



UNION  
OF NOVA  
SCOTIA  
MI'KMAQ

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER/KESIK 2023



## PJILA'SI - WELCOME

Welcome to the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq's quarterly newsletter. It's been a few years since our previous edition and now it's back - new and improved!

In this edition, we will reflect on our organizations work throughout the year, which include the latest information within our programs and services, highlights, upcoming dates and events.

The next edition will be published in March 2024.  
**Stay tuned!**

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### HOURS OF OPERATION

MONDAY - FRIDAY  
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

### IN THIS EDITION:

FIRST ANNUAL INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITAL BUILDING CONFERENCE  
• MENTAL WELLNESS AWARENESS MONTH • STAFF MEETING • YOUTH  
CULTURAL CAMP • 54th ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY • TREATY DAY  
**AND MORE...**

## JANUARY

All UNSM offices returned to regular business hours of operation after a wonderful holiday break with their loved ones, refreshed and ready to tackle brand new projects and goals for the upcoming new year.

## FEBRUARY

### MEET CHELSEY!



Chelsey Purdy is UNSM's Dietitian. She started her tenure in February 2023 and within the short time, she collaborated with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey offering workshops on Food Sovereignty for post-secondary Mi'kmaw students, who learned about treaty rights, how to prepare/share a meal and tan fish skins.

Chelsey hopes to bring these opportunities into classrooms. She finished her thesis, in collaboration with Healing Our Nations and used arts-based methods to explore past, present and future access to food for Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS in Mi'kma'ki.

The current goal is to build relationships with the 13 Mi'kmaw communities and

organizations, aiming to learn about food related work that is already happening and connecting with various leaders working in the food industry. This will be a focus for the next year.

Chelsey hopes to focus her position on food from a governance perspective, concentrating on decolonizing food and empowering communities with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about how they access, control and eat food.

If you would like to reach out, do not hesitate to contact:

Chelsey Purdy

Dietician, UNSM

**EMAIL:** [cpurdy@unsm.org](mailto:cpurdy@unsm.org)

**PHONE:** 902-919-1921

## APRIL

### THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ FIRST ANNUAL INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITAL BUILDING CONFERENCE



The UNSM's First Annual Infrastructure and Capital Building Conference was held in Truro on April 9 & 10. In attendance, there were 40 administrators and technicians working within our Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities. It was well-received as Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) unveiled its plans for current and upcoming Infrastructure and Capital Building projects within our member communities. There were presenters from two of UNSM's partners at the Tribal Council level (the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and North Shore Mi'kmaq Council District) who spoke to the audience about their infrastructure programs and software tools that were currently being administered in their communities.

There had been two company directors from Listuguj who also presented on their Project Management company called, "Migmagi", which provides several professional and consulting services.

This event was an opportunity for vendors and organizations to provide information during the conference. There had been 10 various vendors and organizations sharing information to the participants.

## MAY

### MENTAL WELLNESS AWARENESS MONTH



The Mental Wellness Team played a huge role for our communities throughout the year. The team was a great support to all five communities in Unama'ki, as well as Paqtnekek and provided services during each community's most vulnerable times.

During the month of May, the Mental Wellness Team had a goal to visit all five communities, including Paqtnekek, to promote Mental Health Awareness Month.

Food and refreshments were provided. Games and activities, face painting, free haircuts, mental health resources and services were also available to those who attended these events.

## HAPPY RETIREMENT, ANN!



After 23 years of dedicated services to the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, Ann Gottschall officially retired from her role as the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative.

She will be remembered as the hard working and committed individual; and her contribution and dedication to UNSM, staff and clients are very much appreciated.

Ann has been instrumental in developing and implementing numerous diabetes prevention programs, healthy living initiatives, and diabetes management programs that have made a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our community members.

Under Ann's leadership, we have seen the successful implementation of the Heart Smart program, an Indigenous program that addresses healthy living for kindergarten through grade six. Additionally, Ann has organized countless diabetes walk challenges and community sessions for those living with diabetes, providing crucial education and support to those who need it most.

