



UNION
OF NOVA
SCOTIA
MI'KMAQ

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
FALL/WINTER EDITION 2024



PJILA'SI - WELCOME

We are excited to present the latest edition of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) Quarterly Newsletter—your trusted source for updates, news, and highlights from UNSM and our member communities.

As we step into another exciting quarter, we're eager to share a carefully curated selection of topics, updates, and events designed to inform, inspire and engage you.

In this edition, we look back on the highlights and accomplishments that made this year memorable for UNSM.

Stay tuned for the next edition, coming in March 2025!

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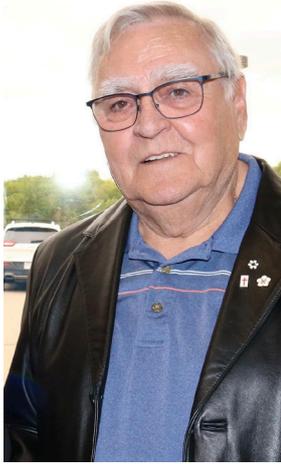
SOCIAL MEDIA: @UNSMIKMAQ

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

IN MEMORY OF JOE B. MARSHALL

(JUNE 30 1940 - JANUARY 19 2024)



The staff at the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq would like to send our deepest condolences to the friends, family and loved ones of Joe B. Marshall.

Joe B. Marshall is a residential school survivor and spent his life advocating for the rights of the Mi'kmaq.

He is the former Executive Director of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Tribal Council for over 15 years until 2016. His significant contributions as a founding member of the Tribal Council in 1969 and continued work for over 50 years is a testament to the vision and dedication he shown in advancing the interests of the Mi'kmaq.

He graduated from Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law with a Bachelor of Laws Degree in 1993 and holds a diploma in Community Development from the Coady Institute at St. Francis Xavier University.

Joe B. spent over 10 years as an Associate Professor at Cape Breton University (CBU) teaching Mi'kmaq Studies and Political Science and compiled several course manuals. He was also involved in the formation of the Mi'kmaq Institute at CBU in 1998.

Joe B. was instrumental in forming the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch to develop principles

and protocols to protect the cultural knowledge of the Mi'kmaq people. He retired from CBU in 2005.

Since 2004, Joe B. continued to advocate for the Mi'kmaq as Senior Advisor to the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative until his retirement in 2016.

In 2009, his expertise was well recognized by the Nova Scotia Government when he was appointed as one of three members of the Natural Resources Strategic Review Steering Panel to develop a new strategy governing the province's natural resources.

In 2011, Joe B. was awarded the Order of Nova Scotia for his outstanding contributions to their community and the province. He was also awarded the Eskasoni Role Model of the Year in 2013 from the Allison Bernard Memorial High School.

In June 2014, his Excellency the Right Honorable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, announced that Joe B. had been appointed to the Order of Canada for his dedication toward community and service to the nation and for his contributions to the preservation and promotion of the Mi'kmaq language and culture.

In 2016, Joe B. was inducted into the Mi'kmaq Sports Hall of Fame for his ongoing commitment to the growth of hockey and ball tournaments and his determination to provide activities for youth.

This past September, Joe B. was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq 54th Annual General Assembly in special recognition to his dedication and services to the Mi'kmaq and their communities of Nova Scotia.

Thank you for your contribution and dedication throughout the years. Joe B. will truly be missed by all.

FEBRUARY

UNSM Receives Funding Boost from Bell Let's Talk Diversity Fund

On January 17th, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM), alongside organizations such as the Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation, RIVO-resilience, Sagkeeng Child and Family Services Inc. and Wolastoqey Tribal Council, were each granted a \$100,000 donation from the #BellLetsTalk Diversity Fund.

The UNSM is dedicated to creating and implementing mental health and cultural education workshops, sports and recreation programs and other initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility and promoting holistic healing within their communities.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits Unama'ki

In late February, Eskasoni welcomed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau along with Members of Parliament Jaime Battiste and Mike Kelowney during their visit to Unama'ki.

