



# OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

FEBRUARY 2020 | VOLUME 22 | NUMBER 2

T H E S T O R Y A S I T ' S T O L D



Lee Obizaan Staples gave an invocation in Ojibwe and urged Band members to do what they can to revitalize the language.

## 2020 STATE OF THE BAND 'WE WILL BE GOOD ANCESTORS,' CHIEF EXECUTIVE SAYS

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin encouraged Band members to be “good ancestors” in her annual State of the Band address on January 14. More than 1,200 Band members, employees, guests, and local and state dignitaries — including Governor Tim Walz and Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman — gathered to hear remarks from Melanie and others at the 36th Annual State of the Band Address at Grand Casino Mille Lacs.

Melanie told Band members that to be good ancestors, the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe “will fight the battles we must, for justice, for our rights, and for protection of our homeland.”

“We hear the drum, and with each loud beat we know that we will not be moved, we will not be defeated, and we will never surrender our Reservation,” said Melanie.

Her speech (printed in its entirety beginning on page 5) was preceded by presentation of flags, honor songs, an invocation in Ojibwe by Elder Lee Obizaan Staples, and speeches by Governor Walz and Secretary/Treasurer Sheldon Boyd.

Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Joe Nayquonabe Jr. served as master of ceremonies. Joe read a letter from U.S. Senator Tina Smith before introducing Governor Walz, the first Minnesota governor to attend a State of the Band Address. Governor Walz spoke of his support for tribal sovereignty and

**“WE HEAR THE DRUM, AND WITH EACH LOUD BEAT WE KNOW THAT WE WILL NOT BE MOVED, WE WILL NOT BE DEFEATED, AND WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER OUR RESERVATION.”**

— CHIEF EXECUTIVE MELANIE BENJAMIN

his commitment to a government-to-government relationship with tribes (see page 3).

Sheldon, whose speech is printed on page 10, introduced the Legislative and Office of Management and Budget staff, thanked them for their service, and reviewed the uniqueness of the Band’s three-branch government.

“The inherent power to make law lives within the sovereignty of the Anishinaabe,” said Sheldon.

He also shared his priorities as Secretary/Treasurer, including creation of a Revisor of Statutes office, passage of the new Open Meeting and Data Practices Act, and an independent evaluation of the Band’s investments.

State of the Band continued on page 2



Former Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington was named tribal liaison with the Minnesota DNR.

## DNR COMMISSIONER IS NEW STATE DNR LIAISON

In her State of the Band Address on January 14, Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin surprised those in attendance by announcing that Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington had resigned his tribal government post to take an important position as tribal liaison with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Bradley (Nazhike-awaasang) is excited to begin his work at the DNR. “Serving as DNR tribal liaison furthers my desire to bring a greater understanding of native issues to state government,” he said. He started his DNR job on January 27.

Bradley said he has been working with state officials, including Minnesota DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen, to improve relations with tribes and develop tribal liaison positions in response to Governor Tim Walz’s Executive Order 19-24, which requires government-to-government consultation with tribes. “The state and tribes want to work together, but there’s a barrier there,” said Bradley. “I see these tribal liaison positions as a way to disassemble that barrier.”

DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen looks forward to working with Bradley. “I’ve known Brad for a number of years and I’m thrilled he has agreed to join the DNR,” she said. “Brad brings to us a unique set of experiences and expertise in natural resources management, as well as a deep understanding of Minnesota tribal issues.”

Commissioner Strommen has earned Bradley’s respect as well. “She’s not just willing to work with us because there’s an Executive Order; she sincerely wants to help,” Bradley said. “Her appointment as commissioner and the Executive Order created an ideal situation.”

Bradley has served as the Mille Lacs Band’s Commissioner of Natural Resources since 2017 and has worked with the Minnesota DNR on a variety of wildlife and fisheries issues. Born and raised on the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, Bradley is a lifelong student of the Ojibwe culture and language.

As DNR tribal liaison, he’ll work closely with Ojibwe and Dakota communities on natural resources and tribal issues, forging stronger relations between the agency and Minnesota’s 11 Native American tribes. He also will provide strategic advice to agency leadership and serve as a resource to staff coordinating with tribal governments.

Harrington continued on page 3



**State of the Band** continued from page 1

Sheldon concluded with the story of his father building a home for his family and demonstrating the “work, sacrifice, and gratitude” that have guided Mille Lacs Band families in the past and will be needed to guide future generations.

**Chief Executive’s address**

In her address, Melanie cited the late Beatrice Taylor and Jim Clark, and she quoted Elder Joe Nayquonabe Sr., who said, “We owe it to our ancestors to be good ancestors.” She told a story about the origin of the Big Drum and summarized the accomplishments of her administration during 2019.

She told a humorous story about her recent meeting in the Oval Office with President Trump, and she complimented “new warriors” Val Harrington, Robert Mitchell, and Don Eubanks.

Melanie also referred back to the State of the Band Address of 2015, when she announced that for the first time in decades, crime had decreased on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Then suddenly, in July of 2016, Mille Lacs County revoked its law enforcement agreement with the Band, and claimed tribal police had almost no authority.

“It seemed our neighborhoods changed almost overnight. We began a period of the highest rate of violence, drug-related crime, and death we have ever known in our modern history.

“Elders were threatened, and many children will forever carry the scars of violence and death. That year, Mille Lacs County had the highest crime rate of all 87 counties in Minnesota,” said Benjamin. “Our reservation became known as a police-free zone by criminals from all over, who had no fear of tribal police and moved into some of our homes.”

Melanie said Mille Lacs County’s motive for ending the agreement was clear. “We found that out right away, when the county refused to reinstate the agreement unless we agreed to act as if our reservation created by the Treaty of 1855 no longer existed.

“We begged previous state officials for help. Promises were made, and broken, and except for offering mediation, no help came. We finally accepted that we were on our own. We did the only thing left we could do. In 2018, we filed suit against



Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin thanked “new warriors” and cited “good ancestors” Beatrice Taylor and Jim Clark in her State of the Band Address.

Mille Lacs County in federal court.”

Assistance from the Secretary of Interior helped the Band get through that difficult period, Melanie said, and she applauded federal investigations that occurred when the county refused to allow tribal police to enforce state law.

“In May, the U.S. Attorney announced a major federal indictment,” said Melanie. “Eight people were arrested and charged with 10 counts of conspiracy to distribute heroin on the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. They are facing federal prison. Last week, another person was indicted and is going to federal prison. Those particular drug dealers are now gone from our reservation. And we will not stop until we get rid of every drug dealer, no matter who they are.”

**Band member named tribal liaison**

Melanie also shared big news about the Band’s Commissioner of Natural Resources, Bradley Harrington.

“In a major development for Minnesota tribes, and especially for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, it is my honor to announce to you that Bradley Harrington has just accepted the offer to serve as the new Tribal Liaison for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He will soon begin advising the State DNR.”

(See pages 1 and 3 for more on this story.)

**About the State of the Band**

Mille Lacs Band statute requires the Chief Executive to “present to the Band Assembly an annual State of the Band Address on the second Tuesday of January of each calendar year” [4MLBSA 6(i)]. The first State of the Band Address was delivered in 1983, making the Band the first Minnesota tribe to provide a formal update in this way.

A full text version of Melanie’s speech begins on page 5.

# GOVERNOR SUPPORTS SOVEREIGNTY, THANKS BAND FOR STEWARDSHIP

Governor Tim Walz was one of many elected officials and other dignitaries at the 2020 State of the Band Address on January 14, and he was welcomed with standing ovations at the beginning and end of his 8-minute speech.

Walz thanked the color guard, drummers, singers, Elders, veterans, and elected officials, and he also thanked Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin for her leadership, vision, partnership, and friendship. “You are always one phone call away,” said Walz. “Your wise council is always appreciated, always in the best interest of the people of Mille Lacs and the people of Minnesota, so I thank you for that friendship.”

Walz chose White Earth Band member Peggy Flanagan as his running mate in 2018, and one of his first acts as Governor was to pass Executive Order 19-24, requiring state agencies to consult on a government-to-government basis with tribes. He emphasized his respect for tribal sovereignty and self-determination in his speech.

That respect, Walz said, is integral to the “One Minnesota” theme of his campaign and his first year in office. “That’s not just a slogan; it’s what I truly believe,” said Walz. “It’s the idea that every single one of our children — black, white, brown, or Indigenous — should get the same opportunity to succeed, the same education, the same access to health care, and the same quality of life.”

Walz reviewed some of the progress his administration and the Legislature have made in his first year, including equalization of funding for tribal schools and the launch of a task force to respond to the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women. “Never again will we allow such injustices,” Walz said, before quoting Lieutenant Governor Flanagan: “At best, Native women have been invisible, and at worst, disposable,” but from the beginning of time, “Native women have led.”

Working together, Walz said, involves talking about the

**“[ONE MINNESOTA] IS NOT JUST A SLOGAN; IT’S WHAT I TRULY BELIEVE. IT’S THE IDEA THAT EVERY SINGLE ONE OF OUR CHILDREN — BLACK, WHITE, BROWN, OR INDIGENOUS — SHOULD GET THE SAME OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED, THE SAME EDUCATION, THE SAME ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, AND THE SAME QUALITY OF LIFE.”**

injustices and atrocities of the past and recognizing that the entire state sits on Ojibwe and Dakota land.

He also promised to work together with tribes on law enforcement and culturally appropriate treatment, and he thanked the Band for its stewardship of Mille Lacs Lake, in partnership with the state, to ensure that the lake will be there “for our children and the next seven generations.”

He called the relationship between the state and tribes “critically important” and says that whenever he is visited at the Capitol by a tribal leader, he believes it is his responsibility to return the visit to that leader’s reservation.

“We need to show that this relationship matters to Minnesotans,” Walz said. “We need to show that sovereignty is not a term to use when it’s convenient but that we use it all the time, even when it becomes difficult and challenging.”

“I am honored to be here, and I am looking forward to hearing the Chief Executive’s State of the Band,” Walz concluded. “I am very hopeful that the traditions that have made Minnesota home to the Ojibwe and the Dakota for so long, the tra-



Governor Tim Walz and Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman were among the dignitaries in attendance at the State of the Band Address on January 14.

ditions that have brought immigrants to this blessed land, and our ability to be able to co-exist together and create a better life for all of us will continue to move forward. Chi miigwech.”



# ELECTION BOARD POSITIONS OPEN TO MEMBERS

Notice to all Band members: Now is your opportunity to submit a letter of interest for the Election Board for the upcoming 2020 Minnesota Chippewa Tribe election.

**WHAT:** If you are interested in working on the General Election Board or any District Precinct Board during the 2020 MCT Election, please submit your letter of interest to the Legislative Office located in the Government Center building no later than February 7, 2020. Each Board/Precinct consists of a Chairperson, Clerk, Teller, and three Alternates.

**WHO:** In order to apply, you must be an enrolled Mille Lacs Band Member and be at least 21 years of age to qualify. You also must be willing to attend training sessions and work as many hours as necessary to fulfill the duties of the Election Board.

