

MI'KMAQ NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FEDERATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND INDIANS

Vol.1 No.2

Winter 2003

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the FNI executive, board of directors and staff, I take great pleasure in extending to all, best wishes of good health and prosperity for the year 2003. Once again I am pleased to be providing you the members and many of our loyal followers with a brief update on some of the recent activities of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI).

Since the last edition of the Mi'Kmaq News in October, the FNI has been busy following up on initiatives which were already in progress and as well on a couple of new initiatives to increase the awareness of the Newfoundland Mi'Kmaq and to further assist in the capacity building of the FNI. It is the time within the fiscal year when all programs are evaluated to some degree and proposals for new programs has to be prepared. A great deal of time and consideration goes into this type of process.

I am fairly certain that the most important piece of information to all readers would be the response to date from Minister Nault, regarding his position on the exploratory

discussion report, submitted to his department by Mr. Marc Lalonde September 30, 2002. I have had the opportunity to speak personally with Minister Nault. The minister indicated to me that there was a fair amount of internal work being done on the FNI file and that he needed some additional time to cover all aspects of the report before he could present his position. The minister still remains optimistic about the FNI file and appears very sincere about working toward a reasonable solution that will be in the best interest to all parties. The FNI executive met with the Hon. Gerry Byrne at his office in Corner Brook to seek his support in Ottawa in regards to the 2002 Mi'Kmaq Regime. Minister Byrne gave us assurance that he would strongly support the FNI's proposal and that he would do his very best to gather similar support from his colleagues in cabinet.

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Bradley Lucas, member of the Indian Head 1st Nations Band Council. For important information on how to get involved with the Aboriginal Youth Policing program please see page 7.

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As always, I will not make any promises or predictions on the outcome other than to report on what is being told to me, either by the minister or his officials. If we were to consider the attention that the FNI has been given in the past nine months as opposed to the past thirty plus years, than I believe we should remain patient for another couple of months or so, if required, to allow Minister Nault appropriate time to deal with such an important matter.

In the meantime, the court case against the Federal Government is still in progress and at this point in time we are not being hampered in the legal preparation of the court action so regardless of the Minister's involvement we would still be at this same stage we are now with respect to the court proceedings.

The FNI currently has the Aboriginal Representative Organization Program (AROP), the Youth Coordinator program, Diabetes program, Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, Communications and the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA) in operation and most all of these programs are making reasonably good progress. However the FNI is never satisfied with status quo on any program and we are continuously trying to improve on the implementation and expansion of such programs to benefit the grass roots people. All of the above mentioned programs are important to our members but the interest and the positive response about the AHRDA program, which provides education and employment opportunities is by far the most important program to our members. This program ends on March 31, 2004, the FNI is very actively pursuing all avenues to insure that we are included into any renewal process. This program and former programs such as the Regional By-lateral process were not just handed to the FNI, it is always a huge task preparing briefs, presentations and showing our accountability to substantiate being included into these national programs, while at the same time making recommendations that would better serve our peoples needs.

Funding Approved

The FNI has recently received approval of \$99,754.00 from Health Canada to continue the promotion and awareness of diabetes.

Under the direction of the Congress of Aboriginal peoples the FNI carried out First Nations Consultations on phase two of the Governance Act with all FNI band councils. These consultation meetings dealt with the proposed changes to the Indian Act and the members observed and participated with a great deal of interest.

The FNI has always been given an opportunity to participate at conferences sponsored by the RCMP to hear the issues and concerns of the Aboriginal people of Newfoundland & Labrador. Any member who wishes to have an issue or concern dealt with, please call the FNI office and we will be more than happy to bring your concern to the table of the next RCMP Aboriginal conference.

The FNI has recently submitted a proposal to ACOA/Canadian Heritage to work on a new initiative to establish an exciting permanent and two traveling exhibitions. Mr. Edward Tompkins will curate the exhibitions, The Mi'kmaq People of Newfoundland, and we are anticipating opening these exhibitions, if approved in June 2004 on the west coast. There will have to be a great deal of work undertaken to make this exhibition a success and the FNI will be providing further details on this initiative and how you as members may be able to assist. I truly believe that an exhibition of the planned magnitude will do justice in respect to the awareness and contribution of Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq people, to the development of this land.

