

CHRISTIAN PILON LAUNCHES LAKE ONTARIO'S FIRST CANOE



In Oshawa, ON June 24, 2011 - On Lake Ontario on the eve of Saint-Jean-Baptiste more than 150 guests from as far away as Quebec and Manitoba gathered to see Franco-Ontarian/Métis Christian Pilon launch the first birchbark canoe he constructed in the traditional manner alongside the National Master Builder, Marcel Labelle.

Today Christian Pilon can be found at Beatrice Desloges high school, a French school in Orleans, ON., where he is currently teaching 12 students the art of authentic canoe building. Mr. Pilon's wish as he put it by telephone today, is to bring awareness about the Metis culture and during the process of building the canoe he teaches and shares through songs, the cooking of native foods, etc. The students get a chance to immerse themselves into the culture. Mr. Pilon instructs the students in the art of opening the birch bark, splitting roots and cleaning off the skins. They also split cedar "Everything is done by hand no power tools are allowed." As Mr. Pilon continued, "It would be an honor to have you share the pictures of the canoe building project. The kids worked so hard to make it happen.



I've learned from Pete Bernard of Pikwakanagan that there are no such things as a tippy canoes, just tippy people. This is one of the reasons why I share the birch bark canoe project; it is the vehicle to share culture, which I learned from my Elder Marcel Labelle Métis from Mattawa. As a Métis, it's important to tug both sides of that famous infinity sign in our flag. One side is Anishnabe and the other European. When we learn to balance both sides, we become a strong, stable and

grounded person. The tchiman (canoe) teaches us the importance of balance in all things in our lives. It is a gift from my Anishnabe ancestors to my European ancestors. It was also a way of living one's life, in total balance and harmony with our surroundings regardless of the stormy weather which we face. If you learn balance, you can navigate through life's storms"



The Ontario Metis Family Records Center says “Kudos to you Christian” – keep up the good work!

Photo Source: Christian Pilon

This article was shared with us by our friend, Paul Allaire

Websites: French: http://voyageurextraordinaire.ca/canot_d_ecorce.html

English: Translated by Google:

<http://translate.google.ca/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://voyageurextraordinaire.ca/&prev=search>