**HOW:** You may hand-deliver or mail your letter to the Legislative Office, 43408 Oodena Drive, Onamia, MN 56359. Email to Wendy.Merrill@millelacsband, or you may fax it to the Legislative Office at 320-532-7506 (fax). You may also go to your local community center and ask the staff to assist you with faxing your letter of interest to the Legislative Office.

In your letter of interest, please indicate the Band district where you reside or, if applicable, the urban area precinct.

General Election Board (District I) — 6 people needed

Isle Precinct — 6 people needed

East Lake Precinct — 6 people needed

Lake Lena Precinct — 6 people needed

Urban Precinct — 6 people needed

# NAYQUONABE NAMED ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Peter Nayquonabe has served in many tribal government roles over the years, which has prepared him well for his new position as Assistant Commissioner of Administration.

Band Assembly voted to confirm Peter last month after he was nominated by Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin.

“I am honored to fill this role within the tribal government,” said Peter. “My parents, Joseph and Rita Nayquonabe, taught me the importance of a strong work ethic and having a solid family base to support you. Growing up, I watched them go to work every day to serve the Band community. My goals have always included getting my education and serving Band members and the area community to the best of my abilities.”

Since 2014, Peter has worked as Executive Director of Community Development. Prior to that, he served as Deputy Director of External Affairs, Finance Manager with Community Development, Director of Tribal Child Support, and Office Manager for the Chief Executive — in addition to previous terms as Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Administration.

Peter holds Bachelor’s degrees in Finance and Accounting from St. Cloud State and a Master’s degree in Tribal Administration and Governance from the University of Minnesota Duluth.

The Department of Administration is responsible for the

day-to-day operations of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe tribal government, including administering grants and contracts and overseeing all personnel issues and lobbying activities as directed by the Chief Executive.

The department is supervised by Commissioner of Administration Baabiitaw Boyd, who was appointed by the Chief Executive and ratified by the Band Assembly last year.

The Commissioner oversees the Assistant Commissioner of Administration, the Commissioner of Community Development, the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, and the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The Commissioner serves as chief of staff to Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and oversees day-to-day operations of the tribal government, including fiscal responsibilities, human resources, grant development, and oversight.

The Assistant Commissioner of Administration acts in a deputy-level capacity to the Commissioner of Administration to help manage the day-to-day operations of the tribal government. Duties include managing human resources, finances, and contracts for the Executive Branch of the tribal government. The Assistant Commissioner also acts as Commissioner of Administration when the Commissioner is absent and assists other commissioners with day-to-day operations as needed.

**Harrington** continued from page 1

Bradley said he was able to accomplish most of what he set out to do when he was appointed Commissioner in 2017. He is especially pleased with the development of the Agriculture Program and the growth of the Fisheries Program. He also enjoyed making global connections for the Band on trips to meet Indigenous people in Hawaii and Peru.

Bradley has studied at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Central Lakes College, the University of Minnesota (Duluth and Twin Cities campuses), the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona, and the Native Governance Center in St. Paul. He has received certification from the Native

Nations Institute, the Blandin Foundation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the nonprofit White Bison and Wellbriety Movement. He has facilitated activities at the tribal/state relations training events relating to Ojibwe language and culture, treaties, and federal Indian law.

Bradley is a parent of Ojibwe immersion students and works in the Mille Lacs community as an advocate for immersion education. He volunteers on local Mille Lacs committees and serves as chair of the local Indian Education Parent Committee. When he is not working on Anishinaabe language, education, and natural resources issues, he spends time with his family.

## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS

### Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Election Calendar

The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe has released the election calendar for 2020. Below are the important dates related to filing for office, the primary election, and the general election.

For the complete calendar, including certification dates, appointment of Election Boards, and deadlines for challenges, recounts, and appeals, see <https://millelacsband.com/news/2020-election-calendar>.

**February 3:** Selection of Election Court of Appeals Judge (for certification of candidate).

**February 10:** Deadline for Notice of Certifications to TEC.

**February 12:** Challenge to certification or non-certification to MCT by 4:30 p.m. on the second business day following receipt of certification.

**February 13:** Deadline for appointment of Election Boards.

**February 13:** Deadline for appointment of Election Contest Judge and alternate Election Contest Judge.

**February 14:** Complete record of all documents related to challenge, submit to Minnesota Chippewa Tribe by 4:30 p.m.

**February 14:** Answer to challenge from the person whose certification is being challenged to the MCT by 4:30 p.m.

**February 18:** Decision of certification or non-certification or within 48 hours of appeal.

**February 20:** Notice of Primary Election and Posting.

**February 21:** TEC provides ballots for Primary Election.

**March 31:** Primary Election. Polling places open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

**April 2:** General Reservation Election Board publishes Primary Results.

**June 9:** General Election. Polling places open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

**July 14:** Winning candidates assume office by operation of law, unless sooner seated, or the election is subject of appeal to the Court of Election Appeals.

## DISTRICT I BRIEFS

**Community Center Naming Contest:** Contest information will be presented at the District I Community Meeting Feb. 12 at 5:30 p.m. with Sandra Blake. Contact Mikayla Schaaf at 320-532-7585 for more information.

**Winter Storytelling is February 13:** The Winter Storytelling event is almost here! Please join us from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Indian Museum in District I for some great food, teachings, and community fun.

Meal provided by Smoke Lodge BBQ.

Entertainment: Max Blake — Native flute music.

Anishinaabe Star Legends and Stories by Mishiikeh Abe Sutherland and Bwaananaabekwe Mary Moose. Open Mic Community Storytelling.

Co-Sponsors: District I Rep. Sandra Blake and Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post. Door prizes. Everyone is welcome.


*4th Annual Winter Storytelling*

Thursday, February 13, 2020  
6pm-8pm  
Mille Lacs Indian Museum

Enjoy an evening of Anishinaabe astronomy and star legends with Miishkenh Abe Sutherland and Mary Moose.  
New this year: community storytelling open mic.

Contact:  
Travis Zimmerman  
320.532.3632  
Mikayla Schaaf  
415.722.5201

Event sponsored by:  
*Office of District 1 Rep Sandra Blake  
and the Mille Lacs Indian Museum*

  
**MILLE LACS  
INDIAN  
MUSEUM**  
AND TRADING POST





On January 6, the District I Community Center Drum and Dance began their winter session. Sessions run eight weeks in duration with an average attendance of 65 participants. “Drum and dance means unity in our community,” said co-organizer Bob Eagle. “It means creating a safe space for our youth. It means strengthening our community values. I enjoy bringing my family here; it is rewarding.”

When co-organizers began this community-driven effort in May 2019, the event brought in a small handful of participants. However, by maintaining consistency through high community interest and collaboration with several Mille Lacs Band programs, numbers grew from 15 to 95 within eight months.

Drum and dance provides the community with the opportunity to engage in knowledge about cultural values and tradition. Males mentor others about drum protocol, songs, and dance, while females mentor others about dance. It is a safe space where families and generations come together to spend time as a community, laugh, and enjoy a meal. Winnie Davis has been cooking delicious meals on a weekly basis, which has brought in a lot of happy eaters.

Community organizer Luther Sam has been instrumental in recruiting and maintaining the consistency of the event. “I believe drum and dance cultivates the culture, and it keeps the tradition of song and dance alive, while bringing a very positive atmosphere to the community,” said Luther. “It is open to all ages and it encourages the young men to come and sing and people to come out and dance. It is a safe place for families while maintaining a drug-and-alcohol-free zone.”

During the fall session in 2019, drum and dance was sponsored primarily through the Mille Lacs Band Public Health’s



Tobacco Free Communities Grant, in collaboration with the Office of District I Representative Sandra Blake. Currently, the event is funded solely through Sandra’s office, volunteers, and donations from the community. “It is great to see the community come together to donate their time and knowledge. I enjoy helping out and to get all the kids involved,” said participant Randell Sam.

Another great addition to the evening has been Makazin games taught by David “Amik” Sam Sr. David volunteers his

time to mentor participants and teach them how to play the game. “It is the opportunity to share something that I love so deeply, sharing the teachings with the kids and those that want to learn the game — the healing game,” David said.

Drum and dance will continue through February with a short break in March to prepare for spring and will begin with a feast to welcome the new season of spring. Everyone is invited to attend.

## MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

# WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

By Betty Kegg

*This article by the late Betty Kegg was first published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted here to help preserve her teachings for the next generation.*

My mother, Maude Kegg, is who I learned from. She was a strong woman. Everything I know from the past, or what to do, comes from her. She taught me my values, traditions, and cultural crafts. My mom taught me to share and to do right for everybody. She taught me to not talk about people. She said don’t ever do anything that you will regret, or that will hurt people. I’ve always thought about that.

People said we were poor, but we didn’t know we were poor. I remember growing up, if somebody had more than what they needed, they’d go along and give it to other people. We had enough to eat. We didn’t have money or brand new clothes, but we were happy. I never knew of Indians existing who didn’t struggle day to day. Thank goodness this is starting to change for some of us.

My mother just loved people. She used to take young people in and raise them as her children. There were already 11 of us, and then she took in many more. One of them was my brother John Nichols. He became a linguistics professor at the University of Minnesota.

My daughter says I’m the same way as my mom when it comes to taking people in. One of my adopted daughters lives in Michigan; her name is Judy. My other daughter who lives here by me is my daughter Mary.

My mother taught me how to make crafts just like hers. For example, she taught me how to make basswood dolls and birch bark baskets. I used to go out and pick the basswood and bark when I was younger. Now the kids, my grandson, and other relatives do it. Making basswood dolls and baskets is not easy to do. My mom always knew the right way to do things, and she would tell me what to do. She wouldn’t do it for me, but she’d always tell me what to do. When I make baskets now, people look at what I’ve made and wonder if it’s my mother’s work. It looks a lot like hers, but I could never fill her shoes, but at least I can do work that is like her work.

About two years ago, I made some really beautiful baskets with a new design. They were really challenging. They were just beautiful. The Mille Lacs Band needed some gifts to present to people on official occasions. One of my baskets was presented to Governor Ventura, and the other one was recently given to Governor Pawlenty. It is nice to pass on our traditional gifts to others.

These days, I teach our traditions to my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I teach them how to make fry bread. I taught my grandson, and he’s really good at it, even though he’s only eight years old. He’s so good at everything. He even makes baskets with me, and little canoes. They are all so eager to learn. My kids and my grandkids are what keep me going. I feel blessed.

My mother taught me to be thankful for everything that the Great Spirit has given us.





**A**aniin, boozhoo, good morning, Mr. Speaker and Members of the Band Assembly. Title 4, Section 6(i) of our Mille Lacs Band Statutes requires the Chief Executive to present to the Band Assembly an annual State of the Band Address. It is my honor to appear before you today in this legislative session to share the State of the Band.

I am grateful to our Court of Central Jurisdiction, our guests, and especially our Band members who have joined us to hear about the State of the Band.

Miigwech to Obizaan for speaking on our behalf. What makes us unique as Anishinaabe are our ceremonies. Jim Clark used to say, “Niitam Asema” (First, Tobacco). We always start our meetings in this good way.

Miigwech to our distinguished Elders, and also to our youth who are here. On that note, happy birthday to my sister, Tempy. By the way, she is the younger one. And miigwech to all my family for being here today.

