Gabriel Stenne Jr. - From Mill Operator to Power Engineer Trainer

For the past 12 years Gabriel Stenne Jr. has worked at the McClean Lake site. Gabe, as his family and friends call him, knew a lot about life at McClean Lake before he even came. His late father, Gabe Stenne Sr., had worked at Orano’s McClean Lake site for a few years and at the Rabbit Lake mine. During those years, his dad shared some of his experiences with Gabe Jr. So, when the opportunity came, Gabe did not hesitate to go to work, first at Rabbit Lake as a summer student, and then full-time at McClean Lake.

Originally from Camsell Portage, Gabe lives in Fond du Lac where he grew up and came back to after going to high-school in Prince Albert. He started at McClean Lake as a mill operator with little experience. However that didn’t stop him as he quickly learned the various mill circuits and perfected his skills as an operator over a couple of years. In 2008 he enrolled in the Power Engineering training program and successfully obtained his Fourth Class Power engineer Certificate within two years and his Third Class Certificate in 2013, while working with McClean Lake’s power engineering group. “I really enjoyed being part of the power engineering crew and gaining more experience every day. People are really good to work with up here,” says Gabe.

As of two years ago, Gabe has found another path for his career. He is now a Power Engineer Trainer for apprentices who are 4th Class Power Engineer Certificate holders or working towards it. “I get to pass on some of the knowledge I’ve gained. It’s on-the-job training; I like teaching this way,” adds Gabe. He provides training on the various mill circuits – that’s when his background as a mill operator comes in handy – and also on boilers, compressors, and various plants such as the acid plant. He also had the opportunity to share his experience and knowledge with the Mill Operations Training Program participants. “When I started we didn’t really have a formal training process for mill operators. Now, the way we train mill operators at McClean Lake is really good. It gives them a good base to build on so they can become good operators and stick around.” Gabe explains that training new employees helps him get a different perspective on the mill and how he does things. For him it’s all part of continuous improvement, updating work instructions is a never ending job.

It is clear when you meet Gabe that he doesn’t want to stay idle. He is already working hard to gain more experience and plans to study to obtain his 2nd Class Power Engineer Certificate. And, he also wants to acquire more supervisory experience so someday he can supervisor a crew. “I want to be a good role model for my three kids at home,” says Gabe. “I want my kids and the young people up north to know that it’s important to get an education, to finish high-school and continue learning after that.”

A man of few words, Gabe concludes that “McClean Lake is a great place to work once you get used to the week-in/week-out schedule”.

Orano Northern Link
Summer 2018
National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration

Once again Orano employees celebrated National Indigenous Peoples Day at the McClean Lake mine site. This year Orano welcomed Montreal Lake’s Burton Bird (in photo). A deaf international hoop dancer, Burton has been dancing since 1988 and has participated in many events including the Woodland Cree Gatherings, Molanosa Cultural Days, the John Arcand Fiddle Fest and many festivals across Canada, the USA and even in France. As a role model Burton is involved in empowering Saskatchewan Indigenous deaf children and enhancing their personal development through his partnership with Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. Through his hoop dancing he promotes deaf indigenous awareness. It was a pleasure to watch him dance and Orano employees appreciated the opportunity to try hoop dancing.

Mine site Elder Georgie McDonald and Jerry Piche his fellow Elder from Fond du Lac were joined by Black Lake Elder Martin Broussie to perform hand drumming and also teach employees some traditional hand games.

It was a great day of appreciation and learning of some Indigenous traditions for many Orano employees, and we thank our guests for taking the time to come to the mine site to share their knowledge with Orano people.

Georgie McDonald - McClean Lake Site Elder

Orano’s McClean Lake Operation has a new site Elder, Georgie McDonald. Georgie was previously employed at McClean Lake as a mill operator from 1995 to 2011. In his new role as Elder, he works closely with the McClean Lake Human Resources team, providing employees and contractors at site with support services.

“I am excited to be back at McClean Lake to help employees and Orano in any way I can,” says Georgie. Georgie was born and raised in Fond du Lac.

Welcome back to McClean Lake, Georgie!