

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE
STORY
AS IT'S
TOLD

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UN-CUFF OUR COPS!

BAND MEMBERS RALLY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

SPECIAL
SECTION:
NAY AH SHING
MANOOMINIKE

SECRETARY OF
INTERIOR MEETS
OFFICIALS IN
DISTRICT I

GE-NIIGAANIZIJIG
STORYTELLING
IMMERSION
CAMP

BAND FILES
FEDERAL
LAWSUIT
AGAINST COUNTY

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELANIE
BENJAMIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Dear Band Members,

Aaniin, Boozhoo! There is not enough space in the newspaper to describe all that transpired this past November. A snapshot of my schedule includes attending the Tribal Nations Opioid Summit at White Earth; meetings with many individual Band members, holding two Cabinet meetings, meeting with Band Assembly; a Special TEC Meeting and also teleconferences with the U.S. D.O.J. Tribal National Leadership Council.

There was a five-day period in November, however, that was the highlight of the month and will go down in history for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Over just five days, we received a surprise two-day visit by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, the highest ranking official to ever come to the Mille Lacs Reservation; we filed a lawsuit in federal court against Mille Lacs County, Sheriff Lindgren and County Attorney Walsh; and Band Members held a rally at the State Capitol demanding justice for our community.

On November 14, Tribal Chief of Police Sara Rice was notified that officials from BIA Law Enforcement in Washington D.C. would be coming to Mille Lacs just two days later, on November 16, to discuss our public safety crisis in District I, and that Secretary Zinke would be joining them for this visit. Secretary Zinke oversees many federal agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He was accompanied by BIA Director Bryan Rice, Director of BIA Office of Justice Systems Charles Addington, Chief of Staff Scott Hommel, several communications staff team, and Secret Service police.

This visit came on the heels of a recent letter sent the previous week by the Interior Department to Mille Lacs County, informing the County that it is the position of the United States that our reservation remains intact and was never diminished, and that under no circumstances should Mille Lacs County law enforcement impede our federally deputized tribal police officers from carrying out their duties to investigate crimes under federal law and inherent Band authority.

After being welcomed by District I Representative Sandra Blake and me along with about 75 Band employees, Secretary Zinke held

a 90-minute meeting with elected officials, commissioners, and our legal team to discuss the current law enforcement crisis. The Secretary listened intently, and promised to do what he could to help; several ideas were discussed. He and his staff also attended our Fall Community Feast, and stayed overnight at our Eddy's Resort. Friday morning, Secretary Zinke joined Chief Rice for a ride-along and toured neighborhoods in District I.

This was a very important visit. We had not previously invited the Secretary to the reservation; of all the tribes in the United States, he spontaneously chose to come here. As a retired Navy Seal Commander, the Secretary talked about the importance of honor and keeping one's word, and he said he intended to honor the federal government's commitments to the Band both via our treaties and the trust responsibility. We are keeping communication lines open and following up on those commitments. I will speak more about that at the State of the Band Address on January 9.

Also on November 16, a few hours prior to Secretary Zinke's visit, Representative Blake offered a resolution in the Band Assembly meeting authorizing a federal lawsuit against Mille Lacs County, which passed and was signed on Friday morning. The Band filed the lawsuit late Friday afternoon in federal district court. In our complaint, we state that the County has prevented Band police officers from exercising police powers within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, has violated federal law and is contributing to an epidemic of drug-related overdoses and deaths. We are asking the court to declare that the Band has inherent sovereign authority to establish a police department and to authorize Band police officers to investigate violations of federal, state, and tribal law within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation as established under our 1855 Treaty. This lawsuit involves both law enforcement and our reservation boundary.

The federal legal system does not move quickly, but we felt we had no other choice than to take decisive legal action. At Governor Dayton's request, we had agreed to attempt one last mediation session with the County, but given the County's past behavior, as elected officials we decided we could no longer wait. We will keep

the Band updated about the status of this lawsuit and scheduled court dates.

Just a few days later on Monday, November 20, about 200 Band Members and allies rallied together at the State Capitol at the "Uncuff Our Cops" rally, which was organized at the grassroots level by Mille Lacs Band members. This was an amazing event, and made a huge impact with regard to getting the truth of our story out to the public.

Chi Miigwech to all the Band members who helped with organizing this event, who attended and made their voices heard. The rally received widespread state and national media attention, shining a bright light on the County's disregard of the safety of Indian people. Through this event we gained new support from Minnesota lawmakers; several have now made commitments to get involved and assist the Band in ending this crisis.

As I write this column, our mediation team just concluded the day-long mediation session on November 27 with the County, which was conducted by a retired federal magistrate. Unfortunately, like all previous mediation sessions, this one too ended without a new law enforcement agreement.

However, there is hope on the horizon. There is much work happening on this issue behind the scenes in Band government. We have made new progress due to your involvement as Band members willing to speak out. Every Band member has a powerful voice. Collectively, we have together gained new allies in our quest for justice for our community. And as Band officials we are holding all parties accountable for the commitments they have made to help us restore public safety in District I.

We will persevere, because the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe does not ever give up when it comes to protecting our families and our rights. We do not negotiate away our sovereignty or our reservation and never will.

I look forward to seeing you all at the State of the Band Address on January 9. Miigwech!

Melanie Benjamin

WEWIN Experience Inspires Youth to Take Action

Last summer, Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin sponsored several young Band members to attend the annual convention of WEWIN — Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations.

It was a great experience, but it didn't end there. Melanie has continued meeting with this group of young women to discuss how to take what they learned and make a difference here at home.

The conference took place at Isleta Resort Casino near Albuquerque, New Mexico, from July 30 to August 2. The young women who attended were Nay Ah Shing students Ronni Jourdain, Mia Sam, and Tierra Day, and Onamia students Alexis Staples, Aubrey Benjamin, Shaina White, Amanda Eagle, and Roxanne Emerson.

Most agreed that the highlight of the convention was a suicide prevention presentation by 17-year-old Faith Holyan.

Faith is a member of the Navajo nation and a former World Champion in the Indian National Finals Rodeo circuit. She started #codepurple, a social media based suicide prevention campaign, after losing a close friend to suicide, in order to connect peers going through difficult times with friends and loved ones.

Ronni Jourdain said Faith's message was that it's always best to reach out to someone when you need help instead of bottling

up your emotions.

Another highlight for several of the girls was a workshop by Cecilia Fire Thunder, the inspirational Oglala Lakota leader, who spoke on the topic of lateral violence.

Mia Sam attended a session by a lawyer who spoke about the importance of studying law. "It was really amazing hearing other people's stories and how they got to where they are now," said Mia. "It was inspiring."

Aubrey learned a lot from a workshop on gender bias in the workplace, and Alexis attended a session on running for office.

When they weren't busy learning, they were able to have fun at the pool or socializing with new and old friends.

Monday ended with a social gathering that included karaoke, which was one of the highlights for Alexis.

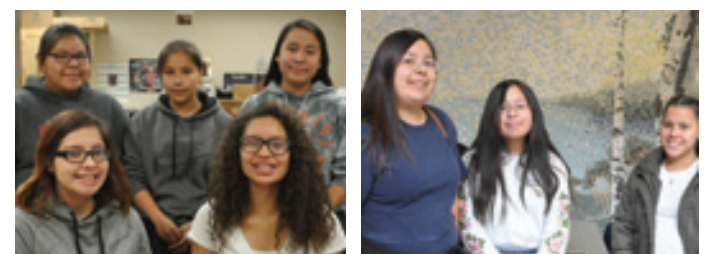
Tuesday night was a healing circle with Marlene Whiteabbit Helgemo, which Aubrey found inspiring.

The girls were also able to explore the Albuquerque region. Some visited a nearby college, while others spent time at the mall, ate at the KISS restaurant, visited a ghost town, and even held a snake. Tierra enjoyed a tram ride into the mountains with her cousin, Roxanne.

Since their return, the girls have been meeting with Melanie at the Cedarwood in Onamia for breakfast on Fridays. The group is planning a youth conference on drug prevention.

Amanda summed up the impact the experience had on her and her friends: "I want to help the community through education."

Stay tuned for more news about these young leaders as the conference takes shape!



Band Members Rally to “Un-Cuff Our Cops”

With a backdrop of tribal police cars, more than 100 Mille Lacs Band members and friends gathered on the steps of the state capitol building in St. Paul November 20 to rally for a solution to the law enforcement dispute on the Mille Lacs Reservation.

The rally started with sage and asemaa, an invocation in Ojibwe by Bradley Harrington, and a hand drum song by Algin Goodsky, followed by a march up the stairs to the capitol rotunda, where a drum song filled the capitol dome and leaders from across Indian Country gave their support to the Band in its fight for a new law enforcement agreement — an absolutely critical step to restoring public safety in District I.

Mille Lacs County’s June 2016 decision to rescind its agreement with the Band has “handcuffed” tribal officers, Bradley said in his introduction, leading to rampant criminal activity fueling an epidemic of opioid overdoses.

Bradley introduced a series of leaders beginning with Drumkeeper Bob Eagle, who said “Miigwech” to everyone who came to show their support.

State Rep. Susan Allen, a Lakota/Ojibwe lawmaker from Minneapolis, said the state capitol is “your house,” and described a growing movement of women and people of color who support Native rights and are aware of tribal issues.

Scott Vele, Executive Director of the Midwest Alliance of Sov-

ereign Tribes, spoke next saying, “Your lives, your law enforcement, is our law enforcement... Over 200,000 Native Americans in the Midwest stand with you today and every day.”

Robert Larsen, President of the Lower Sioux Indian Community and Chairman of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, spoke on behalf of the state’s 11 sovereign Indian nations. “We all want community policing,” Larsen said. “We all support our tribal police. Our concern is if Mille Lacs County can revoke their agreement, any county could revoke that agreement.”

Former FBI agent Walter Lamar from the Blackfeet Nation talked about how the Tribal Law and Order Act gave the Band an additional level of law enforcement on the reservation, stressing the importance of partnerships between local, state, and federal governments. Lamar served as Deputy Director to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Law Enforcement, and Senior Adviser to the Department of the Interior’s Office of Law Enforcement and Security. “I call on state and county officials to seize this opportunity to strengthen criminal justice on the Mille Lacs Reservation — all 61,000 acres of it,” Lamar said.

Ernie Stevens, the Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association and a member of the Oneida Nation, said, “On behalf of the 184 member tribes of the National Indian Gaming Association based in Washington D.C., we come here to stand in support of

the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, not just because it’s right, and not because it’s the law, but because the Mille Lacs Band has been there for all tribes in this country time and time again.”

Rep. Peggy Flanagan, a White Earth Band member who represents the western Minneapolis suburbs in the Minnesota House of Representatives, said changes are needed to the law, which currently gives county sheriffs, attorneys, and boards the ability to sideline or “handcuff” tribal police. “I’m here to ask folks to come back to the table to ensure that our lives, all lives, are protected,” she said, “and I will do whatever I can in my power in this House to ensure that happens.”

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin concluded the event by introducing Tania Aubid, who has been on the front lines of the Standing Rock and Line 3 pipeline battles. She thanked all those who preceded her and spoke about the importance of ensuring that the Band’s sovereignty is protected.

Since the county rescinded the law enforcement agreement, Melanie said, criminals have come to see the reservation as a police-free zone. “We have young girls being violated, and each one of us has a responsibility to stop it,” Melanie said. “We will do everything we need to do to make sure we are protected — our elders, our children, and our guests.”

For photos of the rally, see page 16.

Blandin Provides Lessons in Leadership and Community

Li Boyd Guest Writer

In mid-October, as the first of this winter’s snow started to accumulate, fourteen Mille Lacs community members made their way to Sugar Lake Lodge just south of Grand Rapids to participate in the Blandin Reservation Community Leadership Program (BRCLP). Most participants arrived on Sunday night to settle into the comfortable townhomes the resort offers and complete their first assignment for the training, which they found waiting for them upon check in. Before any training sessions began, each person was asked to take a 144-question test and evaluate themselves based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator system. It set some people up for surprise when they found that they tested quite differently from the way they saw themselves. This opened the door to the theme of discovery throughout the training process.

Mille Lacs Band and community members Craig Beaulieu, Li Boyd, Govinda Budrow, Gilda Burr, Colin Cash, Maria Costello, Shelly Diaz, Jeremiah Houser, Shena Matrious, Amy Opager, Dean Reynolds, Arlyn Sam, Kaitlin Thompson, and Virgil Wind represented this year’s cohort, which also included participants from Lower Sioux, Upper Sioux, Shakopee Mdewakanton, and Prairie Island Indian communities. Together this group of twenty-six community members became the most recent of over 600 reservation community leaders that the Blandin Foundation has provided training to since 2001. Distinguished graduates include our own Melanie Benjamin and many other tribal officials from all eleven Minnesota reservation communities.

Even with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) booklets in hand, many participants weren’t sure what to expect the first morning of training. They were quickly introduced to one of the program’s fine trainers, Roxanne DeLille, whose boundless energy and charisma kept the cohort going all week long, despite the intense and sometimes draining nature of the discussion. Roxanne started by asking the group a deceptively simple question: What is your vision for a healthy community?

What makes the BRCLP unique is that it’s tailored to discussing the leadership needs of reservation communities and the challenges they face due to historical trauma, ongoing systematic oppression, and the things that make Indigenous people culturally different from both each other as individuals and mainstream culture in the United States. Students were shown very quickly that there is a fundamental difference between the way Indigenous people view, prioritize, and take action in the world when compared to the dominant non-Native paradigm. Where western culture is focused

on financial capital and individual wealth, Indigenous cultures concern themselves with personal and community wellness, which encompasses both physical and spiritual well being.

“We’re not asking you to become something else,” Roxanne said early on.

So there were no rote exercises about how work flows in a hierarchy or what one might expect from a typical leadership or management training. Instead, there was exploration of the gifts each person is granted by the creator and ways to incorporate skills that have been acquired along the way. It was important to the trainers to help participants understand that communities have power together, so all must learn to work together to be effective within the community.

“My way or the highway does not work in community leadership!” Roxanne recited many times.

This means listening to one another, building networks of social capital, and also learning to look at the positive things that are available in our communities. Recognizing one another may have been the most important facet of all three of these things. Whether it had to do with just listening to each other’s backgrounds and stories or learning about the projects people are most passionate about, creating connections is what the training all boiled down to.

According to Dean Reynolds, “The bond and trust we made with each other was the real lesson for us to learn. If we could do that with everyone in the community it would greatly strengthen our rez.”