Now a follow-up to a number of youth resolutions at the 2002 AGA. The FNI executive met with the provincial Minister of Labrador & Aboriginal Affairs Mr. Ernie McLean to discuss the possibility of having Mi'kmaq history introduced into the provincial education curriculum. The information gathered at this meeting was very positive and encouraging and will be further pursued by the FNI in hopes of deciding on a proposed curriculum format aimed at a specific level of education. Also, the board of directors of the FNI has invited the youth coordinator of the FNI to join them at all future board of directors meetings.

The FNI has made a presentation to the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans in regards to Canada's Ocean Strategy. Also, we have participated in a round table discussion with members and presented a narrative report to the Royal Commission for Newfoundland and Labrador, Renewing & Strengthening Our Place In Canada.

I attended the Annual General Assembly of the Benoit's Cove Indian Band Council on November 13 2002, which was well attended and organized. Band held elections were held at this assembly and Mr. Kevin Barnes was elected as the Chief. On behalf of the FNI executive and chiefs, I wish to congratulate Chief Barnes and his councillors and wish them every success in their endeavours for their members.

I hope that this short narrative message and the remaining articles within Mi'kmaq News is somewhat helpful in giving you the members some insight on the happenings of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians

DIABETES AWARENESS AND ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

The diabetes program has had a very productive year. They have completed their summer camp program, which went over very well, the children and the coordinator had a great deal of fun. They have completed a 2003 calendar, a children's cookbook, game cards, and a coloring book all with the help and input of the children who attended the summer camps. These items have been distributed to each of the bands.

They have also just completed a cookbook that has many traditional recipes, which will be very useful to the FNI members. The diabetes coordinator would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to send in recipes for this book.

They are also in the process of completing their school programs. These programs will be implemented in each of the band areas where there are schools, and where they have prior approval from the school boards. The coordinator will go into selected schools and give a

short session on preventative measures to combat or delay the onset of Type 2 Diabetes. After these sessions the schools will be presented with an information box which will include print material and games designed toward children and teens which will help them better understand diabetes, and give them information on what they can do in their lives to stay healthy and prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 Diabetes.

The diabetes program is working to give information to all Federation members on diabetes, and will continue to work toward this goal as long as possible. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact the diabetes coordinator at:

Shelley Garnier Telephone: (709)-647-3009
P.O. Box 294
St. George's, NL Email: fni.diabetes@thezone.net
A0N 1Z0

"MOTHER EARTH"

*Frank Russell, Mi'kmaq
Band Member*

Frank Russell would like to thank the staff at the Kindale library for their support, and for bringing in books from as far away as Alberta, to help him understand more about protecting "mother earth" from polluters.

Russell got involved in trying to protect "mother earth" after he worked as an excavator operator. This gave him an opportunity to see the mess that the Americans left behind on the land that was once owned by his ancestors.

Protecting "mother earth" has become part of the Mi'kmaq culture. Russell strongly suggests that all aboriginal and non-aboriginal people should do their part to make the world a better place for our children to live in.



Frank Russell

THEY

They took our land
They took our way of life
They determined our destiny
They who were the for-
eigners
To our land

Sweetgrass

Sweetgrass is often found in relatively moist grounds or boggy soils where over long grasses grow as well. Because of the long shiny stems of sweetgrass and with its purplish roots, a person is able to pick them out quite easily from among other wild grasses. Often the gathering of sweetgrass is preceded by a thanksgiving ceremony performed by the person who is to pick the straws. Gathering of sweetgrass is done mainly in the months of June and July. Sweetgrass is used by Aboriginal people in many many ways including interweaving into their basketry and other craftwork. But probably the widest and the most significant use of it is made in prayer purposes and other spiritual related ceremonies.

The Drum

The drum with its drumbeat represents a centre of all life as if it were the heart providing life with its heartbeat. Centre to all things in creation is the drum, in the same way as the heart provides life for the body.

Generally, all Aboriginal people, for centuries and centuries, have held on to the belief that the heart and the drum share the same purpose and responsibility that is providing life through its beat. This connection of the drum and heart as the centre and the source of life promotes a "oneness" in concept between man and nature.