Kji-Saqmaw Norman Sylliboy extended a warm welcome to the Prime Minister and conveyed a crucial message regarding the sacredness of the Mi'kmaq treaties, emphasizing Canada's responsibility to honor and implement these agreements as a part of the reconciliation process.

During the visit, they toured Kiknu, Eskasoni's forthcoming long-term facility to set to accommodate 48 residents. With construction nearing completion and final touches underway, Eskasoni has been actively preparing by training community members for employment opportunities, anticipating around 80 new jobs.

Additionally, the Eskasoni Fire Department proudly showcased their new fire station and equipment, made possible through Federal Government support.

The subsequent day, Membertou received Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who announced \$1.9 million in federal funding under the Housing Accelerator Fund. This funding will facilitate the construction of 28 new homes and upgrades to housing infrastructure in Membertou.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the \$1.9 agreement with Membertou, along with an \$11-million agreement with the surrounding Cape Breton Regional Municipality, could potentially catalyze the construction of over 3,200 homes within the next decade.

This funding stems from the federal government's \$4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund, introduced in March 2023, aimed at incentivizing municipalities to enact changes and bylaws and regulations to stimulate housing construction.

MARCH

NATION REBUILDING GATHERING

On March 27th, the Capacity Development team held its 2nd Nation Rebuilding Gathering – Phase II (Unama’ki) in Membertou. This one-day leadership event covered topics such as a project recap, the legal and historical context of Nation Rebuilding, research report findings, and leadership discussion sessions.

Attendees included Unama’ki Chiefs and Councillors, Unama’ki District Grand Council members, District Chief Alex Christmas, Senator PJ Prosper, Honorable Dan Christmas, Shelly Martin of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq and the UNSM staff. At the request of the Grand Council executives, Sa’kej Henderson served as the keynote speaker, presenting on the Legal and Historical Context of Nation Rebuilding in his capacity as their legal advisor.

The research report, *Sante’ Mawio’mi*, was presented by Semise’l San and Ramona Morris. They shared findings based on interviews with elders from Unama’ki communities, using oral history to gather knowledge about the *Sante’ Mawio’mi*. This report focuses on the Unama’ki District of the *Sante’ Mawio’mi*, also known as the Mi’kmaq Grand Council.

With the assistance of the Capacity Development Planning Team, we facilitated leadership sessions based on the CFNG’s Five Pillars of Effective Governance: *People, Land, Laws & Jurisdiction, Governing Systems and Resources*.

APRIL

NOVA SCOTIA ALLOCATES \$10 MILLION TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY

On April 12th, it was announced that the Province of Nova Scotia provided \$25,000 in funding to the Union of Nova

Scotia Mi’kmaq for arranging a gathering at Kejimkujik National Park scheduled for late August. The objective is to unite participants involved in food-related projects spanning the 13 communities.

The Province of Nova Scotia has allocated \$10 million in funding to support community organizations addressing food insecurity. These organizations offer various services such as providing locally produced food, running hamper and nutrition programs, and promoting food literacy. Minister Brendan Maguire emphasizes the importance of ensuring these organizations have the resources to support people at the local level.

A total of 122 organizations have received one-time funding support for initiatives like food literacy programs in libraries, collaborative food networks, and culturally relevant food support for Mi’kmaw communities. Funding was distributed based on applications to programs supported by the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

ESKASONI AND NOVA SCOTIA CELEBRATE OPENING OF NEW LONG-TERM CARE HOME

On April 17th, Eskasoni First Nation celebrated the grand opening of Kiknu, marking a significant milestone for the community.

Mi’kmaw elders and seniors across the province now have access to long-term care within a Mi’kmaw community.

Kiknu, meaning “our home” in Mi’kmaw, is a new 48-room facility in Eskasoni...

...and the first of its kind in the province to be built within a First Nations community. The home is deeply rooted in Mi'kmaw culture, reflected in its turtle-shaped design symbolizing Turtle Island, the Indigenous name for North America.

The building's central gathering space features seven poles representing the Mi'kmaw districts and the seven sacred teachings of the Mi'kmaq, alongside a graphical representation of a healing circle for traditional ceremonies. The design and operations were shaped by extensive consultations with community elders.