During the quick ten-minute breaks between sessions, many members of the group even went sledding down a hill outside the conference center, encouraging each other to have some fun and offering a hand whenever anyone fell down. It all circled back to one of the initial messages that Roxanne DeLille told the group in the beginning: You’re not alone.

Gilda Burr said, “Blandin Leadership has offered me a discovery of my own self-worth. It has empowered me to find a connection with others by understanding how I can play a part in resolving social issues that I deem important within my own community.” Planning for potential community projects has already begun now that everyone has settled in back at home with their new networks of support, friendship, and

common goals.

All of the participants expressed gratitude to the program facilitators and especially the trainers. This includes Vic Klimoski, who can be considered Roxanne DeLille’s somewhat more dry-humored counterpart. The training was also facilitated by Rick Smith, Director of the American Indian Learning Resource Center at the University of Minnesota Duluth, and Bill Blackwell Jr., Executive Director of the American Indian Resource Center at Bemidji State University. Participants are also grateful to the staff of Sugar Lake Lodge who kept things comfortable, tasty, and working during their stay.

The BRCLP doesn’t end at Sugar Lake Lodge. A segment of ongoing training will occur in February in St. Cloud along with a commencement ceremony for the program graduates. The Blandin Foundation provides all these trainings free of charge to the participants, through grants and the endowment created by Charles K. Blandin when he first decided he wanted to leave a legacy for Minnesota’s rural communities in 1941. His efforts are well appreciated.

Jeremiah Houser, a long-time employee of the Mille Lacs Band DNR, a family man, a teacher of medicines, a provider of ceremonial materials, and an advocate for sustainable and self-sufficient living, said, “I came to Blandin because someone believed in me and told me to apply. I think the real goal and message from Blandin was us. It was a spiritual teaching to us to see our value within ourselves and to not hide it. I think that the real meaning behind the Blandin program is a message of healing, hope, and confidence to all that are privileged to attend.”



Back: Li Boyd, Govinda Budrow, Jeremiah Houser, Dean Reynolds, Craig Beaulieu, Virgil Wind. Middle: Amy Opager, Kaitlin Thompson, Shelly Diaz, Maria Costello, Shena Matrious. Front: Arlyn Sam

State and Local News Briefs

Dennis Banks, Anishinaabe Activist, Walks On:

Nowa Cumig, Dennis Banks, went to the spirit world on Sunday, October 29. Banks, who was from the Leech Lake Reservation, was a founding member of the American Indian Movement and lifelong warrior for Native rights, helping bring clinics, housing, legal aid, and economic development to Indian communities. He led a takeover of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington in 1972 and participated in a standoff with federal agents at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of an 1890 massacre of Indians by federal troops. Banks was laid to rest in a buffalo robe on the Leech Lake Reservation. *Source: startribune.com.*

Motion to Censure White Earth Secretary-Treasurer Fails:

At a special meeting November 22, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe's Tribal Executive Committee (TEC) voted 3-1 not to censure Tara Mason, the Secretary-Treasurer of the White Earth Band, who was accused by White Earth Chairman Terry Tibbetts of violating the MCT Constitution and several other offenses. Six TEC members voted silent. Tibbetts cast the only vote in favor of censure. *Source: dl-online.com.*

Staples Named Athlete of the Year:

Michael Staples, a three-sport athlete from Cass Lake-Bena, was named Minnesota American Indian Athlete of the Year. Michael has played on the football, wrestling, and baseball teams. "My older brother, Daven, won it his senior year, too," Staples told the Bemidji Pioneer. "I remember back then, I just told myself if I work hard enough I can be in that spot, too. Being, I guess, the best athlete of my culture in the state, it's a blessing and an honor." *Source: bemidjipioneer.com.*

Messenger Sold to Twin Cities Chain:

Kevin Anderson, owner and publisher of the *Mille Lacs Messenger*, announced November 1 that he had sold *MessAge Media*, which includes the *Messenger* and the *Aitkin Independent Age*, to Adams Publishing Group. Anderson purchased the papers from his former boss, owner/publisher Dick Norlander, who purchased the business from Fred DeCoursey in 1975. Anderson had worked for the business since 1985. "It feels right to sell the newspapers to a newspaper company run by newspaper people," said Anderson. "The legacy of reporting the news in the Mille Lacs and Aitkin communities will continue." Adams Publishing Group is a family-owned company based in Minneapolis.

Deer Parasite Killing Minnesota Moose:

Scientists have finally isolated the cause of severe declines in Minnesota's moose population: a parasitic brainworm carried by deer. The number of moose is about half of what it was a decade ago. Whitetail deer, which are native to the southern part of the state, have expanded their range into northern Minnesota over the decades as forests have been cleared. *Source: startribune.com.*

County Sues Feds for FOIA Response:

Mille Lacs County filed a federal lawsuit on October 26 accusing the Department of Justice and Department of Interior of violating the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The county board hired attorney Randy Thompson to file the suit to pressure the federal agencies to release "all agreements, correspondence, notes, and other records related to the tribe's law enforcement powers." Thompson is a veteran of legal battles against the Mille Lacs Band. *Source: startribune.com*

Interested in submitting to the *Inaajimowin*?

Send your submissions and birthday announcements to Libby Weimer at libby.weimer@redcircleagency.com or call 612-465-8017.

The January issue deadline is December 15.

Band Files Lawsuit Against Mille Lacs County

On November 17, the Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin announced that the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLB) has filed a complaint in federal district court against Mille Lacs County, County Attorney Joseph Walsh, and County Sheriff Brent Lindgren. The complaint alleges that the County, Mr. Walsh and Sheriff Lindgren have prevented Band police officers from exercising police powers within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, violating federal law, and contributing to an epidemic of drug-related overdoses and deaths.

MLB Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin said, "We cannot wait another minute to address this emergency. Our people are dying, our community is in crisis, and our neighbors are at risk. Gangs and drug dealers think our reservation is a police-free zone. They're not just coming from the Twin Cities, but from other cities, states, and reservations. They're selling drugs right in front of our officers because they know they're unlikely to be arrested, let alone prosecuted."

Since July 2016, when Mille Lacs County revoked a Joint Powers Agreement under which Band police held authority to enforce state law on the Mille Lacs Reservation, County officials have threatened Band police with arrest if they attempt to carry out law enforcement duties outside of lands held in trust for the Band. The County has exacerbated the public safety void created by those threats by refusing to arrest certain offenders, or prosecute certain cases against those arrested, where Band officers were involved.

In 2015 and 2016, Mille Lacs County had the highest crime rate of all 87 counties in Minnesota, according to the Uniform Crime Report published by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

"We had 32 tribal police officers who knew our families and our culture. The County chose to replace them with 6 new deputies, who don't know our community," said Mille Lacs Band District I Representative Sandra Blake, whose legislative district includes the reservation in Mille Lacs County. "Our police have been handcuffed from doing their jobs, and we will not stand for this any longer," Blake said.

The situation has reached crisis proportions over the past year due to an explosion in drug-related crimes. Since the County revoked the law enforcement agreement, the Band has seen a dramatic increase in drug crimes, drug overdoses, and deaths due to overdose.

In 2015, there were 7 overdoses on the reservation. Since the County revoked the agreement in July, 2016, there have been 66 overdoses on the Mille Lacs Reservation, 13 of them fatal.

"This situation has been extremely frustrating for the people of the Band and the Tribal Police," MLB member and Chief of Police Sara Rice said. "Our Police Officers and I are licensed through the Minnesota P.O.S.T. Board and have to abide by the same standards as every police officer in Minnesota. We are highly trained officers with decades of combined experience. As a police officer who took an oath to serve and protect our community, it is unbearable to have our hands tied by the Mille Lacs County leadership."

Letter from Feds Affirms Boundaries

A November 8 letter from the U.S. Department of the Interior to Mille Lacs County Attorney Joe Walsh confirms that the 1855 Mille Lacs Reservation is still intact, and it says the County "has impeded law enforcement efforts by tribal police officers" by rescinding its law enforcement agreement with the Band.

The letter, which is signed by Harry Humbert, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services, says the "lack of certainty with regard to tribal law enforcement officers' authority on the Band's reservation has caused significant problems for the community residing on and around the reservation."

The letter continues with a clear reaffirmation that "the Band's reservation has not been diminished or disestablished by

Chief Executive Benjamin said the County's termination of the agreement was an irrational effort to force the Band to yield in a decades-old dispute about the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation's legal existence and boundaries. "County officials have been holding the safety of tribal members hostage for 16 months, continuing to make the absurd claim that our reservation does not legally exist."

The county's position "has no basis in law," according to the highest-ranking law enforcement officer in the U.S. Department of Interior. Harry Humbert, who serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services, wrote in a November 8 letter to Mille Lacs County Attorney Joe Walsh that "the County's assertion that the Band's reservation has been diminished or disestablished has no basis in law and conflicts with the federal government's longstanding position."

Humbert noted that tribal officers with a Special Law Enforcement Commission (SLEC) issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs are fully authorized under federal law to pursue and investigate crimes on the reservation, and advised Walsh, "Mille Lacs County law enforcement officers should under no circumstances impede SLECs from conducting investigations in accordance with their authority under the Band's inherent law enforcement authority or Federal law."

At the request of Governor Dayton, the Band plans to follow through with an attempt at mediation with Mille Lacs County, scheduled for November 27, 2017. Band Solicitor General Todd Matha hopes the lawsuit will get the underlying dispute about the reservation boundary off the negotiating table, "so that on November 27 the two parties can focus solely on law enforcement and the restoration of law and order on the reservation."

"We tried mediation with the County for several months in 2017, and after stalling they kept putting worse deals on the table. We are bringing action in court at this time because of the urgency of this problem," Benjamin said. "We are willing to try mediation to resolve it, but based on our past experiences, we have no guarantee the County will not cancel mediation or negotiate in bad faith. We cannot wait another minute to act. Every family has been impacted by this crisis."

In its complaint, the Band asks the court to declare that, as a matter of federal law, the Band has inherent sovereign authority to establish a police department and to authorize Band police officers to investigate violations of federal, state, and tribal law within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation as established under its 1855 Treaty.

The complaint also seeks a declaration that under the Deputation Agreement between the Band and the Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as the Special Law Enforcement Commissions, the Band police officers have federal authority to investigate violations of federal law within the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation and to arrest suspects for violations of federal law. The Band's complaint also requests that the Court stop the County from taking any actions that interfere with the authority of Band police officers.

Congress," referring to a November 2015 Solicitor's Opinion on the matter.

The County's continued assertion that the reservation has been diminished or disestablished, the letter states, "has no basis in law and conflicts with the federal government's longstanding position."

The remainder of the letter concerns tribal law enforcement jurisdiction on the Reservation, saying the Band has "inherent, sovereign authority to provide for the public safety and law enforcement with regard to its own members within its reservation."

For more on this story, including the letter from Humbert and the county's proposal with the county's additions highlighted, see millelacsband.com.

Secretary of Interior Visits Reservation to Discuss Law Enforcement

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke visited the Mille Lacs Reservation November 16–17 to meet with tribal leaders about law enforcement.

Zinke and members of his staff spoke with commissioners and elected officials, toured the reservation, and attended the Corporate Ventures Fall Feast at Grand Casino Mille Lacs.

Upon arrival just after 3 p.m., Zinke's delegation was greeted in the foyer of the government center by Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and District I Rep. Sandra Blake and welcomed by a drum group composed of Pete Gahbow, Percy Benjamin, Chris Gahbow, and Quintin Sam.

The Secretary took time to shake hands and introduce himself to many government employees before retreating to the media room for a closed-door session with elected officials, commissioners, and tribal police.

Chief Executive Benjamin said, "This visit comes on the heels of a recent letter sent last week from Interior to Mille Lacs County, informing the county that it is the position of the United States that our reservation remains intact and was never diminished, and that under no circumstances should Mille Lacs County law enforcement impede our federally deputized tribal police officers from carrying out their duties to investigate crimes under federal law and inherent Band authority.

"Secretary Zinke wanted to hear from us about this issue and listened intently, and promised to do what he can to help. Miigwech to Secretary Zinke and his team for deciding to travel to Minnesota to see for themselves what is happening in our community."

(For more on the letter from the Department of Interior to County Attorney Joe Walsh, see millelacsband.com.)

The Chief Executive introduced Zinke to the community at the Fall Feast Thursday evening, where he was presented with a Mille Lacs Band Pendleton blanket and flag. Zinke is the high-



est-ranking official ever to visit the Mille Lacs Reservation.

Following an overnight stay at Eddy's Resort and a Friday morning tour of the reservation with Interim Police Chief Sara Rice, Zinke met with Mille Lacs County officials at the courthouse in Milaca.

He was accompanied on his trip from Milaca to the airport by County Sheriff Brent Lindgren.

Zinke thanked Chief Executive Benjamin and other leaders for engaging in government-to-government dialogue. On Twitter, he said, "Great to be w/ @millelacsband Tribal law enforcement & hear about challenges. We stand together to fight the #opioidcrisis & are committed to upholding our treaty obligations for public safety both on and off the reservation."

He said he was looking forward to bringing the Mille Lacs Band flag to the hall of tribal flags at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.



Mediation Stalls; County Hires Attorney

A one-day mediation session November 27 between Mille Lacs Band and Mille Lacs County negotiators ended without a new law enforcement agreement. The old agreement was rescinded by Mille Lacs County in June of 2016, and previous negotiation efforts were unsuccessful.

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin announced that the mediation effort had been unsuccessful. "For the time being, unfortunately, nothing has changed," she said. "Our lawsuit against the County will continue to move forward, and Band elected officials will meet this week with our attorneys to discuss next steps."

The mediation came after Governor Mark Dayton asked the parties to return to the table, and the Band immediately accepted the offer. The County Board voted to table the request on November 7.

On November 20, a contingent of Band members traveled to the county courthouse in Milaca to learn if the Mille Lacs County Board would vote to re-engage in mediation over the law enforcement agreement it revoked with the Band.

Before discussing mediation, however, the Board closed the meeting to the public to discuss the federal lawsuit filed by the Band against the County, County Attorney Joe Walsh, and County Sheriff Brent Lindgren related to their mishandling of the situation, which has prevented tribal officers from doing their job to protect Band members in District I.

After re-opening the board room doors, the five-member Board voted unanimously to hire Randy Thompson to represent the County in the lawsuit and to hire outside counsel to represent Walsh and Lindgren.



Without further discussion, Commissioner Dave Oslin moved to accept the offer of mediation, and the motion carried unanimously.

After the Board voted to adjourn, Band member Bob Eagle thanked the Board for voting to revive mediation efforts with the Band.

