



UNION
OF NOVA
SCOTIA
MI'KMAQ

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
SPRING/SIWKW 2024



PJILA'SI - WELCOME

We're excited to bring you the latest edition of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) Quarterly Newsletter – your go-to source for what's been happening at the UNSM and our member communities. As we embark on another exciting quarter, we're excited to share with you a curated selection of topics, updates and events that we believe will inform, inspire and entertain you.

The next edition will be published in June 2024.

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HOURS OF OPERATION:

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

In Loving Memory: UNSM Honours 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'kmaq 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. *(continued...)*

In Loving Memory: UNSM Honours Joe B. Marshall

(June 30, 1940 - January 19, 2024)

(continued...)

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.



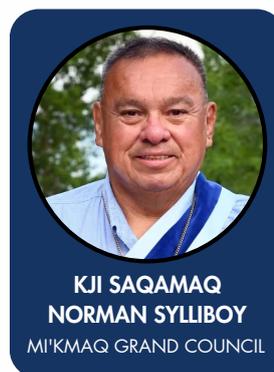
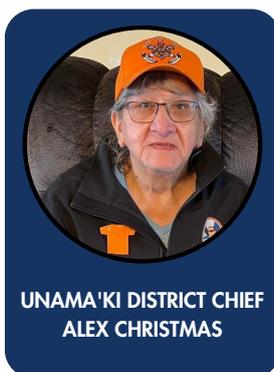
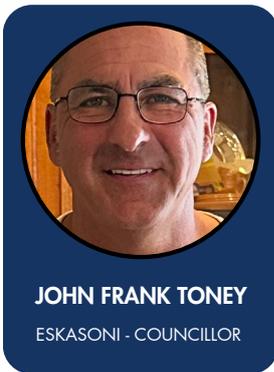
(Pictures were submitted by the family of the late Joe B. Marshall)



UNION
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq's Board of Directors consists of the Chiefs from Nova Scotia's First Nation communities that are part of the association. Currently, UNSM has affiliations with five (5) out of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities. The combined population of these communities represents around 60 percent of Nova Scotia's registered Indian population.



DECEMBER 2023



(Pictured L-R: Santa's Elves, Kim Marshall, Levi Francis and Lorna Christmas)

UNSM Spreads Holiday Cheer: Adopting a Family for Christmas

In December 2023, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) embarked on a heartwarming initiative that brought joy and comfort to a family in need.

UNSM extended the spirit of Christmas by adopting a lovely family, comprising a single parent and four children. Each department was tasked with selecting a child and generously donating five (5) gifts per team.

Collectively, the UNSM staff created cherished memories for a special family during what has been a challenging year for many. UNSM remains committed to giving back to those in need and to our communities.

It truly marked a beautiful conclusion to the year, spreading love and compassion to those who need it most.

JANUARY 2024

Back to Business: Office Returns from Break

Following a delightful holiday break spent with their loved ones, all UNSM offices have resumed to their regular business hours of operation. The team members are rejuvenated and eager to embark on fresh projects and to pursue new goals for the forthcoming year.

Strategic Collaboration: Board of Directors Convenes with Capacity Development Team

The Board of Directors convened with Capacity Development on February 1st at the Delta Hotel in Dartmouth.

Kji Saqmaq Norman Sylliboy led the opening prayer, followed by Chief Leroy Denny's introductory remarks where he provided context on Apuknajit and emphasized the importance of continued teamwork in supporting our communities.

The meeting focused on the projects undertaken by the Capacity Development team. Joan Stevens, Director of Capacity Development, outlined the purpose of the Board Meeting, called at the Chiefs' request, with a specific focus on Infrastructure and the Tripartite Forum.

She mentioned that Capacity Development is approaching the final year of the current five-year plan and will collaborate with the Board and Community Administrators throughout 2024-2025 to update the plan for 2025-2030. She also provided an update on capacity development staff.

Representatives from Infrastructure, the Tripartite Forum, Emergency Management, Community Comprehensive Planning, and Information Governance & Data Projects presented updates on their current and upcoming projects.

Additionally, Tanya Trenholme from Indigenous Services Canada served as a guest presenter, discussing the Solid Waste Management Initiative. She covered various responsibilities, including the Contaminated Sites on Reserves Program, the Impact Assessment Act, and the First Nation Solid Waste Initiative Portfolio.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for April.