Seeing the world in this unique perception therefore cultivates a special bond, a very personal man/world relationship that manifests itself to giving Aboriginal peoples a sense of genuine love and respect for all living things of nature.

ST. GEORGE'S INDIAN BAND COURTHOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT

Chief Violet Benoit-Dawson, St. George's Indian Band

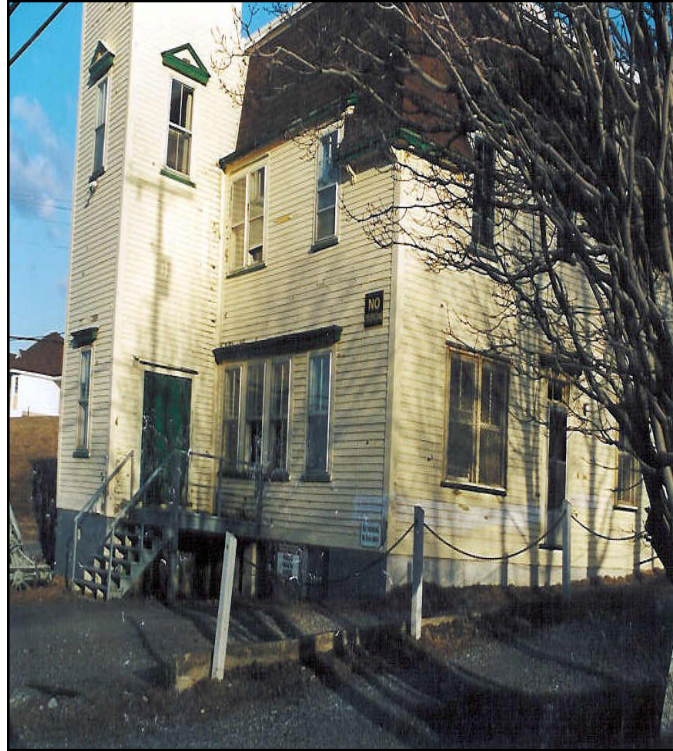
The historic courthouse (photo below) is located at Main Street, St. George's. It was built in 1905 and is one of three of its kind in the province of Newfoundland. Ownership of this building was transferred to the St. George's Indian Band from the Dept. of Public Works and Transportation in 1993 for the sum of one dollar! Unfortunately, since the building didn't generate enough revenue to provide for proper maintenance, this once beautiful old building has deteriorated to the point where it had to be closed up in the fall of 2001. The only hope for the building now is restoration.

On Sept. 15, 2001, thanks to the efforts of the St. George's Economic Development Commission, the Board of the Heritage Foundation of Nfld. and Labrador designated the St. George's Courthouse as a registered Heritage Structure.

With the election of a new Indian Band Council in November of 2001, a building committee was formed with Band Director, Simeon Lee, being appointed as chairperson. Since that appointment, Mr. Lee has worked diligently towards achieving the goal of this committee, which is to restore the courthouse to its original grandeur. Immediately, this building committee grew to include representatives from several community serving organizations such as: the St. George's Economic Development Commission; the Sandy Point Steering Committee, the Regional Economic Development (Zone 9) Board and the Town of St. George's, along with other interested persons to form what is now known as the Court House Restoration Committee. People working together, partnering, is what the courthouse project is all about. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal organizations working side by side for the betterment of their community.

We have received tremendous support for this project from Liberal MHA, Kevin Aylward's office, who arranged a meeting for us with Mr. Wayne Quilty of ACOA, the Atlantic Canada's Opportunity Agency who administers SCIF, which is a Strategic Community Investment Fund. Minister

Aylward provided us with the funds, which allowed us to visit the Historic Courthouse of Greenspond, Bonavista Bay. Greenspond's courthouse was restored in 1994 and is similar in structure to the St. George's Courthouse. Minister Aylward also provided us with the funding to have a structural engineer, Ben Alexander, examine the building to see if the courthouse was structurally sound. Good News! The engineer's findings did indicate that the building is structurally sound and can indeed be restored to its original design. We appreciate the support of Minister Aylward and the support of others like Mr. Wayne Quilty of ACOA and the indispensable services of Ms. Cheryl Hayden, who is with the Regional Economic Development Board. Ms. Hayden has provide countless hours of advice and expertise. She is presently in the process of working with the St. George's Indian Band Council to complete a business plan, which will be submitted to ACOA and hopefully will be approved.