National News Briefs

Deputy Shoots and Kills 14-year Old at Bad River

Fourteen-year-old Jason Pero was shot and killed by a sheriff's deputy November 8 on the Bad River Reservation in northern Wisconsin. Dispatchers received a report of a male subject walking down the street with a knife. A deputy responded and shot the boy. Bad River Band Chairman Robert Blanchard said he has not heard directly from sheriff's officials about why Pero was shot, and he questioned why the deputy had to take the teen's life. The boy's mother, Holly Gauthier, told Duluth station WDIO-TV she believes her son was murdered. "(There is) no reason you can justify shooting a 14-year-old boy," Gauthier said. Bad River Chairman Robert Blanchard said, "This is a tragedy that should not have happened. There's other ways to do things than to pull out a gun and shoot him." *Source: usnews.com.*

President Trump Kicks Off Native American Month by Reviving 'Pocahontas' Slur

On November 1, President Donald Trump declared November as Native American Heritage Month. In his proclamation, Trump said the month was a time to "honor and celebrate the first Americans and recognize their contributions and sacrifices." "Native Americans are a testament to the deep importance of culture and vibrancy of traditions, passed down throughout generations," he said. "This month, I encourage all of our citizens to learn about the rich history and culture of the Native American people." Two days later, on November 3, Trump tweeted about Sen. Elizabeth Warren, whose claims of Native heritage have been disputed: "Pocahontas just stated that the Democrats, lead by the legendary Crooked Hillary Clinton, rigged the Primaries! Lets go FBI & Justice Dept." *Source: huffpost.com.*

Opioid Epidemic Devastating Native Communities

Although rural whites suffering opioid addiction have received the most attention, a recent report by the *Washington Post* shows that Native Americans have been hardest hit by the opioid epidemic. Although more Whites than Natives suffered overdose deaths from heroin in 2014, Natives were more likely to die of an opioid overdose, with a rate of 8.4 deaths per 100,000 people compared to 7.9 for whites. Blacks were a distant third at 3.3, followed by Latinos at 2.2 and Asians at 0.7. *Source: theweek.com.*

Enbridge Knew About Pipeline Damage:

Enbridge Energy, the Canadian company seeking to build a tar sands oil pipeline through Minnesota, revealed last month that it knew about damage to its Line 5 pipeline three years ago but didn't inform regulatory agencies. The damage to enamel coatings was repaired and did not pose a threat. Valerie Brader, director of the Michigan Agency for Energy, said her trust in Enbridge "has been seriously eroded." *Source: theglobeandmail.com.*

Senators Introduce Bills in Wake of LaFontaine-Greywind Killing

The U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held hearings October 25 on bills introduced by North Dakota Senators Heidi Heitkamp and John Hoeven after the August killing of 22-year-old Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind and abduction of her newborn child. Heitkamp said her bill, called "Savanna's Act," comes in response to an epidemic of missing and murdered Native women. The bill would create protocols for responding to cases of missing and murdered American Indians, improve data collection and dissemination, and enhance tribal access to federal crime databases. Hoeven's bill would require 5 percent of a federal victim's fund be allocated to tribes. *Source: bemidjipioneer.com.*



MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

Quilting

By: Beatrice Taylor

This column by the late Beatrice Taylor was originally published in the Moccasin Telegraph series in the Mille Lacs Messenger.

I love to quilt. I feel cheerful when I'm making quilts. I can sit there day after day after day. It's a way to pass the time away. It keeps you busy so you're not at loose ends. And you make something that you will use in the future.

Quilts are used in our Ojibwe drum ceremonies. When you go to a drum ceremony and you put in your offering, usually it's a quilt or quilts. This is a way of asking for a good life for yourself and your family, and thanking the Great Spirit for what he has given you. It's a good tradition. I always make a couple quilts to put in.

And I use quilts a lot for gifts, too. I say that's the best gift I can give you because there's love in every stitch.

Some people have heard of star quilts. That is a pattern that is popular with many Native American people, from the southwest up to Canada. But Indian people don't just make star quilts. There are so many patterns you can make with different arrangements of blocks, stars, and triangles. Star quilts are harder than some other patterns because there is more sewing involved in them.

But I think your blanket has more to do with the colors you choose than the pattern. If you want a spring blanket, then you use spring colors. In the winter, I use white for some of the blocks, but then I put in the brighter colors. I like bright colors — they're more cheerful.

I sew my quilts by hand. I know how to use a sewing machine, but I think with hand sewing, the pieces come out more even. With a machine, sometimes my seams want to crawl under, and then I have to take the whole thing out!

First I cut all my pieces out, then I stitch the blocks together, and then I applique the blocks onto a piece of material. After that, I put the runners around the edge.

Once I've got the top all done, then I put bought blankets in between the top and bottom. I don't like quilt batting — the stuffing that you can buy to go inside the quilt's top and bottom — because it comes apart in the wash.

It's not easy to make a quilt. People think, oh, that must be easy, but you try it once! It's hard on the eyes, the fingers, the upper back, and the neck.

But I love to do it. It's a good pastime. You can make a different design when you think of it, and put different colors together. And when you're done, you have something you can give to someone else. The world is for giving. I like to give, I like to share. I would rather give than receive. It's such a good feeling.

Do you know an Elder who has a story to tell or history to share?

Call Brett Larson at 320-237-6851 or email brett.larson@millelacsband.com.

Band Receives Grant to Address Opioid Crisis

Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith and Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Emily Piper visited Wayside Recovery Center in St. Louis Park November 7 to announce \$16.6 million in grants to combat the state's opioid crisis.

They announced that the Mille Lacs Band would receive over \$300,000 to support a number of initiatives, including planning, system development, and integration of medical, chemical dependency, public health, social services, and child welfare. Additional funds have been added to support the training and hiring of paraprofessionals to the care team.

The Band's Nenda-Noojimidig ("Those ones who seek healing") Mino Gigizheb ("It is a good morning") will integrate a coordinated plan of care for Native American community members, aged 18 or older, who self-identify as experiencing opioid use disorder (OUD). The program will:

- Provide long-term coordinated care through improving access to culturally specific opioid disorder treatment, decreasing the current gaps in unmet treatment needs, and reducing opioid related deaths through increased prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts related to OUD.
- Integrate a coordinated plan of care for Native American Indian community members, aged 18 or older, who self-identify as experiencing opioid use disorder (OUD).
- Undertake an assessment to develop a blueprint for opioid community response that will create an action plan on how to implement strategies to decrease the burden of opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose in the MLBO community, address public awareness, provider education, and access to treatment.

At Wayside Recovery Center, Lt. Governor Smith and Commissioner Piper learned firsthand from providers and patients alike about the runaway epidemic that is opioid misuse. The grants will be awarded over the next three years to more than

30 agencies across the state including tribal governments, counties, and community organizations.

"Opioid overdose deaths have increased in Minnesota by 430% since 2000. These Minnesotans were our friends, neighbors, and family members," said Lt. Governor Tina Smith. "These new grants will help more Minnesotans all across the state get the assistance they need before it's too late. In the 2018 Legislative Session, our Administration will continue to urge the Legislature to make additional resources available for Minnesotans in need."

The grants aim to address the opioid crisis through prevention, treatment, and recovery programs for substance use disorder, including addiction to prescription opioids and illicit drugs such as heroin. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, in 2008, fewer than ten Minnesotans died from heroin overdose. In 2015, that number had grown to 115, and in 2016, 142. In 2016, 2,450 total opioid overdoses were reported, including 376 deaths.

These opioid grants are the result of two grants to DHS from the federal government, secured by Minnesota's congressional delegation, led by Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Al Franken. These funds will be supplemented by other state and federal dollars. This summer, a two-year, \$10.6 million "State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis" grant was awarded to the state to increase access to treatment, reduce unmet treatment need, and reduce opioid overdose-related deaths.

In September, a \$2 million per year, three-year grant was awarded to Minnesota to expand Medication-Assisted Therapy through the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). Signed into law in July 2016, CARA expands prevention and education efforts while also promoting treatment and recovery.

Elder Refreshes Nursing Skills

Linda Quaderer, Mille Lacs Band Elder, has been working to complete her Licensed Practical Nurse refresher course by job shadowing Jackie Jensen.

The experience, which involves 112 hours of observing and assisting Jensen, is part of the clinical requirement of the online nursing program at South Dakota State University.

Linda said, "It was helpful to find that I got lots of mentorship, lots of guidance, and I was encouraged to ask questions." She likes the opportunity to get to know people and spend time with them. "It was a nice surprise that I didn't have to rush."

Jensen thinks that job shadowing is "a great way for people to get a taste of what's out there." She added, "There's a whole world of opportunity in nursing and health careers."

A resident of East Lake (District II) for the past three years, Linda is keeping her future plans open. When asked what advice she'd have for someone considering a nursing refresher course,



A smiling Linda Quaderer talks about her job shadowing experience at the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Public Health Department.

Linda was definite: "I'd tell them to apply at the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe."



Trick or Treat!

Wewinabi Early Ed students had their annual Halloween Parade on October 31. They marched to the District I Community Center where government employees passed out candy.

Former Inmate Gives Back to Correctional Facility



A donation from the Mille Lacs Band Department of Natural Resources to the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Faribault had special significance for Band member Cortney Nadeau.

Cortney spent four years at the prison beginning when he was 17 years old. On November 1, Cortney and Wildland Director Dean Staples brought 35 ironwood poles, 150 precut nylon ties, and colored cloths for flags to Faribault so the facility could rebuild its sweat lodge.

"It makes me feel good to be on the other side of the fence and helping them out," said Cortney.

Cortney and Dean stayed overnight in a Faribault hotel so they could deliver the items to the facility the following morning.

Chaplain Tony Mustazza said, "In my 25 years here, I have never had anyone stay overnight in a hotel to make a donation. I am extremely impressed with the generosity and diligent effort of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe." Ten American Indian offenders rebuilt the sweat lodge on Friday, November 3.

When Cortney was incarcerated at Faribault, he took part in sweat lodge ceremonies, and he says it helped him grow up and learn about himself.

"When I was younger, I went to ceremonies because I thought I was obligated as an Ojibwe," he said. "As I got older, I was around

people who were doing life, and they didn't like to see us young guys going in and out. That really helped me inside. They put it to me straight. I knew if I had a chance, I wouldn't mess it up. I took that to heart and then started taking those ceremonies seriously."

During a second prison term at Stillwater, Cortney experienced a kind of revelation. "When I was growing up, I was taught that I wasn't in control, that everyone else was to blame for my actions," he said. "Being in ceremonies helped me learn that I was in control of my thoughts and feelings and actions. That was a breakthrough. It was a moment I remember. I was 26. That was when I realized I was in control of myself."

When he left prison, he went to work with the Department of Labor until his friend Bradley Harrington recommended him for a job with the DNR. The two have maintained a close bond. "Brad is not only my brother, but also my mentor," said Cortney. "We talk every day. He helps me, and he's told me in the past that I helped him."

Cortney does not regret the time he spent locked up. "I wouldn't change anything because it made me who I am today," he said. "I can definitely say I'm proud of myself. I have a good support system. That is what a lot of people don't have coming out of DOC."

Cortney and Brad are talking about putting together a support group for those returning to the community from prison.

Bradley also encouraged Cortney to pursue firefighter training,

a decision he's happy he made. "Once I discovered the fire program, that was it," he said. "Everything about it I enjoy. Getting a job helped me — to wake up in the morning and have something to do that's productive. My boss, Dean Staples, I respect him, so I look forward to coming to work."



Cortney has fought wildfires in the western U.S., and he's willing to go back — even after an accident with a hose shattered his cheek and gave him a serious head injury. "It was important to me to do my physical therapy and come back to work, not only for myself but for my sons," he said. "I want to be someone they can look up to."

He credits his kids with keeping him focused. "I tell them all the time, 'You'll never know how much you helped me.' That's why I do what I do. I want my kids to look up to someone. It brings me joy, to see them every day. I always want to keep them smiling."

Band Members Share Stories at Tribal Opioid Summit

All of Minnesota's sovereign Native nations — seven Ojibwe and four Dakota — came together to share ideas on combating the opioid crisis that is having a disproportionate impact on



Colin Cash took a selfie with James Cross after the two received a standing ovation for their presentation.

Native communities.

The Tribal Nations Opioid Summit was held November 13–14 at Shooting Star Resort and Casino on the White Earth Reservation.

Mille Lacs Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington was one of the masters of ceremonies, and Band member Colin Cash spoke on the first day of the summit about his work with the Sober Squad, a grassroots group of Mille Lacs Band members helping others in recovery.

The Sober Squad also teamed up with members of Natives Against Heroin to share a healing song.

The summit kicked off on each day with smudging, a pipe ceremony, and prayers in Ojibwe and Dakota.

The first day was a general session that included a welcome from White Earth Nation Chairman Terry Tibbetts and introductions of Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) President Kevin Dupuis, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) Chairman Robert Larsen of the Lower Sioux Community, and Lieutenant Gov. Tina Smith.

Speakers presented on a variety of topics throughout the day:

- Curtis Jackson and Delainey Hardy, Leech Lake Ojibwe
- Colin Cash, Mille Lacs Band
- Douglas Harrington, M.D. on opiate/drug use and heart disease
- Rick Moldenhauer of the Minnesota Department of Human Services on opioid data
- Dennis Olson on the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council on the Governor's Opioid Summit
- Gloria Cobb, Secretary/Treasurer, Lac Du Flambeau
- Randy Samuelson, Director of Peter Christianson Health Center at Lac Du Flambeau
- Commander Kailee Fretland, Clinical Pharmacist/Residency Director, Red Lake Indian Health Service

The second day focused on law enforcement, child welfare, substance abuse, community outreach, and traditional healing. Participants were invited to share their stories and ideas at an open mike.

Psychologist Speaks on Race Relations, Economic Disparities



In recognition of Native American Heritage Month, the Department of Natural Resources sponsored visits by two American Indian professors in November.

On November 15, Dr. John Gonzalez, a professor of psychology at Bemidji State University, gave a presentation at Eddy's Resort titled "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Race Relations and Economic Disparities."

On November 29, after this issue of *Ojibwe Inaajimowin* went to press, Dr. Anton Treuer spoke on "The Real Story of Thanksgiving: An Honest History." (For more on that presentation, see millelacsband.com.)

Gonzalez summarized his presentation as follows: "Despite the modest gains from Indian gaming, American Indians continue to be plagued by poverty and high rates of unemployment. This is not simply the result of meritocracy (those who work hard can succeed and those who don't work hard won't succeed). Instead, the economic inequality is the result of historical policies and practices against Native people, and current perceptions around race relations in our communities. This presentation will look at

local, regional, and state economic data and a recent study that looked at race relations between American Indians and Whites. Embedded in the data are many stories. Finally, some suggestions and ideas will be offered on how to make local businesses and employment opportunities more open and welcoming to Native people that will be a win-win result for everyone."