DID YOU KNOW?

First Nations are creating their own Matrimonial Real Property (MRP) laws to govern land and family property shared during marriage or common-law relationships. Potlotek drafted its MRP law in 2022, and Eskasoni is currently drafting theirs with UNSM support. Community engagement includes in-person and online sessions, a Facebook group, and a survey. Potlotek is moving towards ratification with planned community engagement, while Eskasoni plans more community sessions and two YouTube videos to explain the MRP process.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits Unama'ki



*Pictured Above: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Kji Saqamaq Norman Sylliboy.
Image by: Eskasoni First Nation Facebook page*

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.



*Pictured Above: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Chief Terrance J. Paul of Membertou First Nation
Image by: Membertou Community Facebook page*

UNSM and RSS Support Team Host Gathering on Quill Earrings and Community Engagement in Membertou



On February 26th, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, collaborating with the Unama'ki Residential School Survivor Cultural Support Team, organized a gathering focused on porcupine quill earrings and community engagement in Membertou.

The event took place at the Membertou 55 Plus Society, welcoming a maximum of 10 participants. Food and beverages were available for attendees.

The attendance was excellent! Excited for upcoming workshops in the near future.

MARCH

Tripartite Forum: Tripartite Officials Convene for Strategic Collaboration

The Tripartite Officials convened at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre on March 6th. Dawn McDonald, serving as the Tripartite Liaison, commenced the gathering with an opening prayer.

The agenda encompassed discussions on forthcoming events, ongoing projects, and updates from both the Secretariat and Working Committees. This was followed by a thorough examination of Heidi Weigand's conclusive report.

Exciting news was shared that committees are now permitted to travel to other communities while being mindful of their allocated budgets.

Mark your calendars for the Tripartite Forum All Mi'kmaq Members meeting on June 5th, and the subsequent Working Development Session on June 6th, both to be held at the Inverary Inn, Baddeck NS.

The next Tripartite Officials meeting is scheduled for September 2024.

Empowering Women: UNSM Celebrates International Women's Day



MSÏT E'PIJK WSKITQAMU'K
NA'KWEKMUOW
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



On March 8th, International Women's Day was observed worldwide, celebrating women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. The day served to honour women's contributions throughout history and advocate for gender equality.

Various individuals and organizations took the opportunity to showcase women's accomplishments in diverse fields such as science, technology, politics, art, and sports. International Women's Day provided a platform to amplify women's voices, acknowledge their achievements, and reaffirm the commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

While the office was closed, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq expressed appreciation for its staff's hard work by sharing recognition on social media. Two (2) profiles were featured, highlighting the contributions of Joan Stevens and Rachel Paul-Coles, who have made significant impacts within the UNSM over the years.

This recognition underscores the importance of support in reaching the organization's current standing.

Empowering Women: UNSM Celebrates International Women's Day

Rachel Paul-Coles



On International Women's Day, we celebrate Rachel Paul, our esteemed Human Resources Director. Rachel is not only a beacon of inspiration to women in our organization but also a symbol of dedication, compassion and strong leadership.

Since 2012, she has tirelessly dedicated herself to the well-being of our staff, embodying resilience and grace in every aspect of her work. Rachel's unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace for all is truly commendable.

Thank you, Rachel, for your invaluable contributions and for being a shining example of excellence for the women in our organization.

Joan Stevens



On International Women's Day, we honour Joan Stevens, our Director of Capacity Development. Joan has put her heart and soul into our organization since 2011, leading with unwavering dedication and a compassionate spirit. Her impact is felt deeply, especially among the women she inspires and uplifts every day. Joan's commitment to our growth and success is unparalleled and her leadership is a guiding light for us all.

Thank you, Joan, for being a true leader and a source of inspiration to us all.



Meet the Team: Empowering Growth Through Capacity Development

Welcome to our staff profiles! Within this section, you'll discover comprehensive insights from our latest team members. It serves as an avenue to foster partnerships and offers a gateway to comprehending our staff, their respective roles, and insights into their professions.

Welcome, Camryn!