A special “miigwech” to our brave veterans, our Ogichidaag and Ogichidaakweg. Our veterans are always ready to serve our community.

Today, as we stand at the threshold of a new decade, we hear the sounds of distant drums. Band Elder Jim Clark once wrote, “Our ancestors believed that if we keep bringing out the drums, we would have protection forever. As long as we can hear the drum, as long as the Great Spirit can hear that drum among the Anishinaabe people, there won’t be any aggression against our people.”

Amik told the story this way. In the late 1700s, at the end of the Lakota-Ojibwe wars, a band of Lakota were camped near the Red River. They had gained strength and were preparing to make final war on our ancestors living here. One night, a being appeared to the Lakota and told them that instead of making war, they were to build a Drum. They were given instructions and songs. They were told to give this Drum to the Ojibwe.

That summer, our ancestors were camped on what is now Murray Beach. They could hear the drumming coming from the west. The Lakota were on the way. But when they arrived, they came in peace, not war. They brought a pipe, and that evening, our warriors from both nations smoked the pipe.

The next day more Lakota arrived. They brought with them the Big Drum. As an offering, they gave the Drum to us.

For the rest of that summer, these Lakota and Ojibwe lived together on that beach, teaching and learning the songs and ceremonies until the long summer days began to shorten, and the Lakota returned west. From that day on, we have been allies.

This Big Drum, given to us by the Lakota people, has been protecting our soldiers who go into battle for centuries. That Drum is used today whenever we send our brave warriors off to fight overseas. Of course we have other drums as well, and there are other amazing stories.

The sound of the drum still beats slowly and steadily across this land. It speaks to our Anishinaabe spirit. It even speaks to our babies. The drum feels soothing to them, because it was their first lullaby, even before they were born.

We hear the drum and our spirits rejoice. It is the heartbeat of our people. It beats the story of our ancestors, and the sound of their prayers.

This year, we have a priceless gift for Band members: a book of stories from many of our Elders, some who have walked on. It has been a joy to read their wisdom and teachings.



Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin delivered the annual State of the Band Address at Grand Casino Mille Lacs on January 14.

**“ONE OF OUR VETERANS AND DRUMKEEPERS, JOE NAYQUONABE SR., SAID, ‘I LEARNED THAT WE OWE OUR GRANDPARENTS AND ANCESTORS FOR EVERYTHING THEY DID FOR US. MY GRANDPARENTS ARE WATCHING ME, SO I BEHAVE BETTER. ONE DAY I WILL MEET THEM AGAIN, AND WHAT WILL THEY SAY TO ME? WE OWE IT TO OUR ANCESTORS TO BE GOOD ANCESTORS.’”**

Beatrice Taylor believed that life was about giving to others. She wrote, “All I want to see when I leave this earth is that my children and grandchildren have homes, a good education, and good things like everyone else, but that they are also knowledgeable about their Ojibwe language.” Those were her words.

It is what our ancestors prayed for — mino bimaadiziwin, the good life. They believed that creating a better future for generations they would never even meet was the most important thing. They were good ancestors.

They fought to preserve our language and culture. For decades, they risked being arrested and sent to prison, just for attending a ceremonial dance. But they did it anyway, under the cover of darkness.

They fought against boarding schools kidnapping our children. Diane Gibbs told me that when the Indian agents came to Aazhoomog, a whistle would be blown at the first home, giving families time to hide their little ones. Here near Mille Lacs Lake, many of our ancestors refused to move to White Earth even after the Mille Lacs County Sheriff burned down their homes in 1911 and 1920.

Our ancestors were warriors. One of our veterans and Drumkeepers, Joe Nayquonabe Sr., said, “I learned that we owe our grandparents and ancestors for everything they did for us. My grandparents are watching me, so I behave better. One day I will meet them again, and what will they say to me? We owe it to our ancestors to be good ancestors.”

As we enter this new decade, I think about Joe’s words,

because it seems that is the challenge before us: to be good ancestors for future generations. We will fight the battles we must — for justice, our rights, and protection of our homeland. Long after those who battle us today are gone, we will still be here — because we are the people who survived.

We are the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. We hear the drum, and with each loud beat we know that we will not be moved, we will not be defeated, and we will never surrender our Reservation.

### **A successful year**

2019 was a year of growth and progress for the Band. We achieved success in many areas:

- Because of smart decision-making, our businesses earned nearly 3% more revenue than last year.
- 250 Band members are employed by our casinos, and a record number are in leadership positions.
- We built a state-of-the-art clinic that will expand health, wellness, and dental services.
- We completed a new District 2 community center.
- We opened the Meshakwad Community Center in District 3.
- Elder homes were constructed and renovated in each District.
- And one million dollars were given in scholarships to 265 of our students.

There is so much happening right now in Band government





Breya Sawyer, daughter of Band member Shena Matrious, brought down the house with a beautiful rendition of the national anthem.



District II Representative Marvin Bruneau and District III Representative Wally St. John.



Parliamentarian Darcie Big Bear, Governor Walz, and District I Representative Sandra Blake.

that it is impossible to even speak about a small portion of it. So this year, we have prepared an Executive Annual Report for the Band Assembly and the Band members. Mr. Speaker, I hereby submit this report to the Band Assembly for your review of our work in 2019.

None of this could have been achieved without the hard work of the Band Assembly. Speaker Boyd, and District Representatives Blake, Bruneau, and St. John, miigwech for your hard work this past year. Speaker Boyd, you have made transparency and open meetings a hallmark of your leadership. This is an active Band Assembly, and it has been an honor to work with you.

Title 3 of Band Statutes governs the Legislative Branch. Title 4 governs the Executive Branch, which Band members can find at the end of the annual report on your table. Of the duties listed for the Chief Executive, actually running the programs and services is not one of them. Band Statutes assign those duties to Commissioners, who make day-to-day decisions.

Of the 13 duties listed for the Chief Executive, besides supervising the Commissioners, the most time-consuming duty is conducting external relations with other governments. This includes leading Band efforts to defend and protect our tribal sovereignty, and our right to health care, education, housing, and other programs. It includes working with the State and the federal government, and it means leading our efforts to protect and defend our homelands.

At the State level last year, we worked closely with champions like Representative Mary Kunesh-Podein, who is Lakota. Rep. Kunesh-Podein and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan led state efforts to create the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force in Minnesota.

Representative Melissa Hortman, our Speaker of the State House, held the first-ever Tribal Sovereignty Day at the State Capitol. State lawmakers were trained about tribal sovereignty, our rights, and our shared history. Speaker Hortman is here today. Miigwech, Madame Speaker, for making this historic day happen — and for attending today!

One year ago, a great man took office as our new Governor. Governor Tim Walz has already made huge progress for Indian tribes in Minnesota. I was very proud of the Governor when he selected Peggy Flanagan as his running mate. Together, they have made a big mark on improving the state's relationship with Indian tribes.

One of the Governor's first acts was to sign a new, stronger Executive Order requiring state agencies to consult with us before doing anything that would impact us, and it requires that all state leaders and employees go through a two-day Tribal-State Relations training on a reservation. Mille Lacs just hosted a training last week.

The Governor also achieved new funding for tribal contract schools. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force has begun. The State is providing \$2 million a year for tribes to fight opioid addiction through traditional healing, and there is so much more.

Most important, Governor Walz has treated us as equals. He has met with us more in one year than most other Gov-

ernors did during their entire term, and he even required his entire Cabinet to go through the Tribal-State Relations training, including himself.

He is a former school teacher, a veteran, and he is a leader who understands exactly what treaties mean, because when he was a U.S. Congressman, he had a sworn duty to uphold them.

He is the first Governor to ever attend a State of the Band Address on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Miigwech, Governor, for being here today, and for your words and commitments you made earlier!

The Chief Executive also has a duty to work with the U.S. Congress and the Administration. The Congress has immense power over Indian Affairs, that can be used for good or bad. On the good side, the Congress has sometimes used this power to protect tribes like passing important laws like Self-Governance and the Tribal Law and Order Act.

**"REPRESENTATIVE MELISSA HORTMAN, OUR SPEAKER OF THE STATE HOUSE, HELD THE FIRST-EVER TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL. STATE LAWMAKERS WERE TRAINED ABOUT TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY, OUR RIGHTS, AND OUR SHARED HISTORY. SPEAKER HORTMAN IS HERE TODAY. MIIGWECH, MADAME SPEAKER, FOR MAKING THIS HISTORIC DAY HAPPEN — AND FOR ATTENDING TODAY."**

We are fortunate to have a strong bipartisan team in charge of Indian appropriations: Congresswoman Betty McCollum, a Democrat from Minnesota, and Congressman Tom Cole, a Republican from Oklahoma.

In addition, we now have two strong American Indian women in the Congress: Representatives Deb Haaland and Sharice Davids. They know our issues, and what makes them so special is that we can relate to them.

We also have strong leaders from Minnesota. Senator Smith serves on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and has championed opioid legislation. We have a new Congressman for our District, Representative Pete Stauber. Within just weeks of taking office, he held a dinner meeting with tribal leaders at Fond du Lac to hear our issues. That was impressive.

In the Presidential race, of the 20 Democrats who first announced they were running for President, Senator Amy Klobuchar is polling in the top five. Right after she announced, she called Mille Lacs and asked for our advice in putting together her Indian policy. If you read her policy, it is very strong on tribal sovereignty.

On occasion, the Chief Executive's work includes chasing

down federal officials. On occasion, when there is a national meeting somewhere and certain federal officials we need to speak with are on the agenda, sometimes our team asks me to attend that meeting primarily to try and catch that official in the hallway after they speak, so we can talk about an issue, or remind them that we are still waiting for an answer to a question we already asked.

Making sure that Mille Lacs has a voice at the table is essential. One example of that is the Tribal Nations Leadership Council. It includes 12 tribal leaders who advise the U.S. Attorney General about law enforcement and justice issues in Indian country. This came in handy during our law enforcement crisis, when the county attorney seemed to stop prosecuting most crimes committed on the reservation.

Our close contacts with Interior were also important during that period, when the county attorney wrote to every county in Minnesota and gave them false information, saying that our officers no longer had police powers, and threatened our officers with arrest for impersonating police if they did their jobs.

We were in close contact with federal officials in Washington, who sent the county attorney and the sheriff their own letter, warning them not to mess around with our officers, who were also federal deputies. Every day, we rely on our networking and contacts to protect the Band.

Our other work in Washington included collaborating to get federal funds set aside for tribes to target opioid addiction and treatment. This bill was called the "SUPPORT Act" and has resulted in new funding for our Four Winds Treatment Center.

Another priority was pressing the Congress to reauthorize the Tribal Law and Order Act, including a provision allowing Indian tribes to issue trespass orders, so we can exclude dangerous criminals from coming onto our reservation. After a lot of work, many meetings on Capitol Hill, and Senator Tina Smith championing the effort, I'm pleased to say this bill passed the Senate in 2019 and is awaiting House action.

The Tribal Law and Order Act allows for attorneys to step into the role of Assistant U.S. Attorney, in certain cases. But they have to be trained. Due to the backlog of cases in the U.S. Attorney's office, the Band worked hard to get increased funding so our Solicitor General could be trained to serve as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in certain cases.