St. George's Indian Band courthouse

Future plans for the court house if this project is approved will include of course restoration to its former state and the reopening of the restored building as a Mi'kmaq cultural/historic museum and Interpretation Center for Sandy Point and the Town of St. George's. The upstairs portion of the museum will house and protect any precious artifacts, which can be acquired either from generous donors or from, proposed future archaeological project findings in the area. "Theme Rooms" will be located in the downstairs section, which will contain photographs, artifacts, historical information, story lines and possibly sketches, paintings or carvings pertaining to a particular theme. "Theme Rooms" will include the following: the Mi'kmaq; the Acadian; Sandy Point; St. Michael's College; the Nfld. Rangers; the Nfld. Rail Road; a room dedicated to our courageous war veterans, just to name a few. Research will be carried out and a tireless attempt will be made to ensure that no one is left out for everyone who is a part of our history has a story to tell.

YOUTH ACTION NEWS

Claudette Pardy, Youth Coordinator

The FNI Youth Program has been working extra hard to encourage youth to explore their options and follow their dreams. Youth today are faced with a range of challenges and their emotions can be like a roller coaster ride, but this is normal and the key is to stay focused and follow your dream. The Youth Program is committed to providing employment opportunities, encouraging early career preparation, promoting Aboriginal role models, and providing career information. It will be through your ideas and involvement that the FNI Youth Program will be a success!

The news is beginning to spread regarding the formation of youth councils throughout all nine-band areas. It will be through these councils that an increase of communication among youth will arise, training and development opportunities will surface, youth involvement will increase, attention will develop among issues facing Aboriginal youth, and the preservation of Mi'kmaq culture will go on. The Youth Services Office is waiting to hear feedback from all interested youth and invites any ideas or suggestions toward starting Youth Councils in your area.

Time is going by so quickly and students will soon be seeking summer employment. A great opportunity can arise under The Aboriginal Student Internship Program (ASIP). This program allows full-time post secondary students to apply for some 7,000 temporary student jobs each year from federal departments. You can take advantage of this program by applying online at the Public Service Commission of Canada Web site. Web site is: <http://jobs.gc.ca> Note: See the FSWEF listing.

Our Youth Services Office is presently working on establishing computer access sites throughout the nine band locations. Computers for all band councils will help youth gain greater access to computers and the information highway of technology. It will be through this program, youth will be provided affordable access to explore careers, emerging opportunities available in today's global

economy, and different sources of information. This program will act as a resource tool and prepare Aboriginal youth for the demands of information technology, along with providing a recreational learning environment. A proposal has been submitted to Computers for Schools (CFS), a national, federal government program that collects, repairs and refurbishes donated surplus computers from government and private sector sources. Our proposal was for the request of nine computers and if this request is approved it will allow for our proposed program to begin its next stage. This computer access program may take time and a great amount of effort, but the Youth Program hopes to see it accomplished.

The FNI MSN Chat Group has been a success with a great amount of youth becoming participating members. This site allows for youth to get to know one another and express their ideas and concerns. Come join the FNI Chat Group @ <http://groups.msn.com/fniyouth> and learn about the different happenings with the FNI.

A proposal has been submitted to the National Crime Prevention Centre requesting funding under the Community Mobilization Program. This proposed funding, if approved, will be utilized to hold a Youth Conference on crime and victimization. Crime and victimization is a growing concern among youth in

today's society. Therefore, a Youth Conference educating youth about crime will help in utilizing youth to live a productive and happy lifestyle. You will be glad to hear that our proposal has been past by the Joint Management Committee of the National Crime Prevention Centre and has now been sent to Ottawa to be reviewed by the Federal Minister of Justice for funding.

Youth Reminder Tip:

"We have the right to make choices in our lives, but never give up reaching for your dreams."