Dr. Gonzalez presented graphs illustrating lower rates of educational achievement and home ownership and higher poverty rates due to discrimination and a clash between competitive non-Indian culture and cooperative Indian cultures.

He shared data showing the clear differences in perceptions about race between Whites and Native Americans. For example, Whites are far more likely than Indians to believe that racial discrimination is a thing of the past, and all racial groups have equal opportunity.

He also explained how "confirmation bias" leads to discrimination. People look for evidence to confirm their assumptions, which helps to explain why Native Americans are targeted while shopping, even though most shoplifters are white.

He also shared stories about growing up on the White Earth Reservation, being kicked out of Waubun High School in ninth grade, being profiled for his long hair, and eventually becoming a

professor and a Bemidji School Board member.

He said he ran for school board in part because in 2014 his son was taught about "hostile" Indians and made to draw pictures of Christopher Columbus in social studies class.

Dr. Gonzalez is Ojibwe/Anishinaabe from White Earth and a Professor of Psychology at Bemidji State University, where he also received his undergraduate degree in psychology. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of North Dakota.

Dr. Gonzalez's professional interests are in cultural psychology, which attempts to understand people as cultural beings through their own Indigenous psychological perspectives; multicultural psychology, which takes into account the people's cultural, historical, and sociopolitical contexts; and community psychology, which actively works to enhance the strengths and quality of life in communities.

Dr. Gonzalez's research interests are in the areas of mental/behavioral health disparities for Indigenous people and ethnic/racial minorities. He has worked with Indigenous communities utilizing local cultural knowledge and values in developing suicide and substance abuse prevention programs. Dr. Gonzalez has also investigated the racial experiences of American Indian students and Native people's racial experiences accessing healthcare.

Ge-Niigaanizijig Storytelling Camp

Amikogaabawiiqwe Adrienne Benjamin Guest Writer & Photographer

During the weekend of November 3–5, seven youth from various districts — Deilyah Dexter, David Benjamin, Jenai Beaulieu, Deangelo Sam, Jazmyne Skinaway, Sophia Mushkoub, and Seth Benjamin — gathered at the Anishinaabe Izhitwaawin for an Ojibwemowin-focused camp on storytelling. The overall goal of the camp was for youth to have the opportunity to tell their own stories through various methods of their own choosing (acting, legos, pictures, etc). They then worked with the Ge-niigaanizijig language instructors to translate that story into Ojibwemowin and create a short video and/or small book together from the project.

Upon arrival, kids got settled into their bunks for the weekend and started out by playing some ice breaker games. Guesstures (an acting game) was played with Ojibwe Language Instructors Waabishkigaabaw (John P. Benjamin) and Bagwajinini (Alex Kmett) explaining the Ojibwe words for each action that was being acted out. It was a great opening night for the youth and a great way to infuse language into a fun setting.

Bright and early the next morning, the youth were broken up into two groups and paired with either Waabishkigaabaw or Bagwajinini. They were given a set of Creativity Storytelling dice, and away they went on their own storytelling and creative journeys together. (Storytelling dice have pictures of actions, things, and places that spur creativity around a table by having to incorporate whatever item shows up on the dice into the story that the group is taking turns telling together.) There were many vibrant stories coming out of this process. There was a boy who worked so hard on sewing a blanket for a ceremonial dance that he fell asleep the night of the dance and never got to give it to the apple of his eye; to a deep story about bullying that involved the bully having to experience the pain that he caused others. In the end, two completely different stories were chosen as the stories that the two groups would work on for the rest of the camp.

After the dice game, the youth were treated to a guest appearance by District II Representative, and talented theatrical mastermind, David “Niib” Aubid. Niib came and told the youth numerous stories. One in particular was about a pack of wolves

that encountered someone who admired them and wanted to have all of their amazing traits. Niib had the youth wearing wolf masks and up howling along with him; he also took them on a wolf pack journey around the building in search of a nice place to take a rest. He then switched gears to a story about butterflies and helped the kids each create their own finger puppet, which he then told them he would use in his future storytelling endeavors. The youth were grateful and excited about Niib’s performance, and they couldn’t wait to share their story ideas with him as well. Niib stayed and mentored the youth on their forming stories and helped the language instructors finesse any language that he thought needed tweaking. Waabishkigaabaw and Bagwajinini took full advantage of their time with a master speaker and had plenty of sidebar conversations with him about language usage and grammar.

After dinner, the youth were treated for all of their work and were taken to the Grand Hinckley Cinema to see “Thor: Ragnarok.” After a long day of storyboard work and listening to stories, they retreated to bed.

On Sunday, scriptwriting began bright and early for the two groups. Each language instructor worked out a script with the youth and designated lines for each youth and staff to learn for the project. The kids spent the rest of the morning practicing their lines with each other and designing the sets for their stories. After a few hours, everything was ready to photograph, and the youth were confident enough to be recorded.

Waabishkigaabaw’s group came up with a story called “Booch da-bizindaman” (You Should Listen), and Bagwajinini’s group



came up with a story called “Aw jejiibzhikii ge mino-mashkiki” (Healing the Ill-ephant (Elephant)). All of the lines in the stories were recorded and created by the seven youth and staff in attendance. The stories are in the process of being edited currently by Ge-niigaanizijig staff and will be featured at public events in the communities in the near future. They are truly powerful stories that show the way that our community youth are viewing the issues that we all are facing, and the Ge-niigaanizijig staff is thrilled to have been a part of this inspiring process.

Another youth camp is scheduled for January 5–7, 2018 at the Anishinaabe Izhitwaawin. Please stay tuned to the *Inaajimowin* and the Mille Lacs Band Facebook page for more information as it becomes available.

Community Center is the Place to be for District I Teens

Mikayla Schaaf Guest Writer & Photographer

In August 2015, the doors opened in the evenings at the Mille Lacs Band District 1 Community Center to participants who are interested in playing basketball. District 1 Representative Sandi Blake wanted a safe place for youth to come after school, so she used her Legislative Branch authority to create the evening basketball program. At first, only find a handful of players attended, but over the years it has grown into the hub of the community for teenage youth as well as adults.

Representative Blake hired evening staff to mentor youth through basketball. Quintin Sam, Joe Charette, and Mikayla Schaaf, who are all avid basketball players, facilitate open gym every evening from 5 to 9 p.m. On Thursdays, Mikayla cooks a hearty meal while the youth are playing basketball. Some nights the activities and food draw 25-plus teens to the drug- and alcohol-free environment of the community center.

The positive impact that this program is having within the community is immense. It is comforting for youth to know that this facility is open in the evenings so they have a safe place to go while enjoying sports and good food.

The program has also been fortunate to attract mentors such as Mille Lacs Band member Robert Oswaldson, who not only brings a lot of humor and motivation to the court, but also has college-level experience in playing basketball. “Open gym helps youth by giving them somewhere to go to enjoy their time while doing something positive with a group of friends,” said Robert. “There are minimal things for groups of friends to do around here unless they have a car. Everyone who goes to open gym always gets welcomed and treated with respect from the group of

adults and youth who go to the gym.”

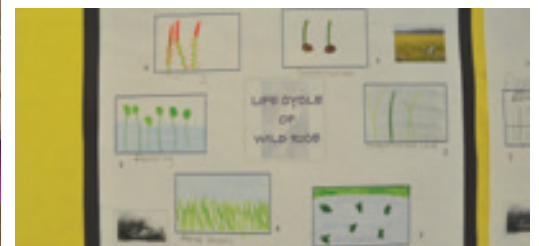
Through basketball, Robert has learned the fundamentals and values of life. It has taught him respect and humility. “I feel open gym helps kids build positive characteristics; most importantly, basketball is my reason to live, right behind my family,” Robert added. “There isn’t a day I do not do, watch, or listen to something basketball related.”

Mille Lacs Band member Joe Charette, who has been very active in mentoring youth at the community center, is dedicated to improving the skills of the players on the court. “It feels great to think I’m a good influence and somebody they can look up to,” said Joe. “I learned that all it takes is one good person to change a youth’s life. As long as they know they can come to gym and that I’ll be there to play ball, I’m proud to say I can do that. I always tease and give the kids a hard time, but that’s how I was raised in my family. I remember I used to like being cracked on by the older guys, so that’s what I do. I also like our trio of workers we got here. Whenever one of us isn’t here, the kids always wonder where we are, and I think it is good to show them how to have healthy friendships as adults.”

Mille Lacs Band member Semira Kimpson, who has shown dedication to Mille Lacs Band youth as District I program coordinator, is very supportive in keeping consistency and stability to make sure the show goes on. “I think it’s a great idea,” Semira said. “I like that kids can come to a place where they like to hang out and that is safe for them.”



NAY AH SHING MANOOMINIKE DAGWAAGIN 2017



Ricing School — Learning, Fun Combine at Manoomin Harvest

For two weeks this fall, Nay Ah Shing Upper School students experienced hands-on learning about manoominike — harvesting and processing wild rice. Teachers created curriculum around rice and ricing, volunteers lent a hand, and students learned science, literature, art, and even cooking through the lens of manoomin — the good berry.

Prior to the actual rice harvest, students made their own knockers with science teacher Larry Hansen. Middle School teacher Bambi Brown taught her students about the life cycle of manoomin, as well as the legend of Wenaboozhoo bringing manoomin to the Anishinaabe. Students did art work on both topics, drawing pictures of rice at various stages and of Wenaboozhoo finding the sacred plant that grows on water.

"The life cycle of wild rice can be broken down into six stages," Bambi said. "1. Germination, 2. Submerged Leaf, 3. Floating Leaf, 4. Aerial Shoots, 5. Flowering, 6. Ripening. Over the course of a few days, 6th through 12th grade students filtered in and out of my class learning about these stages, drawing their own life cycle maps, creating wild rice poetry, and understanding and interpreting the legend of how the Ojibwe people were given the gift of wild rice."

Cheryl Houde's students spent several days researching the harvesting of wild rice, nutritional information, and fun facts about Minnesota's wonderful state grain.

Dominick Polito (Physical Education) and Blenda Hagberg (English) kept their students busy and motivated with a variety of rice activities. In addition to two days on the water, they helped students gather information on ricing and create Power Point presentations.

Their studies covered many aspects of wild rice: local history, harvesting and processing procedures, biology, water quality, uniqueness of Minnesota's crop, and traditions.

Dom's used his talents with Power Point on a visually compelling presentation and voyage of discovery when the students checked out single-grain artwork on-line. It is a marvel how

much artwork can fit on one grain of rice!

Outside of the adventures in the great outdoors, students had the most fun using food coloring to color white rice, then — once the rice dried — to create Dagwaagin or Ricing pictures, using the rice and glue, rather like creating mosaics. The creations were beautiful, including scenes on the water, close-ups of birch trees, and other natural perspectives.

Then came the real fun. Ten students went out at a time with four adults for six days straight — September 6–13. Fifty students and eight staff in all participated in the harvest on Onamia Lake and at Mallard Lake in Aitkin County.

"Blue skies and dry weather made this year's ricing so enjoyable," said Principal Noah Johnson. "One could say it was perfect ricing conditions."

Noah helped line up volunteers to haul three vehicles, a trailer, six canoes, and equipment — poles, knockers, life jackets, sunglasses, etc. Staff and students worked together to load and unload the trailer, haul canoes and equipment to and from the landings, and dump, separate, and bag their rice.

Bambi Brown said none of her 6th grade students had ever been in a canoe ricing before, so the nerves were at an all-time high. "Many were afraid of falling in or tipping the canoe," said Bambi. "Some were afraid to stand up and be the poler. I, for one, was not going to stand up with a student in the canoe, so I was the knocker. I soon became aware that I am more effective pulling rice with my left knocker and knocking with my right."

(Students also learned that capsizing in a canoe is not the end of the world, thanks to an unintentional demonstration by high school teachers Blenda Hagberg and Dom Polito.)

In all, students brought in over 250 pounds of rice — and it didn't come easy. According to Noah, bugs, worms, sweat, and wet clothes took their toll, but complaining was at a minimum, and smiles abounded.

Those rice worms came as a surprise to Bambi Brown. "Connor Boyd was my guide as he pushed me around Lake Onamia,"

she recalled. "The rice was so tall he could barely see above it. We could hear other voices but could not see anyone. It was amazingly peaceful. That was until I noticed the creepy-crawly friend of the rice stalk. As I knocked rice into the canoe, I also knocked this whitish yellow worm into the canoe and on me!"

Her reaction? "EEEEW! IIIIICK!"

The rice worm (which is the larval stage of the noctuid moth) was the only drawback of the rice harvest for Bambi. "Had I known ahead of time about this pesky larva, I might have taught students about their life cycle," she said.

The activities didn't end with the harvest. Students and staff brought the rice to the circle, where they spread it out on tarps to dry. They also set up a rice camp outside, where they could learn to parch, jig, and winnow the rice.

Teachers Cheryl Houde and Gary Nelson also took a group out ricing. "said Cheryl. "We then spent time in the kitchen trying out different recipes that included wild rice. Some of the recipes we tried were Cajun Wild Rice, Blueberry Wild Rice Muffins, Wild Rice Hot Dish, and Blueberry Wild Rice Pancakes, which were by far the favorite among the students." (You can find the recipe at thepioneerwoman.com.)

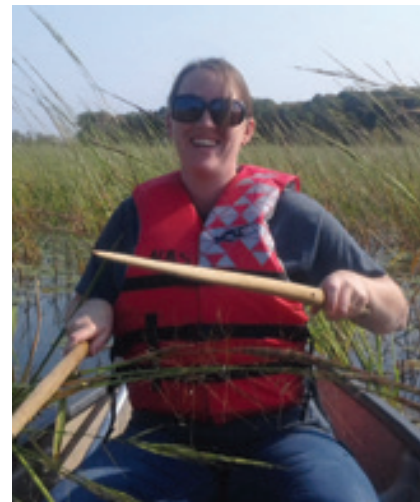
On Friday, September 15, the school celebrated the end of the manoominike season by hosting a Wild Rice Luncheon for parents and community members.

"Many thanks go out to staff, parents and volunteers who made this experience great," said Noah. "As a school administrator, I am proud to be able to take part in these cultural activities and have fun together. We look forward to sharing our rice harvest with families at parent teacher conferences (wild rice hot dish) as well as in our gift baskets to families. We are also privileged to be able to give away a brand new canoe to a Nay Ah Shing parent who came to Open House and turned in the winning raffle ticket."