Today, I'm happy to announce that Solicitor General Caleb Dogeagle will soon be authorized to prosecute federal crimes in federal court that are committed on our reservation. This is an historic exercise of our tribal sovereignty.

On economic development, we pushed for an extension of a New Markets tax credit before it was set to expire at the end of 2019. We actually used this tax credit to finance Eddy's Resort several years ago, and the housing development in Hinckley. We need the tax credits to continue.

We also pushed the Congress to change federal tax laws for our young people. We fought for new language that protects young Band members under 24 years of age from an unfair tax penalty when they first use their trust fund.

Then in November, something interesting happened. I was invited by Senator Klobuchar to attend an event called the



“Women’s Power Breakfast” in the Twin Cities on November 25th, when I received a call from my staff, saying that Attorney General Barr’s office was urgently trying to reach me. He wanted Mille Lacs at a meeting in his office the very next day. The message said it was about Missing and Murdered Indian Women, which has been a priority of mine.

I had not packed for an overnight trip, but urgent phone calls from the U.S. Attorney General don’t happen every day. So I rushed to the airport, jumped on the next plane, and did some speed-shopping for a change of clothes. Monday evening, I found out that this meeting was not in Attorney General Barr’s office — it was in the Oval Office, and the President would be there. He would be signing an Executive Order creating a federal Task Force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Six tribal leaders had been invited, and four of us were able to attend, including Chairman Kevin Dupuis and Roger Smith from Fond du Lac. At first, we were told we would only witness the signing. When we arrived, we were told to stand behind the President, and that the shortest person should stand right behind him. That happened to be me. After he put his pen down, he began thanking each of us for coming. He said, “We have with us Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of . . .” But he could not pronounce “Ojibwe.” Behind him, I quietly said, “Ojibwe . . . It’s Ojibwe” — when he suddenly turned around and said, “Would you like to say something? Could you say a few words? Come here, Melanie.”

I’ll tell you what, that was a surprise, because I had not planned on saying anything. But I did, and talked about the importance of doing something about our Missing and Murdered Indian Women. Then the other leaders were also invited to speak, but the only reason that happened was because he could not pronounce “Ojibwe.”

## Making progress

The Mille Lacs Band is moving ahead, and making progress. We are planning for future generations, as our ancestors wanted. I will now touch on a few of the highlights and challenges from our annual report.

In the Department of Health and Human Services, our new clinic is finally finished, and its doors will open soon, offering more services. This project would not have happened were it not for former Commissioner Samuel Moose and his efforts to get it off the ground. Miigwech, Sam.

In 2019, Commissioner Nicole Anderson made big improvements to serving patients. Through a reorganization, we have doubled the number of patients seen daily, and even started a walk-in policy. Over 80 walk-ins were served the first month.

We are making progress in treating addiction. Over the past year, more than 400 Band member clients received Rule 25 assessments, and more than 250 Band members received out-patient treatment and aftercare. And Four Winds Lodge, our six-week recovery program in Brainerd, treated 160 patients.

The biggest challenge we face in Health and Human Services today is the high rate of children being placed outside the home by the courts. Social workers have the highest rate of burnout of any field, as high as 75 percent in some studies.

We have 15 social worker positions, but only nine are currently filled.

This is a crisis. The Band must devote more resources to this issue — our children must be our top priority. I have ordered an overhaul of this area. A higher salary scale for social workers has been approved, so we can recruit and hire the best social workers in Minnesota. Also, Family Services will be re-designed. When parents have done what the court requires, and the home is safe, we must focus on family reunification, but we need our social work positions fully staffed.

For 2020, I have also directed Commissioner Anderson to open a Women’s Halfway House, and continue training and hiring Band members as Service Coordinators and Recovery coaches. The priority will be placing counselors in Districts II and III.

I also want to say a word about our Band foster families. Even when a birth parent is unable to care for a child any longer, that child will almost always feel an emotional bond with their birth parents that is unbreakable. Our Band foster parents make sure the child still gets that emotional connection, but in a safe environment by maintaining some connection with their birth parents, extended family, and culture. Miigwech to all our Band foster parents, who care for our children and ensure they stay in our community. You are our heroes!

2019 was a big year for Education as well. Under Commissioner Joyce Shingobe, leadership changes were made at Nay Ah Shing schools. We have been seeing so much progress in our schools. Student achievement is increasing, and our cultural programs are growing.

In higher education, over 40 Band members earned their technical certificates, associate of arts degrees, master’s degrees, and PhDs. Also, first-generation descendants with a Band member parent are now eligible for scholarships. Miigwech to this Band Assembly for restoring this benefit.

For 2020, I have directed Commissioner Shingobe to work on opening an Alternative Learning Center at Nay Ah Shing. The goal will be to increase the number of high school graduates by recruiting and enrolling Band members up to age 22 who dropped out of high school.

Our Community Development Department was busy in 2019 as well. One of its duties is running Mino Bimaadiziwin, which provided temporary emergency housing to 111 Band members last year. Thirty percent of those who left moved into permanent housing, and it is our goal to increase that number.

Over \$3 million was spent on building new Elder and disabled homes in each district, and renovating existing homes. Twenty-three homes were reconditioned and turned over to the rental program. The Band’s zero percent home loan program has been a great success helping Band members achieve the dream of home ownership. Because of these loans, 330 Band members own their homes right now, and over 90 percent are up to date with their payments.

This year, the priority is to get final approval for a rent-to-own policy so that Band members who are renting homes and want to stay there can achieve their dream of home ownership. We look forward to working with the Band Assembly on completing this policy.

In economic development, our commercial hotels are doing well, along with our two casinos. But we need to focus on doing well everywhere, across all three districts.

For 2020, I have directed Commissioner Nayquonabe to bring sustainable, well-paying jobs to District II, and invest to provide infrastructure and job creation.

In the Department of Natural Resources, planning for the impact of climate change has been a focus. Warming temperatures are changing everything. Birds are returning sooner, and deer are breeding sooner — sometimes before they have enough to eat. One hundred years ago, 90 percent of trees around Mille Lacs were maple. Today, only 30 percent are maple, because they are moving north.

Climate change is causing flooding, which harms crops, and food prices will increase. Of great concern is our Manoomin, which is very sensitive to any change in water levels.

Something called “climate migration” is already happening in America, with more Americans choosing to relocate to higher, cooler lands with more water resources. It’s different for us. As Anishinaabe, we have no place to migrate to. Our lives are here, on our homelands in each district. Our burial sites cannot be moved. Our Treaty Rights to hunt, fish, and gather are not portable. We need to prepare for the future. The good news is, we have already begun.

**“WIPING OUT OUR LANGUAGE WAS A STRATEGY OF THE COLONIZERS TO ASSIMILATE US INTO AMERICAN CULTURE. BUT WE NOW HAVE A PLAN TO PRESERVE AND TEACH OUR LANGUAGE FOREVER. THE BAND HAS ACHIEVED FEDERAL APPROVAL THROUGH THE AANJIBIMAADIZING PROGRAM TO CREATE AN EXCITING OJIBWE LANGUAGE TEACHING SYSTEM, WHICH IS CREATING JOBS FOR BAND MEMBERS.”**

The old “Sod-Busters” property has been converted into a tribal farm, named “Lenny’s Orchard” in honor of the late Leonard Sam. It began producing fresh fruits and vegetables last summer, and is being expanded. Best of all, our youth from the Widoo program who helped out became completely hooked on gardening. They are learning how to grow and harvest food, like our ancestors did. We have also acquired a fully functioning ranch in Morrison County, where Band members will learn about cultural growing techniques.

Unfortunately, we also face a soil crisis. Experts predict that there may be only 60 years left of good soil for growing food. To prepare for this, the Band started an Aquaponics program. Aquaponics combines raising fish with growing plants in water. We can grow food year-round without wasting even one drop of water. This has already begun.

The Manidoog gave us an entire pharmacy, right outside on our homelands, and we are re-learning about our plants. At a facility in Wahkon, Band members can now get traditional plant medicines for things like arthritis or anxiety.

Our fisheries program is thriving. This year, our little hatchery produced over 1 million walleye fry, which were stocked into our ponds. 21,000 fingerlings were stocked into four area lakes. One of these lakes will be a fishing pond which only Elders and youth will be allowed to use for outdoor fun together.

Our Food Sovereignty program will create exciting new jobs for Band members. I am directing the Commissioner of Natural Resources to continue growing this program.

But it will not be Bradley Harrington performing that role. Governor Walz now requires every state agency to have a Tribal Liaison position. The State DNR just created that position to advise the DNR on tribal policy.

In a major development for Minnesota tribes, and especially for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, it is my honor to announce to you that Bradley Harrington has just accepted the offer to



Commissioners Baabittaw Boyd and Nicole Anderson and Onamia School Board Chair Virgil Wind were among many tribal leaders and government officials who attended the event.



serve as the new Tribal Liaison for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He will soon begin advising the State DNR and his new Supervisor, Commissioner Sarah Strommen.

Commissioner Strommen, it will be a privilege for the State to have Brad working with you! Please make sure he's treated well, or I will be coming down there to bring him back!

The Administration Department, led by Commissioner Melissa Boyd and our new Assistant Commissioner Pete Nayquonabe, leads Human Resources and the Aanjibimaadizing Program, which means "changing lives" in our language. This program helps Band members with education, training, work experience, and support services to improve their lives. The goal is to help participants to end dependency on government assistance through getting jobs and improving job readiness.

Just 100 years ago, 70 percent of Mille Lacs Band members spoke only Ojibwe, and only 30 percent spoke any English. Today, 100 percent of us speak English, and only a handful are fluent in Ojibwe. Many people of my generation do not speak Ojibwe because the boarding school system punished our parents and grandparents if they used the language. In other cases, the BIA relocated many of our parents to big cities, which separated us from other Ojibwe speakers. So we grew up speaking English.

Wiping out our language was a strategy of the colonizers to assimilate us into American culture. But we now have a plan to preserve and teach our language forever. The Band has achieved federal approval through the Aanjibimaadizing Program to create an exciting Ojibwe language teaching system, which is creating jobs for Band members.

When people would talk about how we are losing our language, Jim Clark used to say, "you can't lose something that you are giving up." Through this program, we are going to get it back and give it to our Band members again. Chief Executive Art Gahbow's goal was to one day have Ojibwe spoken throughout the government center and in meetings. With this new project, we might reach that goal someday. Future Band members will be able to learn our language, and our ceremonies can continue forever.

This is how we will be good ancestors.

## New warriors

There are two issues in the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe that Band members need to be informed about. The first deals with a resolution passed by the TEC last winter. Some of our Band trust lands include not just the name of the Mille Lacs Band on the title, but also the name of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Last winter, the TEC voted to pursue legislation that will correct the title on these lands by removing the MCT from the title. This is very important to Mille Lacs and other Bands. There are discussions happening at the TEC, which Band members will receive a letter about in the near future.

Second, in 2017, the TEC voted to hold a Constitutional Convention to consider changes to the constitution. Our Band member delegates have been working very hard, attending many meetings with delegates from the other Bands, and meeting on their own.