Her tireless efforts also included educating community Health Centers on Glucometer monitoring systems, empowering healthcare professionals to better serve those with diabetes. And let us not forget the longstanding Membertou Diabetes Working Group,

which Ann has been a driving force behind since its inception.

Ann's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of those affected by diabetes and has been an inspiration to us all. We are grateful for her leadership, guidance, and friendship over the years, and we wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

Thank you, Ann, for your years of service and dedication to the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative. You will be deeply missed, but your impact will be felt for years to come.

## HAPPY 25 YEARS OF SERVICE, DOUG!



Douglas Brown, our Executive Director of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, has reached an incredible milestone of 25 years of service with our organization.

In 2020, Doug was recognized with the Mi'kmaq People's Council distinction as the first known Mi'kmaw lawyer to retire in the region. The award was presented by Eastern Door, a group of Indigenous lawyers.

Doug is a community member from Membertou. He was called to the bar in 1997 and graduated the Indigenous, Black & Mi'kmaq Initiative at Dalhousie University School of Law in Halifax.

Doug's passion for justice and advocacy is unwavering. In 2016, he wrote a 40-page brief, stating problems in the Nova Scotia judicial system weren't with the laws, but with judges, despite previous rulings went ahead and heard cases.

He also worked on two cases involving the Mi'kmaq right to hunt for food and believes the cases were never about safety but for people to challenge treaty rights.

His expertise and commitment to his work have been invaluable to our organization for a quarter of a century, and we are proud to have him as a part of our team.

Congratulations, Doug, on reaching this outstanding milestone! You are a true inspiration to us all, and we are grateful for your 25 years of dedicated service.

In early May, staff celebrated Doug's momentous occasion and joined together for a brunch at Flavor on the Water. He was gifted a custom-made medallion, made by Jocelyn Marshall of Membertou First Nation.

Doug has been an invaluable member of the Union for a quarter of a century, and we believe this is an outstanding achievement that deserves recognition.

We are grateful for your 25 years of dedicated service!

## JUNE

### CONGRATULATIONS, MUIN JI'JI!



In June, eight inspiring young Indigenous leaders had been selected for this year's Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders event at the Senate of Canada.

UNSM's Information Governance & Data Projects, Special Projects Coordinator, Muin Ji'ji Bernard, had been selected for Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders 2023, which spotlights young Indigenous people ages 18-35 who are making a difference in their communities.

Congratulations, Muin! We're very proud of you and your accomplishments. You truly are an inspiration to all.

# STAFF MEETING

On June 19, the UNSM had a staff meeting at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre.

Staff discussed updates from their departments and roles. We also had a guest speaker, Dan Christmas, who also did a presentation regarding the early years and history of the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.

After lunch, staff participated in an "Amazing Race" team building exercise, with Capacity Development coming in at first place against the Health Department and Jordan's Principle.

It was an eventful and informative day for all. Thank you to the staff at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre for the services that were provided for the day's festivities. It was a fun way to kick off the week.



## LISCOMBE LODGE

In mid-June, Tajiikeimik in partnership with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) and the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) hosted a Gathering of L'nu Minds for Healing at Liscombe Lodge.

There were over 30 Mi'kmaq elders and knowledge keepers from across Mi'kma'ki, who shared knowledge of land, language, medicines and traditional culture.

The UNSM was honoured to contribute to this event. We are looking forward to what's to come.

## 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

### HUNTER'S MOUNTAIN YOUTH CULTURAL CAMP



In partnership with the Confederacy of the Mainland Mi'kmaq and financial support from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) hosted a two-day youth cultural camp at Hunters Mountain in the Cape Breton Highlands from September 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>.

Over 25 youth participated from across Nova Scotia, with ages ranging from 15-29. The weekend is fulfilled with ceremony, establishing friendships, deepening bonds amongst the youth with Mi'kmaq teachings provided by Wasuek Googoo and Terry Denny.

The youth participated in several ancient rites of passage rituals such as hunting, Mi'kmaq naming, as well as moon and

water ceremonies. Elders Jane Meader and Lu'lan Wells led the Mi'kmaq naming ceremony, resulting in 25 youth receiving their Mi'kmaq spirit names. Trained archers such as Terry's sons, Hunter, Kent, and Luke alongside with Clifford Paul, taught valuable lessons to the group of archers, and provided a 3-D archery obstacle course.

## THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ 54<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



For the first time in four years, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq celebrated their 54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly post-pandemic on September 25<sup>th</sup> at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre.

To begin the event, opening prayers were said by Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy, following with the Honour Song that was performed by Sons of Membertou. Doug Brown, Executive Director, welcomed staff and attendees with opening remarks. UNSM's guest speaker, Dan Christmas, was also in attendance who spoke briefly regarding the organization and presented several awards.

Presentations included updates from Finance, Capacity Development, and the Health Branch departments.

In special recognition to their dedication and services to the Mi'kmaq and their communities in Nova Scotia, the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq honoured Lifetime Achievement Awards to Joe B. Marshall and Unama'ki District Chief, Alex Christmas.

Although Joe B. Marshall could not attend, his children, Jay Marshall and Eleonor Bernard, attended and accepted the award on his behalf.

Staff at the UNSM were also honoured for their years of service and COVID-19 awards whilst working for the organization.

The Years of Service Appreciation Award is awarded to individuals for their dedicated service, hard work, and contributions at the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.

# THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ 54<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED...)

## 2023 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARD WINNERS:

### FIVE YEARS

Anne Basque  
Donna Christmas  
Aaron Corbett  
Tracey Googoo  
Jewl Stevens  
Megan Bowers  
Wasuek Googoo  
Kelly Holley  
Kirstin Ward  
Richard (Buddy) Young  
Michael Dwyer

### 10+ YEARS

Beverly Madill  
Joan Stevens  
Rachel Paul-Coles

### 25 YEARS

Douglas Brown

The COVID Crisis Response Recognition Award is to recognize efforts of going above and beyond expectations during the onset of the covid 19 pandemic.

## COVID CRISIS RESPONSE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS:

Jennifer Jesty  
Todd Vassallo  
Richard (Buddy) Young  
Kelly Holley

Congratulations to all! The UNSM is looking forward to next year's Annual General Assembly.



# OCTOBER

## TREATY DAY



Treaty Day took place in Halifax on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mass was held at the St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica on Spring Garden Road. Since the COVID-19 began in 2020, this was the first-year church services with the Mi'kmaq choir and 35 Grand Council members were in attendance.

The Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc and Lt. Governor of Nova Scotia hosted a flag raising ceremony at the Government House.

The opening ceremonies began with drumming, performed by Kiju Boys of Paqtnkek, following an opening prayer and smudging by Mi'kmaw Keptin and Elder, John W. (Tiny) Cremo. The flag raising song was performed in Mi'kmaq by Arlene Stevens of Eskasoni. The flag was raised by His Honour and Kji Saqamaw Norman Sylliboy. There was also a reception to follow in the Government House.

The Treaty Day Award's ceremonies were held in the Red Room at the Province House. The EmCee for the evening was Dan Christmas and opening prayers were said by Kji Saqamaw Norman Sylliboy.

Treaty Day remarks by the Honourable Trevor Boudreau, the Minister of Nova Scotia L'nu Affairs; Jaime Battiste, Member of Parliament Sydney/Victoria; the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans; and Chief Sydney Peters, Co-Chair Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. Kji Keptin Antle Denny addressed Treaty Day with a remarks and words of encouragement.

### **GRAND CHIEF DONALD MARSHALL SR. ELDER AWARD RECIPIENT:**

Joe and Judy Googoo of Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q  
Shirley Clark, Glooscap First Nation

### **CHIEF NOEL DOUCETTE YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT:**

Maria Young, Eskasoni  
Miracle Johnson, Membertou

## **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN EROSION PROTECTION IN ESKASONI & POTLOTEK FIRST NATIONS**



On October 10<sup>th</sup>, it was announced that a federal investment of \$1 million will support the installation of erosion controls in Eskasoni and Potlotek First Nations.

Through the Natural Infrastructure Fund, the Government of Canada is supporting the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq to plan, design, and implement erosion controls along the Bras d'Or Lake.

Erosion protection improvements will include the installation of living dikes with salt marshes and implementing sediment controls. This will improve the communities' resilience when faced with extreme weather events.

The announcement took place at the Potlotek Community Hall. In support of this project, the Board of Directors attended this event and sat on stage while speeches by Mike Kelloway, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Member of

Parliament for Cape Breton-Canso, Jaime Battiste, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Member of Parliament for Sydney-Victoria, and Chief Wilbert of Potlotek and Chief Leroy Denny of Eskasoni.

## **MEMBERTOU DAYCARE: TRICK OR TRUNK EVENT**



The Jordan's Principle team attended the Trick-or-Trunk event at the Membertou Daycare in late October, in celebration of Halloween.

Many organizations decorated the trunks of their vehicles in Halloween-themed décor and passed out candy and other goodies to the children and staff of the Membertou Daycare.

The UNSM is honoured to partake and looks forward to this event every year. Thanks for having us, Membertou!

## ATV REGISTRATION CLINIC



It was a first for Access Nova Scotia to pilot an off-site registration clinic in Eskasoni, First Nation. This clinic was for residents to register their off-road vehicles within their community, saving them the 30-minute drive into town.

Once the fee was paid, vehicle owners were able to access their ownership papers and license plate, immediately.

As a result of this event, 28 people registered their vehicles within four hours.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving were also available and offered obstacle courses with special glasses that had to be worn while going through, simulating vision while intoxicated.

Access NS also gave away Eskasoni decoration licensed plates.

## LUNCH & LEARN

In celebration of Mi'kmaq History Month, the Union of Nova Scotia Cultural Committee hosted four Mi'kmaq language-based Lunch & Learns throughout the month of October, in the UNSM Boardroom. A virtual option was available to those who couldn't attend the in-person sessions.

These sessions included backgrounds and stories, to share their experience and to also teach the basics of the Mi'kmaq language.

The goal of this program was to build confidence and understanding of the language and to promote a safe space to practice.

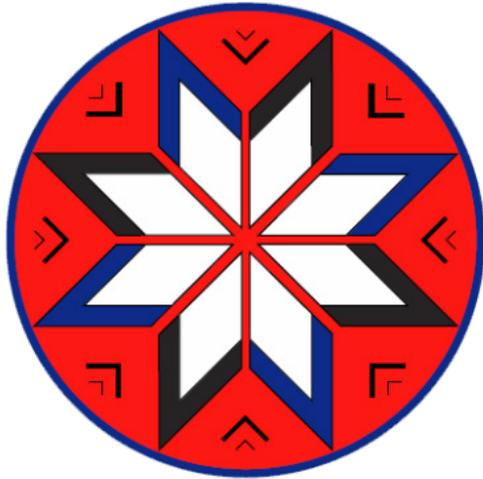
The program was paired with a "Word of the Day", that was posted in the office and on Slack to help promote learning new words and to encourage everyone the basic everyday conversations within the office.

Soon, there are plans to continue with the lunchtime language sessions throughout the upcoming months by utilizing our fluent staff and the information that was learned in October. This is a way to continue to build on the progress the staff has made to grow confident.



## OTHER NEWS

### MI'KMAQ - NOVA SCOTIA - CANADA TRIPARTITE FORUM



Throughout the last year, the Working Committees met virtually then eventually, moved to in-person, due to the pandemic. This slowed down the committee's ability to accomplish its priorities, affecting some work taking place at the time.

With gradual lifting of restrictions in the province, some committees met in person. The Tripartite Secretariat consists of three Liaisons, two Communications Officers, two Administrators, and one Project Fund Coordinator.

Although this restructure was recent, staff are working hard to get the New Tripartite Forum back to the momentum it once had.