Manoomin Facts

- Manoomin is not technically rice. It is the edible grain of a tall aquatic grass — as tall as 12 feet.
- Manoomin grows in shallow mud-bottomed lakes, ponds, and streams, primarily in the Great Lakes region of the U.S.
- The harvest process begins with tobacco being offered along with a prayer of thanksgiving.
- Manoomin has many names: blackbird oats, fool oats, Indian oats, Indian rice, wild oats, wild rice.
- Manoomin should be stored in a cool, dry place.
- You can freeze cooked manoomin.
- Lumberjacks used to eat manoomin for breakfast with honey and milk along with oatmeal.
- Manoomin can be combined with other types of rice.
- Manoomin is the official state grain of Minnesota.
- Most manoomin grains fall back in the water to become seed for future crops and food for wildlife.
- One pound of rice makes 20–25 servings.
- One cup raw rice equals 3–4 cups cooked rice.



Basic Cooking Method

Wash the rice thoroughly under cold water.

Add one cup of wild rice to 3 cups boiling water in a heavy saucepan or pot.

Reduce heat and simmer covered for 35–50 minutes or just until the kernels puff open.

Fluff with a fork and simmer 5 more minutes.

Drain any excess fluid.

For chewier rice, cook for a shorter time.

One cup makes 3–4 cups of cooked rice.



Manoomin Hot Dish

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cooked chicken, grouse, pheasant, or duck
- 4 cups of cooked wild rice
- 1 can cream of celery or cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can of chicken broth or water
- 1 small onion, chopped
- Salt, pepper, seasonings

Directions:

- Grease a baking dish.
- Mix all the ingredients and pour into the dish.
- Bake at 350° for one hour.



Benefits of Manoomin

- Maintains bone density
- Strengthens heart health
- Boosts immune system
- Reduces signs of aging
- Helps prevent diabetes and cancer





Acrostic Poetry
Delilah Mitchell 6th Grade

Wild ricing was fun
 It was my first time
 Loved being on the water, it was fun
 Doing the knocking made my arms tired

Ricing was very cool
 I was scared to fall in
 Cracking up with friends
 Every second I was there made me want to go again

Free Verse Poetry
Rae Ana Sam-Nickaboine 7th Grade

Wild rice – is as **WILD** as can be –
 And tasty as can be – **MMMM**
MMMM
MMMM!!

Birds, animals and more eat the wild rice
 The food that grows on water.
 Wild rice has been here for generations
 Let's keep the **Tradition.**



Making Culture “Cool” Again

Amikogaabawiiikwe Adrienne Benjamin Guest Writer Byron Ninham Photographer

“We want to revitalize tribal identity in youth while trying new approaches to provide educational and artistic opportunities.” said Byron Ninham, Interim Coordinator of the Mille Lacs Band’s 21st Century Community Learning Grant.

Byron and his team at Nay Ah Shing’s afterschool program are trying to do just that. Mille Lacs was recently re-awarded a Bureau of Indian Affairs 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant for 2017. Byron sees this latest venture as a renewal of many different ideas that have been executed through the grant over the past few years. Since the Band has been awarded this specific grant, it has always remained with a Native arts



Bottom: Patti Weirsgalla and Tony Buckanaga are 21st Century Community Learning Center instructors at Nay Ah Shing.

focus, ranging in disciplines from theater, to lacrosse, beadworking, and regalia making.

Byron said that their latest inspiration came during a Bureau of Indian Education grant training with “Creating Change.” It highlighted programs that are having meaningful impacts in tribal schools across the country and explored programmatic impact data reporting of such programs. He said that it also taught him to look toward the long term of success, toward the growth of impact over time. “21st Century’s goal is to not teach to the test — it’s to find innovative ways to better engage students in learning and to make learning more fun,” Byron said. “Kids attending pow wows or taking part in community events helps with social skills, it gives cultural pride, and it instills a sense of community into the youth. It makes kids believe in themselves in a big way.”

Another goal of the program is to recharge the idea of a functioning and traveling drum and dance troupe. The belief is that with well-made, artist-driven work, they can create regalia for every student who comes through their program doors. They want to create regalia that the kids can be proud to wear in the community or at a large national contest pow wow. 21st CCLC Learning Instructor Patti Wiersgalla said, “Everyone that wants to dance should be able to. We don’t want the lack of regalia to prevent a child from being a part of their culture and heritage.”

21st CCLC Learning Instructor Tony Buckanaga has found his own niche through his work in the regalia program. He has found himself learning right alongside the youth and experimenting with his own skills and capabilities in sewing, beadwork, and parfleche work. When asked about the program, he proudly said, “This isn’t work to me. It’s something that I think about every day. I want to inspire these young people to have the same care for the arts that



Left: Dante Benjamin, Cedric Bearheart, and Jason Wind participated in the 54th Annual Oneida Nation Contest Powwow.



Right: Jada Wind showed off new regalia made at Nay Ah Shing this fall.

I do. I definitely found my passion in this, and I want to share that with these kids.”

This past summer, the group tried out the idea of taking a few of their program participants to a large contest pow wow. Three Mille Lacs Band youth, Cedric Bearheart, Jason Wind, and Dante Benjamin, took a trip with 21st Century staff to the 54th Annual Oneida Nation Contest Pow Wow. Although none of the young men placed, they represented the tribe and their schools with great pride and responsibility. They were forced to come out of their comfort zones and to dance hard and with pride. Not only was it a social learning opportunity for the young men, but it was exercise and, of course, it was fun!

Byron sees these activities as the spark to the fire of cultural love and instilled pride and self-acceptance just waiting to be lit. He believes that continual exposure to opportunity and mentoring are the key to any successful venture when it comes to youth, and he believes that his team provides those things and more. In closing, Byron said this: “We have an opportunity to make culture ‘cool’ again, and these kids are responding and picking up the baton and will pass it on forward into the future.”

Former NHL Scout Donates to Kindergarten Class

Chuck Grillo, known by many as “Gringo,” recently donated Pittsburgh Penguins hats and backpacks to all the students in Laurie Rupp’s kindergarten classroom at Nay Ah Shing Abinoojiiyag School.

Chuck worked as an architectural and mechanical drafting instructor for 17 years in both Bemidji and Rosemount High Schools. He has a strong passion for helping young people take their assets to the highest level.

Chuck says he is especially grateful to the Native American athletes like Gary and Earl Sargent and John Buckanaga, as well as the staff of Bemidji High School. Without them, and the people of Bemidji, he believes may not be where he is today.

Chuck owned the Minnesota Hockey Camp located in Nisswa from 1979 to 2016. During his time at the camp, he worked with 30 award-winning athletes in the NHL and hosted over 300 NHL players.

Gringo had a 31-year career working in the National Hockey League. He worked as a scout with the New York Rangers as Director of Pro Scouting with the Minnesota North Stars, Executive Vice President and Director of Player Personnel for the San Jose Sharks, and eleven years as a scout for the Pittsburgh Penguins Stanley Cup winning franchise.

Gringo served his country in the United States Marine Corps, has his Master’s in Guidance Counseling, and 80 credits towards his doctorate in Education. He is also an inductee in

the Bemidji High School Hall of Fame and the Minnesota Hockey Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Chuck decided he would like to give back to the Native American community. “When the final curtain closes, we will be measured by the impact we have had on the lives of others and the size of our heart,” he said.

Chuck said he witnessed a few big hearts around Nay Ah Shing School. He felt honored to meet the staff and spend time at one of his new favorite elementary schools. Chuck said he considered many he met, while visiting, to be friends for life because of their commitment, drive, and passion for all they do.

“The future of these young people gets a little brighter each day when they encounter an administration, teaching, and

support staff that is driven to help all students succeed.”
Miigwech, Gringo!



Attempted Eagle Rescue Shows Danger of Lead

Taylor Hochstein DII Conservation Officer

On the morning of November 5, I received a phone call from concerned citizens near the Mille Lacs Band Cultural Immersion Grounds in Rutledge. They were concerned because there had been an adult eagle in their yard for the past 24 hours. The eagle was unable to maneuver or support its own weight. The homeowners told me that there were no apparent injuries but the eagle appeared to be ill and needed medical attention.

After receiving this information, I made a couple of phone calls and came up with a plan. I was able to coordinate with the fine folks at Wild and Free, a non-profit wildlife program involved in rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing orphaned and/or injured wildlife back into the wild. They are located in Garrison. Although it was a Sunday (Wild and Free is closed on weekends), they were kind enough to come in and assess the eagle's condition that day.

When I arrived at the homeowners' residence, they directed me toward a balsam tree where the eagle was lying. With a pair of leather gloves and a blanket in hand, I approached the raptor. Using extreme caution, I tossed a blanket over the eagle and grabbed it, pinning its wings to its body. The eagle didn't react very much, but it did let out an intimidating hissing noise. It also stuck its large talon out of the bottom of the blanket as if to remind me that it's an apex predator (resides at the top of the avian food chain upon which no other creatures prey). I placed the eagle inside of a Rubbermaid container and put the container into the cage of my squad truck. With the heat on inside the truck, the eagle and I took a cruise to Garrison where I dropped it off at Wild and Free. When I dropped it off, it seemed to have perked up a bit, and I was hoping for the best.

I patiently waited for about a week before deciding to call Wild and Free to check up on the eagle. Wild and Free told me that after their assessment they had determined the eagle likely had lead poisoning. They said that they had sent it down to the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota for further care and that I should call them to find out the status of the bird. I called the Raptor Center, and they regretfully told me that they had to euthanize the eagle due to severe lead poisoning. I was disappointed to say the least; anytime I pick up a wounded or orphaned animal I hope

for a success story. I asked the employees at both Wild and Free and the Raptor Center if they see a lot of eagles with lead poisoning. They told me they indeed do see a lot of it and the number of lead poisoned eagles increases during the fall hunting months.

Though disappointed by the outcome, I wanted to use this situation as a learning opportunity. I wanted to know what might have caused the lead poisoning and if it could have been avoided. I found a lot of great articles and studies about eagle lead poisoning and ammunition projectile fragmentation (scattering of bullet lead in a hunted deer's meat) online. I encourage anybody who hunts with lead bullets or shot to visit raptor.umn.edu to learn about the statistics and effects of lead poisoning in eagles and dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/ammo/lead.html to learn about projectile fragmentation and lead particles in harvested meat.

Even though a 1986 federal law banned the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting, lead poisoning in the food chain still persists. A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources study shows that projectile fragmentation from commonly used lead bullets used in big game hunting left 141 lead fragments in a carcass with an average maximum distance of 11 inches from the wound channel and in one carcass a fragment was found up to 14 inches away from the exit wound. Studies show a spike in lead poisoned eagles beginning in mid-November continuing through winter. A connection can be made between the poisoned eagles and their food source — carcasses from deer that had either been shot and lost or injured and died later. Deer entrails (gut piles) left in the woods often contain lead fragments as well. When birds and other animals eat these remains, they are at risk of lead poisoning.

We have laws and regulations in place for waterfowl hunting mandating that a non-toxic steel shot must be used instead of lead. However, it is not illegal to use lead shot for small game in most circumstances. Lead bullets for big game hunting are very common and have become the standard.

After researching effects of lead poisoning on not only eagles but all animals within the food chain, I personally will be rethinking my ammunition choices. I will be switching to steel shot for all waterfowl/small game and a non-toxic copper bullet for big game.

Looking at the broader picture, I will also be eliminating the lead sinkers in my tackle box and be switching to a steel or tungsten alternative.

Whether it's our family, friends or ourselves consuming the fish and game we harvest, I believe we should contemplate our own actions and how they may be helping or harming the food chain and the environment around us.



Band Members Ask Questions, Give Feedback to DNR at Meeting

The Mille Lacs Band Department of Natural Resources hosted a meeting at Eddy's Resort on November 8 to inform Band members of the status of the Mille Lacs ogaa (walleye) fishery, as well as other topics of interest.

Biologists Carl Klimah and Kelly Applegate gave a PowerPoint presentation to nearly 20 who attended. The presentation covered the reasons why the ogaa population is declining, what happened in the summer of 2016 (when the state exceeded the quota), the consensus plan, and a current recovery plan the DNR and Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission are working on.

Band members provided ideas on management goals and feedback on regulations they would feel comfortable with to recover the ogaa population.

Some expressed support for higher quotas for increased ogaa harvest opportunities. Others recommended harvesting more ginnoozhe (northern pike) because they are eating juvenile walleyes.

Among the questions asked were:

- What lakes can we gill net besides Mille Lacs Lake?
- Can we make a new management system so that everyone who wants to gill net can? (Last year some people didn't get to gill net due to the low quota.)
- Are the 52 gill nets used by the MN-DNR to assess the walleye population in the right spots?
- How does the MN-DNR count the fish they take?

Carl and Kelly also handed out feedback forms asking for ways to improve as well as how they felt about the new recovery plan.

"We plan on having more of these meetings, and people really liked that we are holding them," said Carl. "More meetings will come to discuss the recovery plan as well as to update and educate people on what is going on in Mille Lacs Lake."



DNR Biologists Carl Klimah and Kelly Applegate, pictured at a community meeting earlier this year, gave a presentation November 8 at Eddy's Resort and answered questions from Band members about the state of the Mille Lacs fishery.

Pine Grove Students Study Planets, Art, Anatomy

Amber Lenz & Kelly Griffith Guest Writers

It's been another fabulous month at Pine Grove Leadership Academy in District II. The students finished up their unit on weather by creating windsocks, and they started learning about planets. They were taught the mnemonic My Very Excited Mother Just Served Us Nachos, so that they could remember the order of the planets. It coincided with National Nacho Day, and we celebrated our learning with a plate of nachos.

The students are starting to learn about Henri Matisse in art.

We will learn about his life as well as how he created art. They will be creating their own Goldfish Bowl painting, and exploring other ways to express themselves using line and color.

Will Martin went hunting this week with our culture teacher Donald White, and they got a deer. They met up with students from Lac Courte Oreilles, and spent the day enjoying each other's company and exploring the forest around Danbury, Wisconsin. Once home, all the students participated in processing the deer and learning its anatomy.



The walls at Pine Grove have been decorated this fall with inspirational messages.

Ojibwe Language Becoming Priority at Onamia Public Schools

Amikogaabawiiikwe Adrienne Benjamin Guest Writer **Christina Clitso-Nayquonabe & Byron Ninham** Photographers

Some exciting things are happening at Onamia Public Schools in regard to the Ojibwe language. Indian Education Coordinator Christina Clitso-Nayquonabe was proud to announce the recent addition of an elementary Ojibwe language class. The teacher of this language class is Byron Ninham, who is the Director of the Nigaan Youth Program for the Mille Lacs Band. The class is offered to Pre-K through 5th grade students for 30 minutes, once a week, during hours that are designated as "Specialist" time slots. These slots would normally be filled with a range of activities such as art, music, computer, etc.