Camryn Sock, a member of Eskasoni First Nation, NS, with familial roots in Elsipogtog First Nation, NB, has a deep-seated passion for community and leadership, fostered by her previous work experiences. She has been actively involved in community development on both national and international levels.

In her spare time, Camryn actively engages in community activities, driven by her strong belief in youth advocacy. In her current role, she aims to offer a fresh perspective on the experiences of young Mi'kmaw women in contemporary society.

One of her primary objectives in this position is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of poverty on Mi'kmaw communities. Looking ahead, Camryn aspires to impart Mi'kmaw teachings to the youth, ensuring the preservation and promotion of her cultural heritage.

Camryn Sock
Administrative Assistant, Information Governance & Data Projects
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Welcome, Julia!

Julia Witmer serves as the Policy Analyst within the Information Governance Data Projects team, operating under Governance projects. Additionally, she provides support for initiatives concerning Nation Rebuilding and Matrimonial Real Property Law projects.

Having graduated from the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, Julia holds specializations in Health Law and Policy, as well as Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. During her tenure in law school, she collaborated as a Research Assistant with Professor Naomi Metallic, deepening her interest in Indigenous law and self-governance. Not of Indigenous heritage, Julia originally hails from Ontario.

Before pursuing her legal studies, Julia earned a Bachelor of Science Honours in Life Sciences from Queen's University. She was called to the Ontario Bar in June of 2023.

Julia's fervor lies in creating a brighter future for all individuals, with a particular focus on the nexus of health, law, policy, and essential needs such as food and housing. Recognizing the challenges faced by certain populations in attaining these necessities and thriving, she believes in the transformative potential of law and policy to pave the way for a better tomorrow. Julia feels privileged to collaborate with UNSM, gaining insights from community members, delving deeper into Mi'kmaq law and teachings, and contributing to community empowerment.

During her leisure time, Julia finds joy in practicing yoga, engaging in crafting activities, and honing her culinary skills through cooking and baking.

Julia Witmer
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Meet the Team: Empowering Growth Through Capacity Development

Welcome, Devin!



Devin MacAskill, residing in Sydney, brings his expertise as an environmental engineer to his role as Projects Manager at the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM), having joined the team in November.

Previously, Devin served as the Water Treatment Supervisor for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Water Utility, overseeing operations across eight water treatment facilities.

His professional journey includes a stint at the Verschuren Centre at Cape Breton University, where he forged research partnerships with local enterprises. Beginning his career in Calgary, Devin spent over a decade as an engineering consultant, specializing in remediation projects across Canada.

Family-oriented, Devin and his wife Natalie, employed at the local environmental services laboratory Bureau Veritas, are proud parents to four children between the ages of 8 to 16. Actively engaged in outdoor pursuits, they frequently enjoy activities such as skating, skiing, camping and hiking.

With his extensive background in environmental management and project oversight, Devin's contributions are poised to enhance UNSM's efforts in bolstering infrastructure capacity within our member communities.

Devin MacAskill
Project Manager, Capacity Development
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Welcome, Kennedy!

Kennedy Marshall takes great pride in her identity as a Mi'kmaq woman hailing from Membertou in Unama'ki. A graduate of the Social Services and Therapeutic Recreation programs at Nova Scotia Community College, she cherishes her role as a mother to her two-year-old son, shared with her partner, Peter, and as a fur-mama to Bear, Archie, and Sully. Outside of her professional pursuits, Kennedy finds joy in beading, reading, and spending quality time with her loved ones through leisurely walks.

In her previous roles, Kennedy has demonstrated her commitment to community service. Serving as the Housing Research and Development Coordinator at the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Prevention Worker at the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre, she conducted vital research into housing issues affecting Indigenous women and Two-Spirit individuals in Nova Scotia. Additionally, Kennedy provided essential support to at-risk Indigenous women, ensuring access to harm reduction services and culturally relevant programming within the Centre.

Kennedy's expertise extends further through her contract work with Ma'sl Consulting and Advisory Services, where she contributes to report and proposal development and facilitates KAIROS Blanket Exercises. Through her diverse experiences in volunteer work and board positions, Kennedy has developed a deep understanding of the complex social issues affecting marginalized communities, including poverty, homelessness, racism, discrimination, substance use, domestic violence, and sexualized violence.

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