Congratulations to the community of Eskasoni! May this achievement pave the way for a future filled with success and prosperity.

THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ 2nd ANNUAL INFRA-STRUCTURE AND CAPITAL BUILDING CONFERENCE

The UNSM's 2nd Annual Infrastructure and Capital Building Conference was held at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre on April 30th. The event started with registration and refreshments, followed by inspiring opening remarks from Wasuek Googoo.

The morning featured updates on the UNSM Infrastructure Project and an insightful presentation by North Shore on Maintenance Management. Attendees then participated in two breakout sessions: one on strategic planning for organizational effectiveness and another on ArcGIS training for UNSM technicians.

After lunch, Migmagi project managers shared project insights, followed by a

detailed session from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq on Maintenance Management. The day concluded with the distribution of door prizes, a preview of upcoming projects, and closing remarks summarizing the key takeaways.

MAY

CHIEF ANNIE BERNARD-DAISLEY OF WE'KOQMA'Q ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

On May 3rd, Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley has resigned from her role as Chief of We'koqma'q First Nation.

When elected as Chief of We'koqma'q in 2020, Chief Bernard-Daisley became the first female Chief of her community. Prior to that, she had served three terms as a Councillor in We'koqma'q and as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association.

In October 2020, she was also elected as Co-Chair of the Assembly, representing the Unama'ki communities. Additionally, she held the positions of Co-Lead for the Assembly portfolios of Justice and Children, Youth, Families, and Gender Diversity, and sat on the Board of Directors for the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.

With heartfelt admiration and respect, we extend our gratitude for Chief Annie's leadership. Councillor John Leonard Bernard has been appointed Interim Chief, and we appreciate his willingness to serve.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE: NOVA SCOTIANS HONOURED WITH KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL

On May 6th, Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy of Eskasoni, Grand Keptin Antle Denny of Eskasoni, and Alan Syliboy of Millbrook were awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of their service to Nova Scotia and Canada. The medals were presented during the inaugural investiture ceremony at Government House in Halifax.

The recipients represent a broad cross-section of Nova Scotians who have made notable contributions to Canada, the province and/or their communities. The medal program was established by the Government of Canada in May 2023, with the support of the King, and is administered by the Chancellery of Honours on behalf of the governor general.

The medal recipients are:

- Scott Baker, Halifax
- Marie Bourinot, Eastern Passage
- Johnny Butler, Shelburne
- Angus (Gus) Cameron, Halifax
- Sharon Davis-Murdoch, Dartmouth
- Grand Keptin Antle Denny, Eskasoni
- Cpl. Erin Dillon, Dartmouth
- Capt. Paul Edwards, Halifax
- Warrant Officer Pamela M. Evans, Beaver Bank
- Gina Haverstock, Wolfville
- Dr. Ahmad Hussein, Halifax
- Christine Igot, Annapolis Royal
- Dr. David Kogon, Mayor, Amherst
- Rear Admiral M.T.J. Kurtz, Halifax
- Maurice Lelièvre, Grand Étang
- Bonny Maclsaac, Warden, Inverness
- Dr. Heather Mackinnon, retired lieutenant-commander, Chester
- Cassidy Megan, Halifax
- Deanna Lynn Mohamed, New Glasgow
- Késa Munroe-Anderson, Halifax
- Christopher Ross, Shelburne
- Yvon Samson, Petit-de-Grat
- Dr. Robert Strang, Fall River
- Alan Syliboy, Millbrook
- Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy, Eskasoni
- Tom Urbaniak, Sydney
- Cpl. Christopher M. Wade, Bridgetown
- Shimon Walt, Halifax

UNSM STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

On May 10th, UNSM surprised our hardworking team with treats and special gifts as a token of our appreciation. It was wonderful to see everyone come together, socialize, and enjoy some well-deserved relaxation time.

We love celebrating our incredible staff! Thank you to all our amazing team members for everything you do. Teamwork makes the dream work.