Currently there are over 100 kids (both Native and non-Native) signed up for the class. The hope of this class offering is to jumpstart Ojibwe language learning early and to instill value and importance of the language as well. It is also a hope that the early learning of the language will sustain a love for language learning through high school and beyond. "This year, Onamia's Native American student population reached over 50 percent (many of whom are Mille Lacs Band members or descendents), and the school is starting to reflect the diversity of the student body," Christina said. "We are working toward bridging any cultural gaps that may exist in the school, and building acceptance and understanding in the process."

Instructor Byron Ninham is more than excited and grateful about his opportunity to teach. "I tell the kids every day that this is something that I am passionate about, and I'm aware that I don't know everything but that I will do my best. I let them know that I will continue to learn so that my best is better for them than it was yesterday. I feel that it's important to acknowledge those who have taught me language over the years — it's because of them I know anything. Their teachings are now reaching a new generation through me, and I'm so honored and incredibly grateful for that."

Ojibwe language hasn't just been expanding in the elementary; an exciting partnership opportunity with Central Lakes College recently presented itself to the Onamia High School as well. Thanks to an external partnership between Central Lakes College and Bemidji State University, an Ojibwe language course taught by well-known Ojibwe professor Dr. Anton Treuer has been available to Onamia Public Schools students for the fall semester. Upon completion, it is worth 4 college credits and the high school credits necessary to help fulfill their high school curriculum requirement for a second language.

Indian Education Coordinator Chris couldn't believe it at first. "It was the opportunity of a lifetime for these kids," she said. "Not only would they be able to learn the language and receive high school AND college credit, but they would also be learning from Dr. Anton Treuer, who is such a great role model and well known master speaker. I was thrilled and so excited for the kids to say the least! We have worked toward this for a long time at Onamia, and to see it happening is so fulfilling. This is the first Ojibwe language class taught as an elective in my tenure (four years) at Onamia High School."

This semester there are four young ladies taking the class: Deilyah Dexter (Mille Lacs Band), Madison Sam (Mille Lacs Band), Amanda Eagle (Mille Lacs Band), and Megan Saboo (Bay Mills Indian Community, MI). When asked, one common thread amongst the students was their appreciation of the academic structure of Dr. Treuer's teaching style. When specifically asked about her experience in the class, Madison Sam said, "I feel more connected to the language than I ever have. I'm learning more than just



words. I'm learning the meaning behind them."

Deilyah Dexter added, "This class has been desperately needed in the school so that Ojibwe language can be accessible to all students, and it's needed to preserve the Ojibwe language in this generation and for the next. Now when I go to ceremonies and hear the Elders speak, I'm starting to understand what's being said and can appreciate those ceremonies even more than before."

Although only four students are in the class this semester, Chris sees it as a stepping stool in building momentum to make Ojibwe language a staple in the school's curriculum. "We are hoping that the students in the class will use their influence to make the class popular among not just Native students but non-Native students as well," Chris said. "It's important for everyone to learn about Ojibwe culture and history, and the language is the staple of that."

Shortly after this interview was conducted, Chris received a notice from Central Lakes College that after this semester, the class would no longer be able to be offered at Onamia due to financial strains caused by low interest and enrollment in the class on CLC's Brainerd campus. Onamia is currently seeking other partnering options and/or funding sources to continue Ojibwe language as an accredited course option for their students in the school district.

Nay Ah Shing Students Learn about Safety, Fire Prevention

It was a busy morning at Nay Ah Shing Abinoojiyag October 25 with visits from firefighters, EMTs, and electricians who taught students in kindergarten through fifth grade about safety and fire prevention.

Kindergarteners learned from Mike Schneider of Garrison Fire and Rescue. Mike put on his bunker gear for the kids, who watched with wide eyes and open mouths.

First graders got a fire truck tour from Mike's colleague, Jason Stiernagle, but the real highlight was spraying water at a model house.

Tyler Rosnau and Cortney Nadeau of the Mille Lacs Band DNR taught second graders about wildfire fighting. They also got to crawl under a fire shelter ("like a giant baked potato!") and spray water from the DNR truck, with a surprise visit from Smokey Bear.

Third graders had an ambulance tour with personnel from Mille Lacs Health System, and fourth graders learned about safety around power lines from Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative.

Fifth graders served as safety patrols and were dispatched to each of the lower grades to help out. After lunch they worked with Emergency Services Coordinator Monte Fronk on a Red Cross pillow project.

Monte invited Terry Kemper to give the kids a talk about the thunder beings. After one of the students gave him tobacco, Terry sang a prayer song and told the kids how the ancestors would put out tobacco for the thunderbirds.

"They'd put their tobacco out because the thunderbirds were coming to give them a gift," he said. "They referred to them as the Grandfathers and Grandmothers. We offer tobacco to them and say thank you. Those thunder beings never wrecked our villages. Do you know why? Because we talked to them, we sang to them, we gave them our love, and they gave us their

love. The most important part is that there was love in our hearts. As Anishinaabe, there's a lot of love in us."

Two of the boys in the class volunteered to share songs, which were met with cheers and applause from classmates and a hearty "Aho!" from Terry.

Terry encouraged the kids to go outside and sing to the trees, the birds, and the clouds. "We need you guys to sing those songs and learn those songs. In the future you might get a healing song that will come to you and help our village. Don't be scared. Don't worry about how you look and how your voice is — get out there and sing," he said.

After Terry's talk, Monte talked about the three things each home needs: a smoke alarm (checked once a month), a weather radio, and a fire extinguisher.

Finally, Monte introduced the Red Cross Pillowcase Project. Each child was given a pillow case to decorate and fill with supplies that would be needed in the event of an emergency evacuation: a first aid kit, blanket, pen and paper, water, flashlight, toy, radio, asemaa, tooth-

brush, toothpaste, clothing, soap, book, and pictures of loved ones. One of the kids recommended bringing some asemaa as well.

Monte, who organized the event with Abinoojiyag Principal Lehtitia Weiss, was pleased with the event. "It was a very good day," he said. "The weather was perfect, and everyone showed up. It took a lot of teamwork between the police and school. Hopefully the kids learned a lot about fire prevention and safety and can take that home with them."



Max and His Flutes — Fun in a Good Way

When Max Blake first picked up a flute, it just felt right.

He was 17, and his dad, Benji Blake Sr., brought a flute home from the Gathering of Nations in New Mexico. Benji was trying to play, and Max was teasing him about how it sounded.

Benji let Max try, and when he played his first note, it was like he'd been playing forever.

Listen to him now, after 15 years of practice, and you'll hear why Max is becoming a sought-after musician across the region. Max has played at a meeting of the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, during the Memorial Day festivities at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, at men's and women's gatherings, and at weddings of friends.

Max composes his own songs, but he can also learn by ear, anything from his kids' Disney tunes to his mom's favorite melody: Amazing Grace. He's learned a lot by watching Tony Duncan and his group, Estun-Bah, on YouTube.

He usually plays solo, but at the Memorial Day event he was joined by rapper Thomas X and liked the way it sounded.

Max likes the way the flute expresses emotion. "If you're mad, it's going to sound one way, if you're sad or happy, another. Your emotions come out of those flutes."

His second time performing in public was at a wedding in Pine City. "I only had a few days' notice, but I wanted to make sure it was special," he said. "I sat and thought about it — the idea of a wedding, love. So when I went there to play that song, I told him, 'That song was made for you guys.'"

For most of his adult life, Max worked at the Casino as a pit boss, but last June he made the move to the District I Cultural Grounds, where he works as a groundskeeper. "I needed a breath of fresh air just to change it up," he said. "Who would've known it would bring me here?"

The environment suits him, and his bag of flutes.

"When I make my own songs, I feed off of other energies," said Max. "I watch the birds play, how the wind is blowing those trees — you can take that and feel it, and put it in your interpretation. Anything I see — watching my kids play, the trees, the birds,

the squirrels, watching the water, whether it's a wavy day or a calm day — I interpret it through my riffs and my playing."

According to Fawn DeWitt, who works with Max at the Cultural Grounds, the birds like it, too.

"They come and start talking to him when he plays," she said. "The loons will swim closer and answer with their own flute-like calls."

Max gets most of his flutes from High Spirits and Jonah Thompson, a Navajo flute maker. He also has a seven-hole Hidatsa flute from his dad's reservation. He takes good care of them — oiling them and keeping them out of the sun.

As for his dad, who got Max started on this road, he still plays too, along with Max's brother, Benji Jr. Max is the Pied Piper who's now encouraging some of his own kids to play.

He gets them started, explaining how to tune the flutes, how to care for them, the best way to hold them, and how to breathe. But mostly it's a matter of trial and error and practice. "We're all self-taught."

At a recent naming ceremony for one of Max's sons, Benji brought out a flute and handed it to Max. "He likes my style," he said.

"We'll be sitting out at a family barbecue, and someone's gonna take a flute out, and somebody's gonna play. After a good meal from my mom, it's so relaxing. My dad will bring his flutes out, and they'll get passed around to my brother and me."

Like any art, it remains a challenge, even for a master. "I've been playing 13 or 14 years, and I'm still learning," said Max. "It's never ending, and it's all fun, in a good way."



Annual Corporate Ventures Fall Feast

The annual Corporate Ventures Fall Feast at Grand Casino Mille Lacs on Thursday, November 16, offered the usual mix of good food, good news, and good fun, with a surprise appearance by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke.

Joe Nayquonabe Jr., Commissioner of Corporate Affairs, hosted the event, gave the invocation, and introduced Mille Lacs Band elected officials, commissioners, and the Corporate Commission's Board of Directors: Arlene Weous, Dale Greene Sr., William Premo Jr., and Joanne Whiterabbit.

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin addressed the crowd and introduced Secretary Zinke, who was presented with a Pendleton blanket and a Mille Lacs Band flag.

In his annual update of Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures activities, Joe reviewed the success of Mille Lacs Band businesses:

- 3,225,495: Guests who came through Grand Casino doors last year
- 43,900: Guests served since opening 1991 Kitchen on September 5
- 7,102: Guests at the Kid Rock amphitheater show
- 1,959,557: Gallons of fuel sold at 4 convenience stores
- 23,962: Movie tickets sold at Grand Makwa
- 23,067: Footlong subs made at Subway
- 206,608 Guests helped at Grand Market
- 44,252: Pounds of potato oles sold at Taco John's
- 6,293,845: Pieces printed at Sweetgrass Media (more than double last year's output)
- 47,800: Packages shipped from 2020 Brand Solutions
- 7,126,138: Pounds of linens washed by Grindstone Laundry
- 207,477: Rooms sold from two DoubleTree hotels and the InterContinental
- 2,916: Rooms reserved for the Super Bowl, February 2-4 (which means they are completely sold out)
- 70,275: Rooms sold at Oklahoma City Embassy Suites
- 8,754: Rooms sold at Eddy's Resort
- 3,576: Rooms sold at Big Sandy Lodge
- 48,000: Customers served at Big Sandy restaurant
- 4,711: "As always," Joe said, "I will end this presenta-

tion with the most important number of the night. This is the number of Band members we think about each time we make a business decision. We are thankful for your support and high expectations of our company and we are so glad you are part of our MLCV Family!"

Joe concluded his presentation by saying, "On behalf of all of us who work for Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures and its businesses, I want you to know that we are all committed to excellence and focusing on what counts to deliver the best value for the Mille Lacs Band. Thank you for your continued support."

Following dinner, the crowd was entertained by Sassy Lassy Trivia and Events. Twenty Band members were invited to the stage for a version of "Family Feud" called "Survey Says!"



Winners of the Fall Feast coloring contest were Fia Garbow (left) in the age 1-5 category and Raining Pewaush (right) in the age 6-10 category.





Wenda-noomage-apaginigod A'aw Anishinaabe Drug Abuse Among Anishinaabe

Lee Staples Gaa-Anishinaabemod Obizaan Melissa Boyd Baabitawigiizhigookwe Gaa-anishinaabewibii'ang

Booch gakina awiya gii-noondamogwen enigaa'igod nebowa a'aw gidanishinaabeminaan eni-aabajitood noongom. Aaniindi-go endanakiid a'aw Anishinaabe, mii-go apane ezhi-noondawindwaa bagamibizowaad ingiw aakoziwidaabaanag bi-maamiginind a'aw Anishinaabe gaa-onzaami-mamood i'iw gaawanaajikaagod a'aw bemaadizid; mii-go aanind ezhi-nisigod i'iw ayaabajitood.

I am sure everybody has heard how drugs have been so harmful to our people. Wherever Anishinaabe people live, ambulances are often heard, coming into our communities to pick up those who have overdosed on drugs; some have even died from these overdoses.

Mii dash imaa wii-ani-dazhindamaan wenjikaamagak wenji-izhiwebizid i'iw akeyaa a'aw gidanishinaabeminaan. Gayat nigii-tazhindaan gaa-onjikaamagadinig wenji-goopadenindizod a'aw Anishinaabe. Mii-go geyaabi aanind a'aw chimookomaan ezhi-aanawenimaad inow Anishinaaben. Wawaaj-igo mezinaateseg mii imaa bakaan ani-waabandamang i'iw akeyaa ezhi-wiikobinind a'aw Anishinaabe da-ni-izhi-bimiwidood i'iw bimaadizid. Mii-go gaye imaa wenjikaamagak ani-aanawendang nebowa a'aw Anishinaabe gaa-izhi-ina'oonigod da-izhitwaad.

It is here that I am going to talk about why this is happening in our community. In a previous article, I talked about where the low self-worth and low self-esteem present in some of our Anishinaabe people comes from. The racism that causes this is still present today. We are pushed into assimilation without even realizing it by what we see and hear on our television sets. It's like we are brainwashed not to value the beliefs, ceremonies and language that we have been given as Anishinaabe people. It causes us to abandon the ways that we were given as a people.

Gakina a'aw Anishinaabe ojichaagwan odayaawaan; Anishinaabewiwan inow ojichaagwan. Ishke dash i'iwapii gii-asigooyang omaa akiing, gii-gii-miinigoowizimin ge-izhitwaayang da-biindaakoojigeyang biinish gaye ge-inweyang. Ishke dash biminizha'amang o'ow akeyaa gaa-izhi-miinigoowiziyang da-izhitwaayang, gimino-doodawaanaan a'aw gijichaagonaan biinjina eyaawang. Mii iw wenda-minokaagod miinawaa wendinang a'aw Anishinaabe zakab izhi-ayaad imaa biinjina.