CORRECTION

In the previous Mi'kmaq News, it was mentioned that the Wampum belt presented to the FNI's president was made by many Mi'kmaq people under the direction of an elder Ms. Jessie Alexander (Nee Muise). This was false.

The original idea came from the president of the Newfoundland Native Women Association, Ms. Dorothy George. She then

contacted Doreen Swyers, and asked if she could come up with a design for the Wampum belt. She did with the help of her brother Victor James Muise, and husband Arthur Swyers who helped with the wildlife patterns. When the patterns were finished, Jessie Alexander then crafted it.

CHECK OUT THE INDIAN HEAD FIRST NATIONS WEBSITE AT:

<http://www.indianheadfirstnations.com>

If anyone has any photos, family histories, or stories that they would like added to the website they can call Linda Wells at 646-2662 or e-mail them to: lmwells@hotmail.com

EAGLE'S HAVEN LODGE

"A DREAM THAT BECAME A REALITY"

Eagle's Haven Lodge, a native term for "place of rest" is a fitting name for a new tourist/adventure lodge overlooking the Exploits River, located 14 km into the Buchans Highway. It is owned and operated by Ignatius Paul and Rita Curtis.

Paul is the Federation Chief of the Newfoundland Micmac Native People and is a certified guide who has a lifetime of experience when it comes to hunting and trapping. He grew up by the Exploits River along with his father, John Paul, and had worked on the Badger Log Drive and both had trapped there all their lives.

Paul always wanted to own his own tourist/adventure lodge but never really put a whole lot of thought into it until he met Curtis. Together they discussed the idea and located the site in 1989. They did not actually start to build the cabin until 1994. It took that long to generate enough savings, gather all of the necessary information and receive all the permits to build on their idea. Paul and Curtis built most of the cabin with their own hands. Even though it took four years to build, both said it was worth it.

The cabin itself is fairly large, consisting of 9 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a lounge, a large dining room, a kitchen and a conference room. The cabin is wheelchair accessible and can comfortably accommodate 18 people. A patio surrounds the cabin that overlooks the Exploits River. It offers hunting and fishing tours with nightly entertainment in a comfortable, old-fashioned log cabin in a quiet, serene setting.

Eagle's Haven Lodge also offers a variety of recreational activities and is not just for hunters or fishermen. A person can do everything from bird watching to berry picking. There are hiking adventures offered as well as snowmobile trips in winter, ATVer's and canoe trips in the summer. The lodge will also cater to weddings, graduations, business meetings and private parties.

Both are very excited about their business which has been operational since May 1st, 1999 and they are doing quite well.

For more information on Eagle's Haven Lodge or to make a reservation please call (709) 489-0528 or 486-3338 or 486-6449 ext. 170.

Exploits Elders Christmas Feast

sponsored by
Exploits Native Women's Association

The annual Elders Feast was held on November 23rd, 2002 at the Fifty Plus Club in Grand Falls-Windsor. There were approximately 60 elders and guests seated to a roast beef dinner and dessert. Entertainment was donated by Ed Power & Friends, Joe Kennedy, Nish Paul and Howard Barnes. Gifts were presented to each Elder and their guest by the Native Women's Association. The Exploits Indian Band Council presented a ham as a token of appreciation to each of the Elders. Prizes were drawn for throughout the night and the door prize was won by Nish Paul. An enjoyable time was had by all and everyone is looking forward to this years feast

Message from Chief Nellie Power Exploits Indian Band Council

I just wanted to wish all our members a Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Also, make sure to look in the president's message for further updates on the FNI court case. Please advise the band council of any name or address changes or recent births by calling 489-8425.

BEING INDIAN

Bridget Morris, Communications Officer

What is an Indian? Our first impression when asked that question is likely that of someone of dark skin, with long black hair (complete with feathers) and wearing paint on their face.

There is no doubt in my mind that many North American Indians looked like this (or at least what the movies lead us to believe), but that look has faded drastically over the centuries. Today, many Indians have light skin, short hair, and wear everyday non-traditional clothing they bought off the store shelf. The only time you would see many modern Indians wearing face paint is on Halloween!