A huge shoutout to Cheesin' with Jen for the wonderful charcuterie boxes and Cara MacLellan from Sugar on Top for the delicious candy apples and cookies!

JOURNEY OF UNDERSTANDING: SENATOR PJ PROSPER'S MI'KMA'KI TOUR

Senator Paul "PJ" Prosper conducted a four-week tour of Mi'kma'ki during Senate non-sitting periods and engaged with community members, including Chiefs, councils, elders, youth, and Indigenous organizations, to understand their priorities and issues. The insights gathered informed a report to guide his Senate work.

The Mi'kma'ki Tour 2024 started in Newfoundland and PEI from February 16th-21st, continued in mainland Nova Scotia from March 5th-11th, covered Gaspé and New Brunswick from April 1st-5th, and concluded in Cape Breton from May 13th-17th.

On May 14th, Senator Prosper and his dedicated team met with the UNSM's Capacity Development Team and Executive Director Douglas Brown to discuss ongoing projects. The meeting was highly informative, covering a wide range of topics, and we are excited about the future developments.

IDGP TEAM AND THUNDERBIRD FOUNDATION'S EPIGENETICS TRAINING IN PICTOU LANDING

Our Information Governance & Data Projects (IGDP) team, along with the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation visited Pictou Landing First Nation and had the privilege of delivering a three-day training session titled, "Indigenous Knowledge and Epigenetics: Creating Ethical Space for Mi'kmaq-Led Genetic, Epigenetic, and Other Biological Research in Nova Scotia" during the May 24th-26th weekend.

This initiative aims to build capacity and create an ethical space for Mi'kmaq-led biological research, integrating traditional knowledge and lived experience.

MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM CELEBRATES MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Throughout the year, the Mental Wellness Team plays a vital role in supporting our communities. They have been a great source of support for all five communities in Unama'ki, as well as Paqtnkek, especially during their most vulnerable times.

In May and June, the Mental Wellness Team embarked on a mission to visit all five communities, along with Paqtnkek, to raise awareness for Mental Health Month. These visits featured an array of offerings, including food and refreshments, engaging games and activities, face painting, complimentary haircuts, access to mental health resources, and various other services tailored to attendees' needs.

The Mental Wellness Day events were a great success, and we we're looking forward to hosting them again next year.

JUNE

TRIPARTITE FORUM: ALL MI'KMAW MEMBERS MEETING AND WORKING DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

The Tripartite Forum held an All-Mi'kmaq Members meeting, following a productive Working Development Session at the Inverary Inn in Baddeck from June

5th to June 7th.

Camryn and Maisyn Sock served as the MCs, with Heidi Weigand as the facilitator and the Tripartite Forum Secretariat staff providing support throughout the three-day event.

The conference was a success, as all working committees actively participated in discussions, established connections with other committees and laid the foundation for future projects and collaborative problem-solving initiatives.

The Tripartite Forum is looking forward to the next Working Development Session in 2025!

For further details about the Tripartite Forum, please visit:
www.tripartiteforum.ca

STAFF APPRECIATION DAY: BOWLING FUN AT LANES AT MEMBERTOU

Following a demanding week, UNSM recognized the importance of providing our hard-working staff with a well-deserved break.

On June 7th, our exceptional UNSM team indulged in some rejuvenating bowling fun at Lanes at Membertou.

A special shoutout to Kelly's Angels for their outstanding performance, achieving an impressive score of 381. We extend our gratitude to the dedicated staff at Lanes for their exceptional service!

UPGRADES TO ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Jordan's Principle Unama'ki now offer direct deposit and a digital intake form for the convenience of our Jordan's Principle clients and their families.

PRESENTATIONS

Jordan's Principle Unama'ki spreads awareness by giving presentations about their services, the communities they serve, and what happens after aging out. The Cultural Support team facilitated a medicine pouch-making class with ECE students at NSCC, presented to an ECE class at NSCC, spoke at a Band Designate Gathering, and hosted an information booth at Wellness Days in the five Unama'ki communities.