Every Anishinaabe has a spirit or a soul; that Spirit is Anishinaabe. When we were put on this earth, we were given our own belief system: to put our tobacco every day, and we were also given our own language. When we follow the ways that we were given by the Manidoog, we are feeding our Spirit within which is Anishinaabe. This is what nurtures that spirit and brings peace to us within.

Gidaa-zhawenimaanaanig ingiw gidanishinaabeminaanig eni-aabajitoojig wenda-inigaa'igowaad. Gaawiin eta-go wiinawaa gidaa-maji-inaasiwaanaanig. Ishke inow ogitiziimiwaan maagizhaa gaye gaa-nitaawigi'igowaajin gaawiin ogii-ayaangwaamigosiwaan da-ni-apiitendamowaad miinawaa da-ni-ayaangwaami-aabajitoowaad i'iw akeyaa gaa-izhi-gikinoo'amaagoowiziyang da-ni-izhi-bimiwidooyang o'ow bimaadiziyang anishinaabewiyang.

We should have compassion for our fellow Anishinaabe who are using drugs. We need to realize that they are not solely responsible for their drug abuse, there are other factors involved. It's their parents or foster parents who are responsible

for this happening, for not strongly encouraging their children to value and to practice diligently our ways that we have been given as a people.

Ishke dash nebowa a'aw wenjida weshki-bimaadizid ezhi-webinang i'iw akeyaa gaa-izhi-miinigoowiziyang anishinaabewiyang. Nebowa odani-debwetawaan inow wayaabishkiwen. Gaawiin gaye a'aw chimookomaan odayaanziin ge-minokaagowaad naa gaye ge-naadamaagowaad ingiw weshki-bimaadizijig. Ishke dash ingiw weshki-aya'aawijig dibishkoo-go gaagiwozhitoowag, gaawiin odayaanziinaawaa ge-apenimowaad ge-naadamaagowaad.

A lot of our young people have been pushed to abandon our teachings as Anishinaabe. The larger society has had a strong influence on their lives. That larger society has nothing that offers them spiritual direction in their lives. Our younger generation are in limbo and do not always rely on our Anishinaabe ways for spiritual support in their lives and certainly do not find anything in that other world to guide them along.

Ishke mii-go imaa nisidawinaagwak misawendamowaad ingiw weshki-bimaadizijig wii-tibendaagoziwaad ingoji. Ishke imaa giwaabandaamin ezhi-inootawaawaad inow bakaan enaanzohenjin bakaan ezhitwaanjin inow ikidowinan ayaabajitoonjin. Mii gaye imaa nebowa owiikobinigonaawaan wii-tibendaagoziwaad okwi'idiwaad weshki-bimaadizijig anooj dash imaa baa-maazhichigewaad. Mii imaa ge-apa'iwewaapan i'iw akeyaa inow Manidoon gaa-izhi-miinigowaad da-ni-izhi-bimaadiziwaad Anishinaabewiwaad. Mii eta-go akeyaa ge-izhi-miigaadang miinawaa ge-izhi-noogishkaatood ani-onzaamiikang a'aw Anishinaabe wenda-noomige-apaginigod ge-ni-aabajitood, gidaa-ayaangwaamitoomin nawaj da-ni-mashkawaamagak gaa-izhi-miinigoowiziyang da-izhitwaayang.

We can see that our younger people have a desire to belong. What they do is adopt the way of speaking that comes from another culture or are easily influenced or drawn to become part of a gang. They will always feel like there is something missing. It's only after they return to our Anishinaabe ways that they will have peace within. The only way to break the cycle of the drug abuse in our communities is to strengthen the presence of what we have been given as a people.

Ishke gakina awiya imaa ishkoniganing eyaad da-ni-naazikang aaniin igo akeyaa okwi'idid a'aw Anishinaabe ani-biindaakoojiged. Gakina a'aw Anishinaabe endanakiid miinawaa wenjiid imaa ishkoniganing oda-ni-ayaangwaami-aabaji'aa inow obiindaakoojiganan. Mii gaye gakina awiya odayaangwaamitoon da-ni-gikendang gidinwewininaan. Mii gaye ge-izhichigewaad ingiw weshki-bimaadizijig da-wawiinge-gikendamowaad i'iw akeyaa Anishinaabe ezhichiged ani-mamanidoowichiged biinish gaye i'iw gaagiigidowin ge-ni-aabajichigaadeg aaniin igo akeyaa a'aw Anishinaabe okwi'idid biindaakoojiged. Maa minik-igo imaa da-ni-dazhitaam da-ni-miigaajigaadeg ezhiwebizid a'aw Anishinaabe endanakiid.

All of those living within the reservation need to be encouraged to participate in our ceremonies. Everyone has to use their tobacco on a daily basis. Everyone should also learn our language to nurture that Anishinaabe Spirit within us. Our younger people have to work toward learning our ceremonies and to be able to do the talk that goes with these ceremonies. It is going to take some time to turn things around in our communities by

strengthening the presence of our culture in the communities.

Ishke eshkaam nebowa a'aw Anishinaabe gii-ani-ayaad gaa-apagijwebinang i'iw akeyaa gaa-izhi-miinigoowiziyang, mii iwapii eshkaam nebowa gii-ani-ayaad a'aw Anishinaabe eni-aabajitood i'iw enigaa'igod naa anooj mayaazhichigewaad.

As we began to see the decreasing interest and participation of Anishinaabe people in our ceremonies, we are seeing the increasing negative impact it is having on our communities with the drug abuse and other dysfunctional behaviors escalating.

Ishke gaa-ikidowaad ingiw gaa-nitaawigi'ijig megwaa imaa gii-wenda-ozaamiikamaan gii-minikweyaan, mii o'ow gaa-izhiwaad, "Gaawiin gii-inendaagozisiin da-ni-nishwanaajitooyan i'iw giwiiyaw megwaa omaa bimaadiziyani ani-aabajitooyan i'iw minikwewin. Ingwi Manidoog gii-inenimigoog omaa da-ni-dazhiikaman gegoo megwaa maa ani-bibizhaagiiyan omaa akiing. Mii iw wiin ge-biminizha'aman megwaa imaa ayaayan omaa akiing."

Those old people that raised me used to tell me when I was heavy into alcohol use, "You were not put on this earth to waste your life away using drugs and drinking. Those Manidoog had a reason for putting you on this earth. There is something that they want you to accomplish while you are here. It was not meant for you to waste your life by drinking and using drugs. Find out what was meant for you to pursue while you are here on Earth and go after it."

Ishke nebowa ayaa a'aw Anishinaabe eni-gaadood gikenimaad inow besho enawemaajin eni-aabajitoonjin maagizhaa gaye eni-adaawaagenid enigaa'igod nebowa a'aw Anishinaabe. Gidaa-ayaangwaamimaanaanig da-maanaajimaawaad inow odinawemaaganiwaan ayaabajitoonjin miinawaa edaawaagenin i'iw noongom wenda-noomige-apaginigowaad ingiw Anishinaabeg. Gaawiin odayaangwaamitoon da-ni-ayaangwaami-aabajitoowaad, mii-go imaa da-mino-doodawaawaapan.

There are many Anishinaabe who are covering up the drug abuse that exists within their family and refuse to disclose those that might be dealing and selling drugs in their own family. We need to encourage these Anishinaabe to disclose this information to the police. They are not harming their relatives by telling, they are doing them a favor.

Maagizhaa maajijigaazowaad megwaa dash iwidi gibaakwa'igaazowaad gemaa daa-moonendamoojig ezhi-inigaa'idizowaad. Miinawaa gaye daa-wenda-gagwaansagendam a'aw Anishinaabe inow odinawemaaganan ani-ishkwaa-ayaanid miinawaa nisigonid ani-aabajitoonid, mii imaa eni-moonendam, maagizhaa gaye gawiin daa-gii-izhiwebasinoon maanaajimopan. Ishke gaye a'aw eni-adaawaaged i'iw mayaanaadak nebowa-go Anishinaabe oda-nisigon, mii iw ge-onji-wiindamaagepan awiya gikenimaad adaawaagenid.

Just possibly while they are sitting in jail, they may realize the harm they are doing to themselves. If a relative of yours dies from drug abuse, you would feel bad especially when you realized you could have intervened by disclosing about their drug abuse to the police. If someone is selling drugs, there will be deaths caused by overdoses. This is why they should disclose to the police if they have a relative who is dealing drugs. Continued on page 14

The Healing Power of Running

Joe Nayquonabe Guest Writer

My running story begins in February of 2016 when one of my friends challenged me to run a half marathon with him. My initial reaction was “no way, you’re crazy — why would I want to run a half marathon?” I thought about it all afternoon. I had recently lost some weight and knew the next step to maintain was to incorporate more physical activity. I had never considered running before, and since I’m not one to back down from a challenge, I started doing some research on where to begin. The race was just 5 months away, so I knew I had to get started.

One of the most interesting finds during my research was an excerpt written by Charlie Otto Rasmussen about how running is a big part of the history of the Ojibwe culture. It was titled, “Michitweg and early Ojibwe runners.”

Long before the construction of roads and communication lines, runners served a vital role in Ojibwe communications across the upper Great Lakes region. When a person fell ill without a qualified healer available, the Michitweg — both men and women — were summoned. They would run all over to contact healers in other villages; sometimes they’d run a few dozen miles, other times it was well over 100 miles.

The excerpt also said that elders would pass the running tradition on to their children and grandchildren, fostering a legacy that spans generations. I immediately thought of my girls. Let’s face it — our kids imitate us, so why not use it as a force for good?

Having that motivation in my arsenal, I laced up my sneakers and hit the pavement.

Fast forward to 2017. I have run eight half marathons, one 10-miler, and two full marathons — one in New York City and the other just this past October in the Twin Cities. In this process, the sport became my solace. My daily workouts were a channel for my thoughts — whether I was happy, sad, or frustrated. My training gave me the time I needed to connect with myself; healing 10, 15, 20 miles at a time.

While I’m proud of the miles I’ve run, this article isn’t about listing my accomplishments in the running world, but rather sharing my experiences about what I’ve learned since starting this journey. Too many times in life, we start something without completing it because it becomes difficult. I’m hoping that through my words and experiences, it will motivate and encourage others to find something that they’re passionate about. Maybe it’s running. Maybe it’s something else.

1: You can always find an excuse. Don’t let excuses get in your way of success.

I remember one morning I woke up, laced up my running shoes and heard a little voice from upstairs asking, “Daddy, where are you going?” It was my five year old. “Running,” I said. “Why?” she asked.

It was a good question, and one I couldn’t readily answer. The truth is, just before you run is the worst possible moment to try to explain to someone, or even to yourself, why you run. It just doesn’t make sense. Running is hard. It requires effort. I didn’t really want to run that morning. My body was still sore from a previous run, I knew I had a busy day ahead at work and sleeping in would have been way easier. I was training for the NYC marathon, sure, but it was still months away. Right at that moment, it didn’t feel critically important to be heading out on a 9 mile run. I could go later. Or the next day. Or I could skip this run all together. I ended up ignoring those excuses and ran those 9 miles. When I was done, I felt completely re-energized. I remember when I crossed that finish line I was so glad that I decided to ignore the excuses that crept in before so many of my training runs. I thought of the Michitweg and felt a sense of pride knowing that I was the first Mille Lacs Band member to finish the New York City Marathon. That was an indescribable feeling. There will always be excuses to find something else to do — just ignore them. The truth is once you get up and moving, the time goes by fast and you’ll feel better. And once you

hit your goal, you’ll be anxious to make another, just to repeat that incredible feeling.

2: There will be times when you are diverted off course. Embrace it.

My toughest race was in Walker. It was a half marathon that I decided to run as part of my training for the full NYC marathon. At this point in time, it was normal for me to run 13–16 miles, so I didn’t anticipate a tough race. I said “see you soon” to my wife and made my way to the starting line. I envisioned confidently crossing the finish line, breaking two hours. My stride was on point, my breathing was in rhythm, and my legs were feeling good. What was supposed to be one of my fastest half marathons quickly became my slowest. About halfway through the race, the course was diverted into the woods — a trail run! I had no idea the course steered away from pavement running and I had definitely never prepared myself for a trail run. I had to run on that trail for 5.1 excruciating miles, which forced me to slacken my pace. I left feeling humbled and defeated. Looking back on that experience, I am glad I had that diversion — because that’s reality. We all face times where our plans don’t work out as we had hoped, and there is something about uncertainty that just doesn’t sit well. You can almost guarantee that at some point in your life, you’ll veer off course, just make sure you are able to get back on the right path.

3: Our kids learn from what we do — and we can learn from them, too.

My daughter Bella started cross country running last year and loved it, so I thought it would be fun to have her and I run a race together. We decided that we would train for the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon in Duluth and run that race together. This race wasn’t going to be about my personal best; I just wanted to complete it with my daughter. During one of our training runs, I noticed that I was quite a bit ahead of her. I looked back and saw her dedication and determination to try to catch up to me. I felt terrible so I ran back to her and finished at her pace. That was a huge lesson for me that day. When I am by myself, I push myself to run better, run faster. It’s ok to take time for you and surpass your goals, but it shouldn’t always be about us — especially when it comes to our kids. That run wasn’t about me — it was about making sure that she felt good about herself and comfortable with her run. I was a very proud dad when Bella and I finished 13.1 miles and crossed the finish line together, hand-in-hand.

4: Hard times in life are inevitable, but we need to move forward.

Loss in life is inevitable, but that doesn’t make it any easier. As most of you know, I lost my mom this past May, which has been difficult, to say the least. Many in our community have suffered great loss, too. For me, in honor of my mom, I decided that I was going to just do better. With everything. There is no timetable for grief, but the time I take for my runs, by myself, has been a great healing outlet for me. All summer long, I trained for the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon. I was going into the race with an injury, one that I made sure I could still safely run with. I knew I wanted to beat 4 hours, which would be a personal record (PR) for me. On race day, I felt pretty good. Once I got to mile 20, I hit a wall and I wanted to give up. It was then I thought of my mom. I thought of her smiling and laughing. I was able to put one foot in front of the other and continue. That forward momentum was a symbolic and literal manifestation of what I’ve been doing since May. I ended up crossing the finish line 3:50:38 — beating my first marathon time and hitting a PR!

Now that the marathon is behind me, I have thought a lot about this past year. It’s been tough, but I realized that the struggles in my life don’t define me, what I’ve done with them does. I could have skipped my tough training runs. I could have



given up when the course got tough. I could have waved an official to signify that my marathon run was done. But I didn’t. I pulled myself together and continued pushing, moving forward, in running and in life.