Many of our delegates are concerned about this process. They have stated they believe that the entire Band should be part of any decisions going forward, rather than just their small group. They have proposed an all-day conference just for Mille



Lacs Band members on this topic in the near future. It is very important that Band members be part of this conversation. Delegates have a table outside, and I encourage you to visit them and find out more.

At this time, would each of our delegates please stand if you are able? These Band members are looking out for our Band. They are new warriors. Let's give them a round of applause. Miigwech!

I also want to acknowledge our other new warriors who always contribute to our community: This Christmas, our local chapter of Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations cooked up food, collected gifts, and went to Mino Bimaadiziwin. Families had a nice meal and the children received gifts. Miigwech to our WEWIN members, and to Valerie Harrington for organizing this event.

Our third grade students at Nay Ah Shing showed that even kids can be warriors for our community. They did a food drive right before Christmas, then they packed up the food, loaded the bus, and delivered it to our food shelf.

Don Eubanks is a warrior for social justice, by doing important work to educate people in Minnesota and the nation about issues of racism and identity through his radio show, "Counter Stories" on National and Minnesota Public Radio. This is wonderful service that will benefit American Indian people!

We have many other new warriors who work every day for our community, some who just work hard to brighten the day of an Elder. Many Elders bring up Robert Mitchell, who drives them to their medical appointments, and talk about how kind he is, how he always offers to help them with little chores and always manages to lift their spirits. I know there are hundreds of other Band members who are always there to help. Miigwech to all of you for what you do for the Band.

**"OUR FEDERAL LAWSUIT WILL TAKE YEARS TO RESOLVE. WHILE THE BAND HAS BEHAVED WITH HONOR, THE COUNTY HAS ENGAGED IN A PUBLIC RELATIONS ATTACK ON US, BY SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION IN THE NEWSPAPER, TRYING TO BUILD FEAR AND MISTRUST AMONG OUR NON-INDIAN NEIGHBORS."**

## Legal issues

At the State of the Band Address in 2015, I was happy to announce that for the first time in decades, crime had decreased on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Then suddenly, in July of 2016, Mille Lacs County revoked our law enforcement agreement, and claimed tribal police had almost no authority. It seemed our neighborhoods changed almost overnight. We began a period of the highest rate of violence, drug-related crime, and death we have ever known in our modern history.

Our reservation became known as a police-free zone by criminals from all over, who had no fear of tribal police, and moved into some of our homes. Elders were threatened, and many children will forever carry the scars of violence and death. That year, Mille Lacs County had the highest crime rate of all 87 counties in Minnesota.

We begged previous state officials for help. Promises were made, and broken, and except for offering mediation, no help came. We finally accepted that we were on our own. We did the only thing left we could do. In 2018, we filed suit against Mille Lacs County in federal court.

Whenever I tell this story to those who are not from here, they ask "Why? Why did the county end our law enforcement agreement?" We found that out right away, when the county refused to reinstate the agreement unless we agreed to act as if our reservation created by the Treaty of 1855 no longer existed. The second question they ask is this: "With such high crime, why would they replace two dozen highly skilled tribal police officers who know our families and culture with just six



county deputies who are strangers to us?" The answer is, to protect their legal argument about our reservation no longer existing. They said our police had almost no authority in Minnesota without their permission.

The third question is always the hardest to answer. Why would former state officials do nothing to help Minnesota citizens who were victimized by crime and violence? That answer is as dark as the racism that has always existed in government institutions. Certain politicians and their advisors were afraid of losing votes. In a meeting with one of our government affairs staff, a former state elected official not only admitted this was true — he was proud of it.

Our people were threatened and harassed and children were traumatized because of a political calculation. While the state refused to help us, the federal government stepped in. The Secretary of Interior made an emergency trip to our reservation and agreed to send federal law enforcement officers to help us. Our police were also deputized by the federal government.

With prayer and ceremony, and help from our Trustee, we managed to get through that period until the agreement was reinstated in 2018, and our tribal police were back in full force. In May, the U.S. Attorney announced a major federal indictment. Eight people were arrested and charged with ten counts of conspiracy to distribute heroin on the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. They are facing federal prison. Last week, another person was indicted and is going to federal prison.

Those particular drug dealers are now gone from our reservation, and we will not stop until we get rid of every drug dealer, no matter who they are. Miigwech to U.S. Attorney Erica MacDonald and Assistant U.S. Attorney Deidre Aanstad for their cooperation and outstanding work.

At every table in this room today, there is someone who lost a loved one due to drugs or drug-related violence. We are a community that has experienced the worst kind of racism and the worst kind of silence from those who were supposed to be our allies — all because one group of county commissioners say our reservation no longer exists.

At the federal level, there is no question. Democrats and Republicans agree that our reservation boundary exists. The Bush Administration supported us in 2000. The Obama Administration wrote a legal opinion saying our reservation has always existed. Even the Trump Administration has said our reservation exists. The only parties that disagree are Mille Lacs County and the former Attorney General, who took that position in hopes of getting votes.

During the civil rights era, a great man once said, "It is time to get out of the shadow of states' rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights." That man was Hubert H. Humphrey. Minnesota was once a leader on civil rights. But on Indian policy, Minnesota has been an outlier. There are 573 Indian tribes spread across America. It is not normal, in this day and age, for any state to be in the business of trying to terminate an Indian tribe's reservation. It does not have to be this way in Minnesota, and it should not.

But I have hope for the future, because I have hope and confidence in Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and Attorney General Ellison. We will continue fighting for our basic right to





With the auditorium full to capacity, the State of the Band event was transmitted to a conference room at Grand Casino Mille Lacs and streamed to Facebook Live for those who could not attend.

our homelands, and invite them to our struggle.

Our federal lawsuit will take years to resolve. While the Band has behaved with honor, the county has engaged in a public relations attack on us, by spreading false information in the newspaper, trying to build fear and mistrust among our non-Indian neighbors.

To our friends and neighbors, I have this to say. There are 11 Indian reservations in the State of Minnesota, and thousands of non-Indian people who live within those reservation boundaries who have never experienced what Mille Lacs County wants you to believe will happen.

Federal law is very clear. If you live within our reservation and are not a Mille Lacs Band member, we cannot tax you. We cannot zone you. We cannot force you into our courts. If you are arrested, the case goes to the state or federal government. If you live within our boundary, you do not lose any rights you have as a county or state citizen.

The fact is, our reservation HAS existed since 1855, and we have never once attempted any of these things. The county is not telling you the truth. They are just trying to justify raising your taxes to pay the legal bill for their obsession with getting rid of our reservation.

The Mille Lacs Band wants nothing more than to live in peace, and be good neighbors. We have been good neighbors and we will continue to do so, no matter what.

**Forever our home**

Many Elders talk about how they feel about our homelands. When the health of our mom, Baashking, began to fail, my sisters and brothers and I took care of her in shifts so she could stay in her home. For awhile, she had to spend many weeks in the nursing home in Onamia. I would visit her almost every day. Nearly every time she saw me, she would say, “Okay, Mel, let’s go. It’s time to bust me out of here.”

My mom was the only Anishinaabe Elder staying at the memory care unit at that time. But one day she looked at me with clear eyes and told me why she wanted to go home. She said, “You and I are different from everyone else here. We are

**“BAND MEMBERS YOUNG AND OLD ARE EMERGING AS WARRIORS, READY TO FIGHT FOR OUR TRADITIONAL WAYS, OUR LANGUAGE, OUR SAFETY, AND OUR HOMELANDS. WE ARE A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, AND BUSINESS PEOPLE. WE ARE EDUCATORS, WRITERS, SCIENTISTS, COUNSELORS, AND HEALTH PROVIDERS. WE ARE WILDLIFE EXPERTS AND CHEFS AND DANCERS. WE ARE CARPENTERS, MECHANICS, AND WELDERS. WE ARE THE YOUTH, WE ARE THE WORKERS, AND WE ARE THE RETIRED. WE ARE THE WARRIORS WHO WILL STAND AND FIGHT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.”**

the kind of people who need to feel the ground underneath our feet.”

I heard a Pawnee woman said it another way. She said, “I take my shoes off, stand in the water, eyes on the lake, feel the water move with my feet and my soul. This place grounds me. This land knows my name.”

That is how many Anishinaabe feel about our home. The Manidoog in the lakes, in the trees, in the plants and earth all around us know who we are. They know our names. Each of us were meant to be born and to be where we are. Across all three districts, the land knows our name. We are moved by a sense of joy when the maple sap runs, when the trees bud out, when the birds return.

Nelson Mandela said it another way. When talking about the racism and conflict that terrorized his homeland of South Africa, and the aftermath and scars his people still bore, he talked about the link between ancestral lands and the identity of his people. He said, “that spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland explains the depth of the pain we all carried in our hearts...” when his country was torn apart by violence. Mille Lacs Band members can relate to that.

The United States once tried to rob us of our language, our religion, and our children and families. They robbed us of our

land, and the state tried to stop us from hunting and fishing and feeding our families, and stole our medicines. The federal government gave us constitutions with enrollment laws that were intended to reduce our size, and eventually enroll us out of existence. All of these things were done to achieve one thing: To rob us of our ability to imagine a future.

They failed. Band members young and old are emerging as warriors, ready to fight for our traditional ways, our language, our safety, and our homelands. We are a community of artists, musicians, and business people. We are educators, writers, scientists, counselors, and health providers. We are wildlife experts and chefs and dancers. We are carpenters, mechanics, and welders. We are the youth, we are the workers, and we are the retired. We are the warriors who will stand and fight for future generations.

Band members, together, we will finish the job our ancestors started. We will fulfill the promise to future generations we have yet to meet — that these lands will forever be our home. We are the non-removables, and together, we will face our battles and we will win.

And when future generations look back on what we achieve together, they will say that we were good ancestors!

Bizindawiyeg. Chi miigwech!



The auditorium at Grand Casino Mille Lacs was filled with Band members of all ages, tribal employees, friends, family, and leaders of other tribal and non-Indian governments.





## STATE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

# WORK, SACRIFICE, AND GRATITUDE

By Secretary/Treasurer Sheldon Boyd

Good morning all, and welcome, Mille Lacs Band members, Mille Lacs Band Employees, Mille Lacs Band Elders, Distinguished Guests. Welcome to the Mille Lacs Band 36th Annual State of the Band Address.

By Mille Lacs Band Statute, on the second Tuesday of each calendar year, the Chief Executive is mandated to give the Annual State of the Band Address to the Band Assembly of the Legislative Branch of the Mille Lacs Band Government.

Shortly it is my duty as Speaker of the Assembly to open the 1st Session of the 19th Assembly of the Mille Lacs Band Legislature.

But first, allow me please to introduce the members of the Legislative Branch and Band Assembly:

The Honorable District I Representative Sandra Blake

The Honorable District II Representative Marvin Bruneau

The Honorable District III Representative Wally St. John

Commissioner of Finance Mel Towle

Parliamentarian Darcie Big Bear

Staff Attorneys Christine Jordan, Hannah Valento, Joaquin Gallegos

Legislative Staff Director Wendy Merrill, Val Harrington, Brianna Boyd, Semira Kimpson, Kiana Morrison, Deanna Sam, Cheryl Miller, Michelle Pomerleau, Billie Boyd, Pam Eagle, Mikayla Schaaf.