I am 4'10 with short, dirty blonde hair and have white skin. I wear everyday clothing and find critics everywhere I go. When I tell people I am Indian they say, "no you're not! You're white."

This attitude leads me to believe most everyone is stuck on this idea of Indians being dark. People have to be open to changes and not always believe in something that may not exist anymore. Sure Indians still exist, I am not saying that they don't. The ones that do exist may not be the ones we imagine, but that is ok. - white ones are just as Indian.

FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE ACT

Throughout the month of October, meetings were held within the nine band areas concerning changes to the first nations governance act. At each meeting, Patrick Brazeau from the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and Jack MacDonald from the Department of Indian Affairs, Amerhest region gave a presentation to the people who attended.

There were many issues covered in the meetings. These included: clarifying legal status and capacity of bands, providing basic political and financial accountability measures (band council to band members,) a band designed code or federal default code to address matters such as: how often band councils should meet, the manner of calling and publicizing meetings, the participation of members in meetings, how laws are to be enacted, conflict of interest, and access to information.

Other issues discussed were: bands having to prepare an annual financial audit and make it available to its members, eligible voters

are to be band members residing on and off reserve who are 18 years of age or older, custom and s. 74 bands not treated the same in terms of access to custom as an option, no national ombudsman to assist with complaints against band councils, no independent body to handle election appeals, new statutory provisions clarifying third party intervention situations, and lack of access to custom for s.74 election bands maybe a violation of s.35 aboriginal rights.

During each meeting, everyone's questions and concerns were addressed. There were many good ideas on how we can better our band membership and the federation as a whole. The meetings were very informative and provided the FNI members with a better insight on Indian Act bands in Canada and the flexibility that will be provided to their governing structure with the proposed changes being considered by the Department of Indian Affairs under the First Nations Governance Act.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

THE FEDERATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND INDIANS

Aboriginal Youth Policing Program

Since 1998, the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) has undertaken the initiative in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to deliver an aboriginal youth policing program in our own communities.

This is an opportunity for aboriginal people who are interested in becoming a peace officer to gain invaluable experience working along with the RCMP officers for approximately 14 weeks during the summer months of each year. The FNI will pay a base allowance of \$125.00 per week to each participant who is selected by the RCMP to participate in the program.

Once again the FNI will be advertising in March or April in the local newspapers for interested youth to apply for this program.

There is an extensive personal review done by the RCMP therefore this process has to take place during this time of the year in order to be able to proceed by mid-May. I encourage all interested youth to apply. You must be between the ages of 19-29. To date 11 of our people have become RCMP Officers.

You can help aboriginal people seek employment:

If you hear or see a position available call one of the Aboriginal Client Relations Officers.

Tell the employer about the employment programs offered by the FNI.

Give the employer one of the FNI's phone numbers.

Business/Clerical Employment Positions

During the last year the FNI has noticed that on numerous occasions throughout Western and Central, NL the local newspapers had advertisements for either business and or clerical employment positions. Based on the present database of the FNI, the majority of trainee's under the FNI who want to be in the workforce in this field have found employment. Therefore, the FNI is encouraging individuals that have an interest in these fields to consider applying for post-secondary training in Business or Office Admin.

Programs

Training:

Adult Basic Education, post-secondary and University training.

Employment:

Wage Subsidy full time and seasonal, Grad Incentive program, self-employment assistance and job creation.

Youth & Disability:

The FNI is also open in investing in innovative ideas of creating employment.

Annie M. Randell,

Coordinator of Employment & Training

FEDERATION DIRECTORY

CHIEFS

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CONGRATULATIONS



Pamela Francis



Norma Francis

Two sisters Pamela and Norma Francis are the first RCMP officers to come from the Gander Bay Band council.

They both graduated from the RCMP Academy in Regina, Sask. Pamela graduated October 30, 2000 and Norma graduated September 24, 2001.

Today, Pamela is stationed in Ft. McMurray, AB and Norma is stationed in Port Coquitlam, BC.

Pamela and Norma are the daughters of Norman and Joan Francis of Gander Bay.

MI'KMAQ NEWS

We are always looking for event listings, stories, suggestions, poems, ideas, and artwork. So please send them in.

You can send them to:
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