It’s no secret that our community is suffering, but we also have so much to be proud of. My hope is that we continue to heal and move forward.

TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

Happy December Birthdays to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Judith Louise Beaulieu
Gayle Marie Bender
Henry Benjamin Bonga
Loann Dana Boyd
Phyllis Ann Boyd
Terry Lee Bradley
Vicki Marie Burton
Kyle Matthew Cash
Lawrence Churchill
Frances Davis
Marilyn Ann Davis
Winifred Marie Davis
Delsie Louise Day
June Louise Day
Norma Bea Diver
Randy James Dorr
Rodney John Dorr
Ruth Elaine Garbow
Colleen Margaret Garcia
Diane Marie Gibbs

Rosalie Marie Gopher
Corwin John Graikowski
David Darryl Granger
Dale Herbert Greene Sr.
Angeline Hawk
Viola Mary Hendren
Michael Ray Hensley
Carole Anne Higgins
Frank Hill Jr.
Esther Marie Johnson
Christine Mary Kegg
Cheryl Ann Keller
William Reinhardt Kerkow Jr.
Larry Allen Koeppe
Renda Lynn Leslie
Michael Allen Mager
Daniel Rae Matrous
Gordon Wayne Matrous
Colleen Gay Minger
Debra Jean Morrison
Richard Raymond Mortenson
Linda Lou Moxness
Maureen Cynthia Nickaboine

Jay Jay O'Brien
Anita Rose Parker
Dale John Pindegayosh
William Richard Premo Jr.
Herbert Sam
Corrina Marie Sheff
Susam M. Shingobe
Laura Ruth Shingobe-Garbow
Vanette Louise Todd
Carol Ann Turner
Anita Louise Upegui
Kenneth Laverne Wade Sr.
Yvonne Cecelia Winiecki
Douglas Alan Wistrom
Lucille Mabel Woyak

Happy December Birthdays:

Happy 19th birthday to **Aaliyah**, with love from Grampa, Gramma and Aaron

Submit Birthday Announcements

Send name, birthday and a message **20 WORDS OR LESS** to libby.weimer@redcircleagency.com or call 612-465-8017. Deadline for Jan. issue is Dec. 15.



The District I Pet Clinic was held on November 18 and 19 at the Community Center. Photos above by Nici Fronk. For more photos and information, see millelacsband.com

Mille Lacs Band Recovery Groups

District I Mille Lacs

Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition

Mondays, 5:30 – 7 p.m., 17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia (Next to the Halfway House – Brown Building)
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-7773, ext. 2419

Wellbriety Migizi Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel
700 Grand Avenue, Onamia, Minnesota

Wellbriety Celebrating Families

Tuesdays, 6 – 8 p.m., Mille Lacs Band Halfway House Group
17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia, Minnesota
Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

N.A./A.A. Welcome

Hosted by Mille Lacs Band Halfway House
Wednesdays, 7 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia (Red Brick Building) Contact Halfway House at 320-532-4768

Wellbriety Sons of Tradition

Sundays, 1 – 3 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia
Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-7773, ext. 2419

District II East Lake

AA Group

Mondays, 5 – 6 p.m., East Lake Community Center
Contact Rob Nelson at 218-768-2431

District III Hinckley & Aazhoomog

NA Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Aazhoomog Community Center

Wellbriety 12 Step Group

Tuesdays, 12 p.m., Aazhoomog Clinic Conference Room
Contact Monica Haglund at 320-384-0149

Wellbriety Meeting

Thursdays, 6 p.m., Hinckley Corporate Bldg.
Contact Mike Kettner at 320-385-7052

RECURRING EVENTS

Ojibwe Language Tables

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., DI, District I Community Center
Thursdays, 4:30 p.m., DII, East Lake Community Center (3:30 p.m. on last Thursday)

DI Open Gym

Open Gym is held at the DI Community Center,
Mondays – Thursdays: 3:30 – 9 p.m.

DI Women's Group (Strength & Support)

Thursdays: 3:30 – 5 p.m., Public Health Building (17230 Noopiming Lane)

Healer Herb Sam is Available in the Urban Area

Fridays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call 612-799-2698 or stop by the Powwow Grounds (1414 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls.)

B-Ball League Night: Thursday Nights

Native Art Sign Contest

Rules and regulations:

- Minimum size of sign: 24"x30" quality art canvas
- Must have creative anti-drug slogan featuring your Native art talents
- Must be a Mille Lacs Band member
- Signs are due December 22 between 1–5 p.m. at the District I Community Center
- Winner will be announced at the State of the Band Address in January 2018

Questions/Concerns? Please go to the Facebook event "Native Art Sign Contest."

Continued from page 12.

Wenda-oomage-apaginigod A'aw Anishinaabe

Drug Abuse Among Anishinaabe

Mii iw booch gakina ezhi-bagosendamang, apegish ingiw neshwanaajitoojig owiiyawimaan megwaa bimaadiziwaad noondawaawaad inow Manidoon da-madwe-ganoonigowaad ani-wiindamaagowaad, "Daga naa Noozis, naazikan a'aw Anishinaabe gaa-izhi-miinigoowizid. Gidaa-naadamaagon." Mii eta-go iw akeyaa ge-izhi-maajitaawaapan da-ni-aanjitoowaad ezhi-bimaadiziwaad. Ani-biindaakoojigeyang gidaa-nandodamaagemin i'iw akeyaa da-naadamaagoowiziwaad miinawa da-bakibizhigaadeg minjiminigowaad ingiw Anishinaabeg gashkitoosigwaa da-boonitoowaad wenda-inigaa'igowaad.

It is everybody's hope that there is an intervention from a higher level for those using drugs in our community. We hope that in some form or fashion that they hear the voice of the Manidoog saying, "Please, Grandchild, make use of the teachings that we have given to the Anishinaabe. It will help you." It's from there they may seek the help that is available in our ceremonies to change their lives. Let's all ask for help for our Anishinaabe in need as we put our tobacco to be able to remove what is holding them down and that they be able to leave the drugs alone.

Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post December Events

Sweetgrass 2-Day Workshop: December 2 & 3, Sat. 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Learn the art of making a coil sweetgrass basket in this two-day workshop. Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided on both days. \$60/\$55 MNHS and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members, plus \$15 supply fee. Registration required by phone or email.

Storybook Time & Bead a Ring: December 2, 12–3 p.m. \$3/kit, museum admission not included. Enjoy stories and light snacks from 12–1 p.m., then from 1–3 p.m., learn a basic stringing technique while beading a ring to take home. Please allow an hour to make the ring.

Birch Bark Ornament Workshop: Saturday December 16, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Create miniature ornaments from birch bark to decorate for the holidays or give as gifts. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided. \$25/\$20 MNHS and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members, plus \$15 supply fee. Registration required by phone or email.

Mark Your Calendar!

Mille Lacs State of the Band

The Mille Lacs State of the Band event will be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2018.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Want Your Event Here? Email libby.weimer@redcircleagency.com or call 612-465-8017. Visit millelacsband.com/calendar for additional MLB events. Band Assembly Meetings Band Assembly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at rotating locations throughout the districts. For locations and other info, call the Legislative office or visit millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com. Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change. DI Christmas Party December 6 at Grand Casino Mille Lacs. Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. The entertainment is "Laughter Is Medicine" with Tatanka Means at 6 p.m., with door prize drawings to follow.</p>					<p>1 Ceremonial Dance Perry & Bob Mille Lacs Healer Herb Sam <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>2 Sweetgrass 2-day Workshop 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Indian Museum Storybook Time & Bead A Ring 12–3 p.m. Indian Museum Ceremonial Dance Perry & Bob Mille Lacs</p>
<p>3 Sweetgrass 2-day Workshop 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Indian Museum</p>	<p>4 Zumba Fitness 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. I Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting DII AA Group DIII NA Meeting Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>5 Zumba Fitness 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group Open Gym Language Table <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>6 Program Fair 10 a.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. DI Christmas Party 5 p.m. Grand Casino Mille Lacs DI NA/AA Welcome <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>7 Housing Board Meeting 1 p.m. Mille Lacs Ribbon Skirt/ Shirt, Pucker-Toe Moccasin Making 5 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. DII Holiday Party 6 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley DIII Wellbriety Meeting Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>8 Holidays on Franklin 3–5 p.m. AIM Interpretive Ctr. Ceremonial Dance Tim & Tom East Lake Healer Herb Sam <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>9 Urban Holiday Party 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Minneapolis American Indian Ctr. Ceremonial Dance Tim & Tom East Lake</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>11 Basic First Aid Training 4 p.m. DI Community Center Zumba Fitness 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting DII AA Group DIII NA Meeting Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>12 Hand Out Gift Cards 9 a.m.–3 p.m. DI Community Center Zumba Fitness 6 p.m. Chiminising Community Center DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group Open Gym Language Table <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>13 Hand Out Gift Cards 9 a.m.–3 p.m. DI Community Center Painting Night 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center DI NA/AA Welcome Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>14 Hand Out Gift Cards 9 a.m.–3 p.m. DI Community Center Constitutional Convention 12 p.m. Location TBD DIII Wellbriety Meeting Open Gym Basketball League <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>15 Constitutional Convention 8:30 a.m. Location TBD MPLS American Indian Ctr. Elder Party 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Ribbon Skirt/ Shirt Making 5 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. Ceremonial Dance Jim & Lewis LCO Healer Herb Sam <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>16 Birch Bark Ornament Workshop 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Indian Museum All District Elder Christmas Party 5–9 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Ceremonial Dance Jim & Lewis LCO</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>18 Constitutional Convention 12 p.m. Northern Lights Casino Hotel DII Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. DIII Wellbriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Hinckley Corp. Building Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition DI Wellbriety Migizi Meeting DII AA Group DIII NA Meeting <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>19 Constitutional Convention 8:30 a.m. Northern Lights Casino Hotel DI Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center DI Wellbriety Celebrating Families DIII Wellbriety 12 Step Group Open Gym Language Table <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>20 Division of Indian Work Elder Party 5–8 p.m. DIIa Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center DII Youth Holiday Party 5:30 p.m. East Lake Comm. Ctr. DI NA/AA Welcome Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>21 Housing Board Meeting 1 p.m. East Lake ALU DIIa Youth Holiday Party 6 p.m. Chiminising Community Center DIII Wellbriety Meeting Open Gym Basketball League <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>22 DIII Community Meeting/Holiday Dinner 5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Event Ctr. <i>Adults Only</i> Healer Herb Sam <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>25 Band Holiday Gov't Offices Closed</p>	<p>26 Band Holiday Gov't Offices Closed</p>	<p>27 DI NA/AA Welcome Open Gym <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>28 DIII Wellbriety Meeting Open Gym Basketball League <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>29 Healer Herb Sam <i>See page 14</i></p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31 NYE Sobriety Pow wow DI Community Center</p>	<p>DI Community Center Events Cribbage Night: Dec. 4, 11, & 18 in the Media Room at 5:30 p.m. Volleyball Night 1/2 Court: Dec. 4, 11, & 18 in the Media Room at 5:30 p.m. Painting Night: Dec. 13, 20, & 27 in the Sewing Room at 5:30 p.m. Drum Practice: Dec. 5, 12, & 19 in the Media Room at 5:30 p.m. Zumba: Dec. 13, 20, & 27 from 3:30–4:30 p.m.</p>			<p>Housing Board Meetings If you want to be on the agenda, call 218-316-2042 and leave a message with your contact info and reasons for addressing the board. December Meetings: Dec. 7 at Mille Lacs, Dec. 21 at East Lake ALU January Meetings: Jan. 4 at Isle Comm. Ctr., Jan. 18 at Mille Lacs February Meetings: Feb. 1 at Hinckley ALU, Feb. 15 21 at Mille Lacs</p>		

Band Members Rally to “Un-Cuff Our Cops”

Steve Premo & Chad Germann Photographers

Leaders from across Indian Country showed support for Tribal Police on November 20. See story on page 3.



Ceremonial Dance Dates Fall 2017

Bob & Perry: Mille Lacs, December 1 & 2

Tim & Tom: East Lake, December 8 & 9

Jim & Lewis: LCO, December 8 – 10

Need Help?

- If you or someone you know is injured or in danger, call **911** first.
- **Tribal Police Department dispatch:** 888-609-5006; 320-532-3430.
- **Emergency Management Services:** 24-hour fire, disaster, and emergency management response: Monte Fronk, Emergency Management Coordinator: 320-362-0435.
- **Community Support Services:** For emergencies related to food and nutrition, Elder services, Elder abuse, sexual assault, or emergency loans, call 320-532-7539 or 320-630-2687.
- **Domestic violence:** (c) 320-630-2499.
- **Women’s Shelter:** 866-867-4006.
- **Heating, water or other home-related maintenance problems:** If you live in a Mille Lacs Band

Housing-maintained home, call for housing maintenance service in your district. During regular business hours, please call our Customer Service Representative at 800-709-6445, ext. 7799. If you live in a home not maintained by the Mille Lacs Band and need assistance after hours with utilities or heating, please contact: After Hours Emergency Service: 866-822-8538. (Press 1, 2, or 3 for respective districts.)

- **Mille Lacs Band Family Services:** Foster Care: 320-630-2663; Social Worker: 320-630-2444; Toll-free: 800-709-6445, ext. 7588.
- **Family Violence Prevention:** District I 320-532-4780; East Lake 218-768-4412; Aazhoomog 320-384-0149; Hinckley 320-384-4613; Toll-free 24-hour crisis line 866-867-4006.
- **Batterers’ Intervention:** 320-532-8909.
- **Behavioral Health:** 800-709-6445, ext.7776.

Aazhoomog Clinic Hours: Providers are at the Aazhoomog Clinic in District III from Monday through Thursday. The dentist is in the office on the last Friday of every month, and the foot doctor is available the first Wednesday of every month. Call 320-384-0149 to make an appointment or ask a question.

Reporters Wanted, Submissions Accepted: The Mille Lacs Band and Red Circle Agency are seeking Band members in all three districts and the urban area to cover events and provide content for the *Inaajimowin* newsletter, millelacsband.com, and the Facebook page. If you or someone you know enjoys being out in the community, is active on social media, likes taking photos, or has an interest in writing, send an email to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. No experience necessary. Hours and pay will depend on work experience, education, and availability. You can also simply submit articles or photographs, and if your work is used, you will receive reimbursement.

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Are you an Elder or do you know an Elder who has a story to tell?

The *Ojibwe Inaajimowin* is looking for Elder stories for upcoming issues. Send your name, contact information and a brief description of the Elder you would like to feature.

Email brett@redcircleagency.com or libby.weimer@redcircleagency.com or call Libby at 612-465-8017 or Brett at 320-237-6851.

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