We cannot forget the staff of the Office of Management and Budget, Chris Waite, Katy Radunz, Joni Wall, and all the OMB Staff.

Next, please allow me to provide a brief update on what's been going on since taking office July 10, 2018.

### Legislative report

There are two legislatures in the State of Minnesota: the Mille Lacs Band Legislature and Minnesota State Legislature.

The Mille Lacs Band Legislative Branch, arguably the most powerful, is the source of all finance and beginning of all substantive change in our government.

The inherent power to make law lives within the sovereignty of Anishinaabe, and that inherent power is then delegated, via the constitution and government, to the District Representatives of the Band Assembly and Chief Executive by elections.

Your Representatives are there to make laws on your behalf. That is the Legislature's most important function within our nation.

Laws are, in a sense, a record of a nation and legacy.

For example, the United States has among other landmark laws the Civil Rights Act, the Social Security Act, the Voting Rights Act, and more directly in effect here are the Indian Civil Rights Act, the Self Determination Act, and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, among others.

Mille Lacs Band leaders some 40 years ago had the daring to establish this three-branch government on this small Nay Ah Shing Community on the Mille Lacs Reservation. It may well have been the only three-branch tribal government at that time.

But the foundation was laid. The forethought and courage to accept this new system had to come from the people or it certainly would have failed.

That brings us to today. The Anishinaabe of time immemorial have adapted to the times linguistically and governmentally,

We are looking to make substantive improvements here in the Mille Lacs Legislative Branch, which includes establishing a Revisor of Statutes Office and implementing an electronic audio video system that assists the parliamentarian to meet the statutory mandate of recording the acts and deeds of the Legislature.

Members of the Mille Lacs Legislative Branch have recently made trips to the Minnesota Legislature offices to network and gather information about established practices.

There was a visit to the Chief Clerk for the House of Representatives Pat Murphy, The Minnesota House and Senate where we were warmly received and gathered more insight to that larger environment.

Interestingly, part of the presentation by the Chief Clerk, and I hope I remember this correctly, mentioned foundations for U.S. and State Legislative decorum is based on the Iroquois Confederacy, where respect for each other and order within meetings was borrowed early in the years of the United States.

### New and revised laws

Now the planned Revisor's Office has a huge task.

In particular was a visit to the Office of the Revisor of Statutes where staff there was welcoming and openly shared best practices and reference material for drafting bills for the law-making process.

Again, I thank Sandy Glass and staff for their attention.

Mille Lacs Band Statutes, not printed since 2006, are planned to be reprinted and published periodically.

As an example, in your packets at each table seat is a draft bill: Title 27 — The Open Meeting and Data Practices Act.

This draft bill tracks the initiatives that are part of the set of goals of my term as Secretary/Treasurer — the need for transparency in government and live streaming of Band Assembly sessions.

This bill has a sponsor in District III Representative Wally St. John, is meant to provide more transparency and oversight by the people, and is expansive in the material covered. Please read this.

This proposed law is meant to provide a framework to begin to clarify how the government protects and manages all types of information, and if enacted will be landmark legislation and keeps Mille Lacs as one of the more progressive tribal governments.

Now a law like this only means something if you read it and hold your government to the law, and the government must breathe life into the words by action.

One Band statute under review is Title 8 — Child Protection. The review process will include collecting information at community meetings and an Elder panel. It is sponsored by District I Representative Sandra Blake. Other statutes under review are Title 8 — Child support; Title 23, Section 9 — Prohibited Drugs Statute; Title 21 — Chapter 4: Unlawful Detainer; Title 22 — Commissioner of Finance Description; Title 25 — Steven Tibbetts; Title 16 — Corporate; Title 18 — TERO; and Title 9 — Education.

### Economic security

When gaming came to our tribe, some 30 years ago now, I remember the goal was to learn the gaming business and eventually begin management of our casinos — not let someone else manage what we can do ourselves.

The first seven years was a partnership with Grand Casinos

and we shared profits.

In exchange, the Mille Lacs Band gained the experience of gaming management and, with eventual termination of that relationship, began exclusive management and received 100 percent of the profits.

Now during this time of 20-plus years, the Mille Lacs Band has invested those gaming profits and used those investments to make possible many other benefits, like housing, health care, and business diversification.

We all should applaud the efforts of our leaders over these 30 years of what can be called the Gaming Era.

However, it is the management of our investments that hasn't tracked along with the management goals of our casinos, and we are not alone in this.

Tribes across the land have natural resources of coal, gas, and oil, and gaming that has brought prosperity, and the experiences of that prosperity are wide ranging in history.

There historically has been a mix of theft and swindle, successes and great accomplishment, from the example of the book *Killers of the Flower Moon* to the Native American Finance Officers Association.

The movement toward taking a more active role in the management of Tribal finances is a shared movement among tribes nationally.

This subject matter falls squarely on the Office of the Secretary/Treasurer, to evaluate and make recommendations.

These investments are the economic security of the Mille Lacs Band.

Therefore, an independent evaluation of the Band's investments and other financial entities is planned, and approval from the leaders of the Mille Lacs Band will be sought.

If approved, there will be further evaluation of the current laws and infrastructure of Band government to adequately monitor and take a more active role in managing investments.

This evaluation and any substantive recommendations will be firsts, and will be keeping Mille Lacs at the forefront along with other progressive tribes.

### Laying the foundation

Now before I open the 1st Session of the 19th Band Assembly, allow me to pass on a personal memory.

I remember in the early 1960s, my dad on his land, his individual trust allotment, the document signed by President Calvin Coolidge, on Wigwam Bay, having us kids help mix cement in a trough, handing us a trowel, just so we knew how it felt, showing us how to lay bricks for the foundation of the house we were going to live in.

Weekends of plumb lines, piles of dirt, string levels, wearing his same work clothes that still had cement on them from a week of work on the streets of Minneapolis as a truck driver delivering building materials.

Just him and his children laying the foundation for what was going to be a safe place to live for many years to come.

Only to bring his drum out and sing at the end of the day in an open-framed section of the house after my mom fed everyone.

This is the kind of work, sacrifice, and gratitude that guides many Anishinaabe families here today — the kind of work, sacrifice, and gratitude that will be needed to prepare things for our children and their children.

Miigwech. I call to order the 1st Session of the 19th Assembly in the Nay Ah Shing Community on January 14, 2020.



JUDGE DAVID CHRISTENSEN

# STATE OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Boozhoo, Aaniin, good morning, Chief Executive Benjamin, Speaker Boyd, District Representatives of the Band Assembly, Mille Lacs Band members, employees, and guests. It is a good day for all of us to come together for this occasion.

My name is David Christensen. I serve as the District Court Judge for the Band's Court of Central Jurisdiction. I see many familiar faces today, but not all of you have found your way into the Tribal Court courtroom, which may be a good thing for you. I am an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. It has been very exciting to see the growth and development of the Court since I first came to work for the Mille Lacs Band 27 years ago in the Office of the Solicitor General. I also served as the first legislative counsel for Band Assembly. During that time, I helped draft the revisions to the judicial code and saw the transition to the current Tribal Court system. It has been my honor and privilege since 2015 to serve as the District Court Judge and see on a daily basis the positive effect the Court can have on the lives of individual Band members and their families.

## Tribute to justices

As many of you are aware, it is the responsibility of the Chief Justice of the Band's Court of Appeals to give this address. Unfortunately, Chief Justice Rayna Churchill cannot join us today due to health issues she is facing. So I have been given the responsibility and privilege of providing you with the State of the Judiciary address.

Before I do that, I would like to take this time to reflect on Chief Justice Churchill's leadership and her impact since she was first appointed to the bench eleven years ago in 2009. As an appellate court justice, she approaches her role honestly and seriously, balancing the need to ensure justice is done with compassion for the situation of the litigants. As the Chief Justice, she is overall responsible for the administration of the court system. During her tenure, Chief Justice Churchill has overseen the development and addition of a highly effective, culturally-grounded peacemaking process in Family Court. Working with a skilled peacemaker, many litigants have been able to use the circle process to improve communication and identify issues in order to better resolve their disputes and begin to heal their relationships. Justice Churchill is also responsible for the many structural improvements that the Court has been implementing: from updating court rules to advocating for much-needed additional judges and staff to making recommendations to the Chief Executive and Band Assembly for the renovation of the District I, soon-to-be-former Community Center into a Court facility.

The Court of Central Jurisdiction's new home will have enough space to accommodate two courtrooms, it will include secure and confidential areas for individuals to meet with their lawyers or the peacemaker, and it will have sufficient parking space, which will be a relief to the folks working in the Government Center. She has helped to bring us a long way from the trailer with no bathrooms that used to house the Tribal Court! We are grateful for her work on the court system's behalf. We also deeply appreciate the Chief Executive and the Band Assembly for their steady and generous support of the initiatives she has overseen. Chi miigwech!

There are times when the Court does get a happy break from dealing with situations of strain and crisis. These include when the Justices are asked to perform wedding ceremonies, which Justice Churchill says brings her great joy.

We greatly miss having the Chief Justice present with us today as we recognize her more than a decade of steadfast service and leadership that has created a court system of which the Band is justifiably proud.

If Justice Clarence Boyd is present today, please stand. I also have the pleasure of recognizing Justice Boyd, who has faithfully served as the Associate Justice for District I for 16 years, until his retirement from the bench just this last September. The Court is deeply indebted to him for his steady hand, wisdom, and dedication during these crucial years. Miigwech!

I would also like to recognize Justice Ramona Applegate, who was appointed in 2017 and serves as the Associate Justice from District II. She has been a wonderful addition to the bench, and we have been keeping her very busy. Justice Applegate has expressed that she enjoys her judicial work, as it is her way to contribute to the well-being of the Band and its members. Please stand Justice Applegate and be recognized.

The newest appointment to the Court of Appeals was made this past October, with the appointment of Justice Elmer Nayquonabe as the new District I Justice. It is a new challenge for him, but he said he is looking forward to it. If Justice Nayquonabe could please stand and let us recognize him.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a distinguished judiciary.

As every attorney can tell you, while the judges and justices are very important, it is almost equally important to stay on the good side of the court clerks! Their job is to help out; it is not to offer legal advice.

In 2004, the Tribal Court had 961 cases filed. In 2019, there were 1,442 cases filed — which is more than a 50 percent increase. And every one of those cases involves multiple pleadings, hearings, and orders. In 2019, the court held 1,962 hearings and issued 3,793 orders. In addition, the court audited old records and closed out 2,743 of those old cases. These are enormous numbers for a staff of this size. Without the diligent hard work and reliability of the court staff, we would not be able to provide the level of justice services that we do. Would the Tribal Court staff please rise and accept my appreciation.

## The crucial role of tribal courts

It has been said that tribal justice systems are one of the clearest expressions of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Tribal Courts are in a position to take into account the unique culture, history, and family values so fundamental to a sovereign nation. Nowhere is that more true than here at the Mille Lacs Band. In my years with the Court, I have witnessed the ongoing metamorphosis of the Band's court system to one that more accurately mirrors the Band's unique judicial philosophy and traditional theory of law.