BEAR WITNESS DAY CONTEST

On May 10th, all five communities participated in a bear coloring contest in honor of Bear Witness Day, an annual observance dedicated to Jordan's Principle. This principle ensures that First Nations children have equitable access to social, health, and educational services, consistent with standards provided to other Canadian children. Each winner received a family night of bowling at Lanes at Membertou and a gas card.

WINNERS:

- Wagmatcook: Emery Isadore (Grade 6)
- We'koqma'q: Jerrica B (Grade 3)
- Potlotek: Richard (Grade 4)
- Membertou: Audrey Paul

We want to thank everyone who participated. Congratulations to our winners!

EKWITAMEMK 2024

Jordan's Principle Unama'ki's cultural team hosted the Ekwitamemk (Traditional Fish Camp) from June 13 to June 15 in Cheticamp, in partnership with Parks Canada.

The camp welcomed 15 participants aged 10 to 15, who learned traditional fishing methods, preparation techniques, water safety and canoeing skills. Staff from UINR attended and educated the children about conservation and fish identification.

Each day concluded with storytelling, medicine pouch making and an opportunity for the children to participate in a sweat lodge ceremony.

Campers stayed in tipis and had ongoing op-

portunities to learn from Elders, Land Guardians and other knowledge holders on site.

The event was a success. Congratulations to all staff who made this dream a reality. We look forward to the growth and continuation of this camp for our youth, as it is invaluable.

JULY

The staff at the UNSM worked tirelessly throughout the month to finish projects before a much-needed vacation, as the Annual Summer Shutdown was quickly approaching.

AUGUST

All UNSM offices returned to summer hours of operation after a wonderful summer vacation. Our staff was freshly tanned, relaxed and ready to get back into the work routine!

SEPTEMBER

On September 30th, the UNSM staff wore orange in solidarity with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This day served as a powerful reminder of the painful history and lasting impacts faced by Indigenous communities across Canada.

But our commitment did not end with a single day. It called us to listen, learn and foster understanding every day of the year. By embracing these values, we took meaningful steps toward healing and reconciliation.

Let's continue to stand in solidarity—not just on September 30th, but every day.

OCTOBER

On October 7th, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) hosted its 55th Annual General Assembly at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, celebrating unity, tradition and progress.

The day featured a Board of Directors meeting, and special moments like an opening prayer by Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy and a performance by the Sons of Membertou.

Highlights included Lifetime Achievement Awards for the late Sally Johnson and Nancy Paul, as well as recognition of Michael Dwyer, UNSM's CFO.

(continued...)

Departments shared updates, and service awards were given for five years of dedication.

Five Year Award Winners:

- Chelsea Googoo
- Muin Ji'j Bernard
- Asha Marshall
- Hilda Googoo
- Kim Marshall

The event closed with a prayer, leaving everyone inspired for the year ahead.

NOVEMBER

EXCITING NEWS ON THE CABOT TRAIL

The Lewis Mountain Trail has unveiled its new signage, which includes the Mi'kmaq language and historical context. This is the first of many trail signs being updated along the Cabot Trail, honouring and celebrating the Mi'kmaq culture and language.

These bilingual signs are a step toward recognizing the deep roots and heritage of the Mi'kmaq people in this beautiful region. Whether you're a local or a visitor, take a moment to connect with the land's rich history as you explore the trails.

Stay tuned for more trails with updated signs that bring greater awareness and respect to the Mi'kmaq language and legacy.

Thank you, Elaine Denny, for your patience, exceptional translation skills and for working closely with us on this remarkable project.

DECEMBER

OFFICE CLOSURE NOTICE

All UNSM offices will be closed at noon, beginning December 12th for the holiday season and will reopen on Monday, January 6th 2025 to regular hours of operation.

Please be assured that emails and phone calls will be answered as soon as our staff returns to the office.

Happy Holidays from all of us at UNSM!
Wishing you all a joyful and restful holiday season – see you in 2025!

For more information, visit: www.unsm.org



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Are you passionate about making a difference?
The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq is currently
hiring for the following positions:

- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Governance Manager
- Operations Coordinator

To view job descriptions, visit:

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OR scan the QR code:

