

# MHR *Connections*

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## June - A Time to Celebrate

June was a month of celebration for many Manitobans. It all began the first day of June.

### Pride 2005

The flags were raised on June 1<sup>ST</sup> and over the next ten days events included a baseball tournament, a film festival and a community health open house, leading up to a rally, parade and festival on June 12. It was all part of Pride 2005.

The theme for this year's parade was "I do", a reference to the same sex marriage legislation now before parliament.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission participated in the Gay Pride festivities in Winnipeg at Memorial Park.

Elliot Leven, one of Manitoba Human Rights Commissioners along with outreach and liaison officer Beatrice Watson, volunteered at the Commission's display booth. Many people



*Commissioner Elliot Leven hands out pens and human rights information at Pride 2005.*

stopped by the booth to pick up informational brochures or to ask questions about human rights. A highlight at the booth was the complimentary fluorescent pens given to the first 500 visitors to the booth.

The Manitoba Human Rights Code protects persons from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the workplace in employment, housing and public service areas.

### Filipino Heritage Week by Johsa Manzanilla

Between June 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, the Philippine community in Manitoba celebrated Philippine Heritage Week. This year's Winnipeg festivities were organized by the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba, a working group since 1981 comprised of about 25 Executive representatives from different Philippine organizations. Perla Javate, President of the Philippine Heritage Council described the week as "not only uniting and strengthening ties between the young and the old within the community, but also sharing our culture with other Manitobans."

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### The Rights Connection By Janet Baldwin – Chairperson Pride and Prejudice

The nineteenth annual Pride March wound through Winnipeg streets recently, on the final day of celebrations and cultural events of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and two-spirited communities.

Winnipeg Pride 2005 celebrations began on June 1, the National Day Against Homophobia. Anti-Homophobia Day was first held two years ago in Quebec as a day of awareness about homophobia. This year the campaign extended across Canada and was supported by many organizations, including the Public Service Alliance of Canada, The Montreal Police Service, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Homophobic violence and harassment was also the subject of the Jubran judgement, recently issued by the Court of Appeal for British Columbia. Mr. Jubran, who did not identify as gay, had filed a human rights complaint after being subjected to repeated homophobic insults and harassment during five years of high school. A tribunal had held that the school board failed to provide Mr. Jubran with schooling that was free of discriminatory harassment, having found that whether or not the students knew or believed Mr. Jubran was homosexual was irrelevant. Its decision had been overturned on judicial review by the B.C. Supreme Court on the basis that Mr. Jubran was neither gay, nor perceived to be gay by his harassers, and therefore the harassment was outside the scope of the specific provision of the legislation.

Madam Justice Levine, writing for the Court of Appeal, set aside the decision of the B.C. Supreme Court and restored the order of the Tribunal. She agreed with the Tribunal's view that whether or not the students knew or believed Mr. Jubran was homosexual or not was irrelevant. "(T)he law is clear that it is the effect of the actions, not the intent or belief of the actors, that is the basis for determining whether discrimination has occurred," she said.

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The week began with a Flag Raising and Opening Ceremony at the Philippine-Canadian Centre, where members from various Philippine groups throughout Winnipeg gathered to sing the Canadian and Philippine national anthems, as prominent politicians with representatives of the Philippine Veterans Association raised the official municipal, provincial, and Philippine and Canadian national flags.

The next event, "Share Our World", was an opportunity to share the Philippine culture with several different multicultural groups across the city. About 50 to 60 visitors participated in the evening event, which included ice-breaker games to highlight Philippine hospitality as well as to teach others about Philippine culture and traditions.



*Recognition of Filipino Veterans - Honorary Consul General of the Philippines Dr. Roland Guzman with members of the Philippine Veterans Association.*

Children were also featured during the weeklong celebration. Their

performances included the national *Tinkling* dance, some OPM (Old [traditional] Filipino Music), and the *rondalla* band. The children are students enrolled in Philippine classes where they learn about their heritage. This event was organized by the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers Incorporated (MAFTI).



*Students in the Rondalla Ensemble performing at the MAFTI presentation.*

The Filipino Youth Initiative (FYI), an organization dedicated to increasing awareness of Philippine heritage among the young adults in Manitoba, also took part in the festivities. "Sama-Sama Night," which is most closely translated to a night of 'getting together.' It was an evening of fun and games testing one's knowledge of Philippine heritage and pop culture trivia. The purpose of the event was to bridge the gap between generations within the Philippine community.

The week also offered informational sessions. For example, there was a welcome and resource night for all "bagong dating", which in Tagalog means new arrivals or new immigrants. They were offered a series of short presentations on how to get comfortably settled in their new surroundings, and a question period for any inquiries or concerns. The final weekend began with a "Celebration of Faith" and the bringing together of Filipino people of diverse spiritual beliefs. The Philippines is a country known to reflect a diversity of religions

The week concluded with an Open House to the public, a Ball at Fort Garry Place celebrating the 107<sup>th</sup> year of Philippine Independence from the Spanish on June 12, 1989, and a Sunday Picnic, held at R.B. Russell High School.

The Philippine Heritage Council is also involved in other cultural presentations throughout the year including participating in Folklorama, the annual August Festival of Nations. There are about 40,000 Filipinos in Manitoba.

*Johsa Manzanilla is a university student working at The Manitoba Human Rights Commission during the summer.*

**National Aboriginal Day**

National Aboriginal Day was celebrated from dawn to sundown on June 21<sup>ST</sup> as Manitobans took part in the cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. In Canada, 2005 is also the Year of the Veteran, and the day also served to honour and remember Aboriginal Veterans.



*Dancers participate in the Grand Entry as three generations of women (Barb Hall, her daughter Carmen and grand daughter Cruzlee) watch in Brandon's Stanley Park.*

Events were held throughout the province. For example in Brandon, Stanley Park was alive with sights and sounds celebrating the day.

The day before, on June 20<sup>th</sup> on the grounds of the old residential school in Portage la Prairie, a statue honouring Kishkemequa (Short Bear) was unveiled. Kishkemequa was the first Chief of the Long Plain First Nation. The former residential school was declared a heritage site. Long Plain also hosted an Aboriginal Day Festival the following day.

In Winnipeg, the day began with a sunrise pipe ceremony at the Forks. Festivities throughout the day included a community breakfast hosted by the Manitoba Metis Federation and a bison and beef burger barbecue at City Hall.

The City of Thompson focused its celebrations on Aboriginal veterans.

**Keeping the Fires Burning  
Honouring our Grandmothers**

Six Aboriginal women were acknowledged on June 16 during a ceremony honouring grandmothers. "Keeping the Fires Burning" is a celebration of Aboriginal women's leadership, which acknowledges the tremendous contribution that Manitoba's Aboriginal women have made in the preservation and transmission of First People's cultures.

The dinner event was organized by Ka Ni Kanichihk, a registered, non-profit community based Aboriginal human services organization. Ka Ni Kaichihk means "those who lead" in the Ininew (Cree) language.

The women honoured at the 2005 celebration were: **Gladys Elaine Cochrane** (1946-2004) of Peguis, **Dora May Gauthier** of St. Boniface, **Eleanor Olson** of Norway House and Peguis, **Harriet Mclvor** of Sandy Bay and Portage La Prairie, **Thelma Meade** from Hollow Water First Nation and **Gladys Cook** of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, now residing in Portage La Prairie.