The principle of zhaa we ni ma is always at the forefront of what we are attempting to accomplish in the court. The purpose is to maintain balance and keep the people together. Unlike state and federal courts' adversarial systems, the Court is engaged in "a cooperative search for truth and justice." The individuals in the case, the lawyers, and the Judges all have a responsibility to this end. That does not mean that cases can't be contentious at times, but we have a responsibility to keep Mille Lacs Band values in the proceeding.

The Band's own court system is the best place for the Community's children to be protected. It is the best place for offenses to be addressed and disputes to be resolved. As the growth in caseload shows, more and more individuals and agencies



Judge David Christensen presented an update on the activities of the Judicial Branch.

are choosing to bring their cases to the Tribal Court.

We are taking steps to improve access to justice and to be more user-friendly. You will see improvements to the Court's website. You can go there now to find and read court decisions that have been approved for publication by the Court of Appeals. We have made the probate process easier for people to navigate with simplified court forms and a self-help guide. When a loved one passes, the family has other concerns, and getting through the court process smoothly should not be one of them. These forms and guides and many others can be found on the Court's website.

## Success story

The uniquely culturally reflective approach that the Tribal Court uses appears to be showing positive results in the lives and futures of Band members. I would like to share with you one story of a family, who, with the Band's help, overcame the serious struggles that accompany chemical dependency and substance use disorder:

About five years ago, a young woman gave birth to a child. The mother admitted to having used drugs throughout her pregnancy. The baby was born having been prenatally exposed to drugs during the pregnancy and suffered painful withdrawal symptoms. The young mom admitted that she could not quit using without help and that she could not take care of the baby until she did. A Child in Need of Protection or Services (also referred to as a "CHIPS" case) was filed, and custody of the baby was granted to the Mille Lacs Band through Family Services and the child was placed in foster care. Within a couple of weeks, the mother was able to obtain treatment at a program that let her have her baby with her. She successfully completed treatment and within nine months, the CHIPS case was closed. Great!

Unfortunately, that's not the end of the story. She relapsed, started a cycle of relapses, homelessness, and going in and out of jail on drug possession charges. She overdosed but fortunately survived. At one point, she believed that it would help her to leave the reservation community and go to treatment in another area. She would have periods of sobriety, several times getting close to having her child returned to her, but then would flounder again and go back to using.

After several years of this pattern, the mother found that she had exhausted her options and returned to the Mille Lacs community. But by now things had changed on the reservation. She was able to have temporary sober housing. Gradually, the mother, with the support of Family Services, started to access the programs and resources now available to her through the Band. She completed a Rule 25 chemical use assessment conducted by the Band, entered a Suboxone program, and started receiving outpatient treatment at the Red Brick House. She also began to address her issues of trauma, grief, and loss through individual therapy, including equine therapy.

**State of the Judicial Branch** continued on page 12



# STATE AND LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS

## Native American activist 'humiliated' by TSA agent:

Indigenous rights activist and attorney Tara Houska said she was humiliated by her treatment at the hands of a Transportation Security Agency agent at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport last month. Houska described the incident on Twitter: "Going through @TSA at @mspairport, the agent said she needed to pat down my braids. She pulled them behind my shoulders, laughed & said 'giddyup!' as she snapped my braids like reins." The TSA has apologized to Houska. *Source: wcco.com.*

## White Earth uses food kits to encourage healthy, traditional eating:

Minnesota's White Earth Nation is helping families access and rediscover the wild rice, bison, and other nutritious foods their forebears once relied on through a 'food kit' project funded by a grant from Blue Cross, Blue Shield. The project was temporary, with the meal kits provided periodically this fall, ending in December, but according to Zach Paige, a food sovereignty specialist with the tribe, the effort created excitement across the White Earth community and ensured a positive reception for the food chosen. *Source: startribune.com.*

## Shakopee Mdewakanton chairman retires:

Charles Vig, tribal chairman of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community since 2012, announced his retirement last month. "After serving the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community for nearly 30 years as chairman, vice chairman, and on the Gaming Enterprise board of directors, I have decided to retire to spend more time with my family," Vig said. "Our community has many up-and-coming leaders. I am excited to pass the baton on to them and plan to stay actively engaged in the future of our community." Vig was elected vice chairman in January 2012 and became chairman that summer after longtime leader Stanley Crooks died. Keith Anderson was chosen to succeed Vig on January 22. *Source: startribune.com.*

**Native activists seek shelter beds:** American Indian activists are escalating their campaign for more emergency shelter beds in Minnesota, while calling on civic leaders to respect a U.S. Supreme Court decision that protects people sleeping in public spaces from eviction. Demonstrators with a group called Natives for Justice occupied the plaza in front of the Hennepin County Government Center in downtown Minneapolis last month, where they repeated their demand for an overnight shelter that would respect their cultural heritage. The group also demanded an end to the "constant relocation and eviction" of homeless Natives from sleeping in public locations, such as under bridges, in buses, or on sidewalks. *Source: startribune.com.*

## Barry ZeVan the Weatherman dies at 82:

Former KSTP and KARE weatherman and longtime TV personality Barry ZeVan died on New Year's Day at the age of 82. Known best for his quirky personality as a Twin Cities weatherman in the 1970s and '80s, he also worked as Director of Public Relations for Grand Casinos from 1991 to 1999. His family remembered him as "a fierce advocate for Native American rights." He was inducted into the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame. *Source: kare11.com.*

*Stay up to speed on news from Indian Country at [millelacsband.com/news](http://millelacsband.com/news).*

**State of the Judicial Branch** continued from page 11

She worked her case plan, and her weeks were kept full attending sobriety meetings, cultural events, and AA and NA meetings. She began working part-time and pursuing her education and obtained a driver's license.

She then met and started a relationship with a sober partner. She had six solid months of sobriety and a strong network of positive sober supports. The child was returned to her care, under court supervision. She and her partner obtained a home through the new Wraparound Program. In the fall of 2019, feeling confident that the mother was strong in her sobriety and had the resources and skills to prevent relapse, the Court dismissed the case, and the child's foster parents withdrew a guardianship petition they had filed. The child came home. But by this time, Family Services and the Court had been involved in her and the child's life for almost five full years.

If this had been a County court case, given the length of time of the CHIPS case and the mother's repeated struggles with relapse, the County would have been required to petition to terminate the mother's rights, and her child even may have been adopted. However, because it is Tribal Court, we can take the time that is necessary to help parents overcome their addictions — which as we know doesn't often happen on the first try. There is a saying that, "Relapse is part of recovery." The Band's efforts to combat the deadly drug epidemic among its communities is paying off. The services and resources, including cultural resources, and family support that are available here made all the difference in the lives and futures of this young mother and her child.

But five years is too long for a child to wait to be reunified. We can and must do better.

Through the early intervention with parents and children,

## NEW FACE IN URBAN OFFICE — BILLIE BERRY

By Toya Stewart Downey *Mille Lacs Band Member*

Since November, Band members who visit the Urban Office have been getting to know the new administrative assistant, Billie Berry.

Because she's wanted to live in the Twin Cities for a while, when the job became available it seemed like the right time for Billie, who transferred from Nay Ah Shing to her new post.

"I've enjoyed helping people and the interactions with Band members," said Billie, who grew up in Sauk Rapids and St. Cloud and would drive to the Cities almost every weekend.

Billie, who is the oldest of 11 siblings, graduated from Isle High School in 2005 and then attended Central Lakes College. While there, she earned a place in the honors program, Phi Theta Kappa. In the fall, Billie will begin taking classes at the University of Minnesota Duluth in the Master of Tribal Administration and Governance program.

Eventually, Billie would like to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., but first she wants to make her mark with the Mille Lacs Band.

Billie is a member of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation cen-

and a team effort to share information and coordinate services through a new Tribal Healing to Wellness Court process, we can more quickly and effectively help parents to get and stay clean and sober. Their children can go home more rapidly — or not have to be removed from their homes at all. Moreover, the family does not have to feel like they have to leave the reservation to achieve and maintain sobriety.

We are working on creating a Healing to Wellness Court here. A Healing to Wellness Court program to assist individuals suffering from substance abuse who are involved in the Tribal Court system will operate on four bedrock principles: accountability, coordination, collaboration, and culture. Participants in the program will be closely monitored and supported. The Court, the legal players, and all the necessary service providers will meet and staff each case and work as a unified team coordinating treatment and other services, and brainstorming together as to how to best meet the family's needs. Mille Lacs Band tribal culture is one of the Band's most enduring strengths. With the guidance of knowledgeable Elders, the program participants will reconnect with their culture — which will be an essential factor in helping them to stay on the Good Red Road.

The Healing to Wellness program will be one way that the Mille Lacs Band Community can reach out and wrap its arms around those who are most in need of intervention and healing. We plan to implement the Healing to Wellness Court program once the Court moves into its new space, hopefully in August. We are eager to get started!

Miigwech for this time and for allowing me to share with you the State of the Mille Lacs Band Judicial Branch Address for 2020.



Billie Berry is the new Urban Office administrative assistant.

tered in Nelson House, Manitoba, and she got her first job with the Mille Lacs Band when she was 19. She was an executive assistant for Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures.

"My favorite part of working in the Urban Office is making a difference in people's lives," said Billie. "I love the hugs I get, and the thank yous. It just feels good."

## REMEMBER TO VOTE IN MARCH 3 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

Minnesotans will head to the polls on March 3 to help choose the 2020 presidential candidates for the Republicans and Democrats. The two parties will have separate ballots, and voters can only participate in one party's primary.

The Republican Party has only one candidate on the ballot: Donald J. Trump.

The following Democrats will be on the ballot: Michael Bennet, Joseph Biden, Michael Bloomberg, Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Julian Castro, John Delaney, Tulsi Gabbard, Amy Klobuchar, Deval Patrick, Bernie Sanders, Tom Steyer, Elizabeth Warren, Marianne Williamson, Andrew Yang. Democratic voters can also vote "uncommitted."

Booker, Castro, and Williamson dropped out after the ballot

was created.

No other offices will be on the primary election ballot.

Any voter registered in Minnesota can vote in the primary. Voters can pre-register through February 11 or register at the polling place when they vote. Voters must turn 18 years old by March 3 to vote in the presidential nomination primary.

Precinct caucuses will be held February 25 to choose party leadership, endorse candidates for other offices, and present resolutions for the party platform. Check the Caucus Finder at [sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting](http://sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting) to find your caucus.

**If you need more information or a ride to the polls on March 3, contact the Government Affairs office at 320-495-5006.**



# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CENSUS 2020

Within the next few weeks, Americans will start to see a slew of national television ads regarding the census. These ads are aimed at preparing Americans to participate in the Census 2020. And here in the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe communities of Districts I, II, and III and the Urban Area, the Census Complete Count Committee has been planning their own educational and preparedness series aimed at Mille Lacs Band members with the goal of activating our community for 100 percent full cooperation in the Census. They are still looking for members to join in and help shape our future.

The *Inaajimowin* recently sat down to talk with Shelly Diaz, (Urban Liaison and 2020 Census Coordinator for the Tribal Hub), to ask some frequently asked questions about Census 2020.