### MUKLA'GATI



The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq is planning a course of action to restore Kelly's Mountain to its original Mi'kmaw name of, "Mukla'gati" meaning, "a place where the geese land." This is a combined effort between Mi'kmaw leadership and the province of Nova Scotia.

This specific region is said to be the home to legendary Mi'kmaw prophet Glooscap. It's located in the Kluscap Wilderness Area. The Mi'kmaq believed he once dwelled in an oceanside cave near Cape Dauphin and consider the cave to be the centre of the universe and where Kluscap is expected to return.

It was also home to a Mi'kmaw community that was displaced in 1906.

UNSM's Infrastructure Manager, Darrell Bernard, is excited that the province is working with the UNSM. Christina Deveaux, a spokesperson for the province says they're looking to add the Mi'kmaw name to signs in the area, but the official name of the mountain is not going to change.

**Stay tuned for further updates!**



UNION  
OF NOVA  
SCOTIA  
MI'KMAQ

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ 12 DAY OF CHRISTMAS

**ANNUAL DOOR  
DECORATING CONTEST**  
DECORATE YOUR DOOR WITH  
A FUN HOLIDAY THEME.  
(BUDGET: \$20)

29

**30  
SANTA CLAUS IS  
COMING TO TOWN**

PICK ONE TEAM MEMBER TO BE  
SANTA FOR A "HO HO  
HO" SHOWDOWN IN THE  
BOARDROOM  
AT LUNCH.

**1  
DO YOU WANNA  
BUILD A SNOWMAN?**

WEAR WHITE/SILVER OR DRESS  
LIKE A SNOWMAN OR WEAR  
SNOWMAN CLOTHING.

4

**HOLIDAY HAT DAY**

WEAR YOUR FAVOURITE  
HOLIDAY HAT OR HEADBAND.

**UP ON THE ROOFTOP**  
MEET IN THE BOARDROOM AT  
NOON FOR A GINGERBREAD  
HOUSE COMPETITION.

**5 \*LIGHT SNACKS PROVIDED.**

**6  
BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!**

WEAR YOUR FAVOURITE UGLY  
CHRISTMAS SWEATER.

**CHRISTMAS TRIVIA**

IN THE BOARDROOM AT  
NOON. THE WINNER WILL  
RECEIVE A PRIZE!

**7 \*LIGHT SNACKS PROVIDED.**

**CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE**

BRING IN YOUR FAVOURITE  
COOKIES/TREATS TO EXCHANGE.

**8**

**MERRY MONDAY**  
WEAR RED & GREEN

**11**

**REINDEER GAMES**

GATHER IN THE BOARDROOM  
AT NOON FOR FUN  
CHRISTMAS GAMES.  
**\*LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.**

**12**

**13**

**'TWAS THE NIGHT  
BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

WEAR YOUR FAVOURITE  
CHRISTMAS PJ'S TO WORK

**14**

**ANNUAL  
CHRISTMAS BRUNCH**

BRING YOUR FAVOURITE  
BREAKFAST ITEM TO SHARE WITH  
STAFF. DOOR DECORATING  
WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED!

**CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
FLAVOR ON THE WATER - 6:30 PM

**CHRISTMAS  
SHUTDOWN**

ALL UNSM OFFICES ARE  
CLOSED AND WILL REOPEN  
ON JANUARY 4, 2024.

**15**



UNION  
OF NOVA  
SCOTIA  
MI'KMAQ

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**CHIEF LEROY DENNY**  
ESKASONI



**CHIEF TERRANCE J. PAUL**  
MEMBERTOU



**CHIEF WILBERT MARSHALL**  
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**CHIEF NORMAN BERNARD**  
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WE'KOQMA'Q



**STARR PAUL**  
ESKASONI - COUNCILLOR



**JOHN FRANK TONEY**  
ESKASONI - COUNCILLOR



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MI'KMAQ GRAND COUNCIL



**UNAMA'KI DISTRICT CHIEF  
ALEX CHRISTMAS**



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