*Q: What is the Census anyway?*  
A: There are numerous surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, but the one that we are preparing for is the decennial 2020 census, which is taken every 10 years. The federal government counts the population to determine where to allocate resources, meaning how much funding our schools, clinics, highways, and housing programs are granted. The data collected is also used by businesses for locations.

*Q: I think the Census is dumb. Why do I have to fill it out?*  
A: I can understand how some may think it's just another government piece of paper and a waste of time, but I assure you that it is especially important for 2020. We are at risk of losing one Minnesota congressional seat, which means less representation in DC to be our voices. Not only that, if we are not counted, there could be a re-districting of electoral boundaries that could have detrimental effects for our communities.

*Q: I am really busy with kids, job, school, everything. My life is crazy and I barely have time to breathe. Is this Census thing going to take a lot of my time?*

A: Kids, school, and jobs are the motivating factors to complete the 2020 Census. These are all impacted by the data and count from the census. Lack of time shouldn't be an excuse for NOT completing the census; it is only 10 questions and will take about 10 minutes. You have three ways that you can complete the survey: Online via computer, smartphone, or tablet; by phone; or request a paper survey. And you will have an entire month to schedule time to get it done!

*Q: When do I have to do this Census thing?*  
A: Census Day is observed nationally on April 1, 2020; you will receive an invitation by postcard from the US Census by March 20 and will have details that I just listed for ways that you can complete the form. Census takers will begin visiting homes that have not responded beginning May 1.

*Q: I don't want everybody to know my business. I am uncomfortable sharing my personal information. How do you keep it private?*

A: The 10 questions that are asked on the survey are basically about who lives in your household, the age, sex, and



race of each person, and the dwelling type and phone number in case they have follow-up questions. They will not ask for Social Security numbers or bank information. The U.S. Census Bureau is bound by law to protect your answers and keep them strictly confidential. In fact, every employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life.

*Q: Do I have to do it? Am I required by law to fill out the Census? Can I go to jail if I don't do it?*

A: We should all want to do it. This will impact our lives for the next 10 years. We need to think about our children, who will be impacted most through funding of schools, clinics, lunch programs, and child care. You will not go to jail, but if you're over 18 and refuse to answer all or part of the census, you can be fined up to \$100. Let's all make this OUR Census as an exercise of our sovereignty!

*Q: What if I skip a question? Like, you know, I don't want to answer one question?*

A: You don't have to answer all the questions, but you may get a follow-up phone call asking for your answer.

*Q: What if I just don't answer the door when they knock?*  
A: You don't have to have anyone knock on your door if you self-respond online, on your smartphone, by phone, or by mail. It is so important to make sure everyone is counted, that census takers will make three attempts to contact you to complete the survey. If they are unable to contact you, they may ask a neighbor to answer the questions.

*Q: What if someone who usually lives in my household is not actually living here on April 1, like if they are away at college or in jail?*

A: Those are considered group quarters where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. These places are owned or managed by an entity or organization that provides residents with housing and/or services. They will be counted by census takers in a separate way.

*Q: How are foster kids counted?*  
A: The census counts everyone where they live and sleep most of the time, even if the living arrangement is temporary or the parents of the child do not live there. This would include foster kids, children living with relatives, grandparents, or others if there is split custody between the parents.

**CENSUS WORKERS WILL NOT ASK FOR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS OR BANK INFORMATION. THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU IS BOUND BY LAW TO PROTECT YOUR ANSWERS AND KEEP THEM STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ANYONE KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR IF YOU SELF-RESPOND ONLINE, ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, BY PHONE, OR BY MAIL.**



## COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Mille Lacs Band Emergency Response Coordinator Monte Fronk and Tribal Emergency Response Committee member Vivian LaMoore attended an Integrated Active Threat Response Course training exercise at Big Sandy Lake Resort December 16-18. The course was designed to improve integration between law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) in active shooter events and provided law enforcement officers with key medical skills that can be used to increase survivability of victims. The course also provides a model framework for law enforcement, fire, and EMS to integrate responses during an active shooter event through the rescue task force concept using the Active Shooter Incident Management Checklist. The course included intense two-day classroom training followed by one day of practical training with volunteers acting as victims in various active threat scenarios. The event was sponsored by FEMA and Louisiana State University Academy of Counter-Terrorist Education. For information on CPR/AED, Basic First Aid, Fire Extinguisher Training, Car Seat Training, and free car seats and fire alarms, contact Emergency Management Coordinator Monte Fronk at 320-532-3430.

## NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

**Marge Anderson is one of Poehler's 'Smart Girls':** The late Marge Anderson, former Chief Executive for the Mille Lacs Band, was featured last month on the website Amy Poehler's Smart Girls. The lengthy article focuses on Marge's leadership of the Band during the 1837 Treaty case, which resulted in the affirmation by the U.S. Supreme Court of Band members' right to hunt, fish, and gather in the territory ceded in the treaty. The article quotes Marge at length and points out that she was the first woman to lead an American Indian tribe in Minnesota. *Source: amysmartgirls.com.*

**Iowa regulators want pipeline experts to weigh in:** Iowa regulators want owners of the Dakota Access pipeline to provide expert analysis to back up the company's claim that doubling the line's capacity won't increase the likelihood of a spill. Texas-based Energy Transfer wants to double the capacity of the pipeline to as much as 1.1 million barrels daily to meet growing demand for oil shipments from North Dakota. Commissioners in a South Dakota county last year approved a conditional-use permit for a pumping station needed for the expansion. Permits in the other states are pending. *Source: startribune.com.*

**Producers commit to Hole in the Day film:** David Franzoni, who won a Best Picture Oscar for producing "Gladiator," Denise Gardner, and Bill Carlson will produce a film adaptation of Anton Treuer's *The Assassination of Hole in the Day*. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Foundation is providing financing for the project. "*The Assassination of Hole in the Day* is an epic story about one of the greatest, complex, and yet least-known political leaders of the 19th century, Hole in the Day, or Bagone-Giizhig," said Gardner. Franzoni will write the screenplay. His writing credits include "Amistad," "King Arthur," and the Oscar-nominated "Gladiator" script. "Anton Treuer's book is a consummate work of scholarship, one that jumped out as being inherently cinematic," Franzoni said. *Source: variety.com.*

**South Dakota approves Keystone XL water permits:** The South Dakota Water Management Board last month approved five water-permit applications for Keystone XL pipeline construction. The contentious hearing stretched into a dozen days over the course of four months as American Indian tribes and environmental groups argued against their approval. The board met in a closed executive session before voting to approve the permits. The water will be used for drilling to install pipe, build pump stations, and control dust during construction. Two ranchers also applied for water permits to supply backup water to worker camps. *Source: startribune.com.*

**Native journalist speaks out against Chiefs:** Journalist Vincent Schilling is speaking out against the Kansas City Chiefs' use of Native American mascots and imagery. On Twitter, Schilling, a Native American writer, explained why he thinks the Chiefs "are not honoring Native people." He also talked about how the Kansas City NFL team got its name and the impact of what he considers to be offensive stereotypes. He said the Chiefs got their name from a "non-Native man who formed a fake Indian Boy Scout tribe, the Mic-O-Say." Chiefs fans often wear Native American headdresses and perform the Tomahawk chop as they cheer for their team. *Source: q13fox.com.*



## DISTRICT II UPDATE

**Youth program merger:** Starting January 1, 2020, Niigaan and Wiidoo have combined programs. With this new merger, Wiidoo youth will no longer be able to participate in the Niigaan program. Youth Mentors will now work with students in kindergarten through 6th grade. Teen Mentors will work with students ages 12 to 24.

All families need to complete enrollment paperwork.

Activities include the following:

***Moving Forward:*** We will discuss the new program moving forward. This will be a chance for your children to have a voice and help create a vision of what they'd like to see moving into 2020.

***Play Practice:*** The youth will work together to write a play in Ojibwemowin. We hope to be ready for the community meeting in February.

***Drum and Dance:*** We are starting again! There was a great turnout during the month of November, and we want to do so much more!

***Internet Safety and Bullying:*** We will be looking at the dangers of using the internet, including social media and playing games online. This will tie into lessons on different forms of bullying and how it can affect others.

***Who am I?*** We have a fun project planned to discover our roles in our families, school, with friends, and in the community.

***Cooking and a Movie:*** Youth will learn how to make a small meal and enjoy it with a movie. The first month's menu included pizza and pigs in a blanket.

***Basketball Skills and Games:*** Sports can teach valuable skills, including teamwork, social skills, healthy habits, and self-discipline. All are important going into adulthood.

***Ojibwe Scavenger Hunt:*** The Ojibwe Scavenger Hunt involves teamwork, communication, and the opportunity to practice Ojibwemowin.

## DISTRICT III UPDATE

**Census Jobs:** Meet with a 2020 Census recruiter from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on February 13 at Meshakwad Community Center or apply online at [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs). Earn \$19 per hour!

**GED Instructors:** Come and study with Aanjibimaadizing GED instructors at the Aazhoomog Community Center Monday through Friday.

**Elder Advocate:** Roberta Martin is available Monday through Friday. Contact the Aazhoomog Community Center at 320-384-6240 to make arrangements for assistance.

**WIC Clinic:** WIC Clinics will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Lodge next to Tobie's in Hinckley. Please call Donna Sutton, RN, at 320-532-7457 or Joanne Boyd at 320-532-7821 with questions.

**Wellbriety Meetings:** Wellbriety is held at the Aazhoomog Clinic on Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. Contact Loretta Hansen at 320-362-1431 or Cassie Benjamin at 320-384-6240.

**Community Center usage:** If you would like to use the community center, call Julius Aubid at 320-384-6240, ext. 3232.

**Community meeting:** The February community meeting will be held on February 19 at 5:30 p.m. at Grand Casino Hinckley.

## URBAN AREA RIBBON SKIRT CLASS

By Toya Stewart Downey  
Mille Lacs Band Member

Band members in the Twin Cities are finding more ways to connect to their culture through the programming offered by the Urban Office. First up in January was a ribbon skirt class that attracted a small but determined group.

Tricia Moose taught the five-hour class to the six novices, who ranged from teens to older adults.

"I wanted to make a skirt to have it for ceremonies," said Tehya, 15, who was working on a blue ribbon skirt. "I've never sewn before, but I thought it would be great to learn."

So did the others who attended the Saturday class, including Urban Site Manager Wahbon Spears, who set up the class and wants to try to offer classes on different cultural topics each month.

Wahbon, like many other Band members in the Twin Cities, didn't grow up on the reservation and is eager to learn more about creating traditional clothing, crafts, and other works of art. Eventually, she'd like to offer another quilting class as well as moccasin-making, jewelry-making, and other crafts.

As the students came to the class, they were able to look through several bins to find their fabric of choice, the perfect pattern, and the colors they desired most. They had ribbons galore to choose from and then their imaginations took off as they began measuring, cutting, and sewing.

Tricia, who has taught ribbon skirt classes before, advised the class that beginners "should always start with cotton fabric and should try a simple design (like a skirt with no pockets) for their first time making a ribbon skirt."

During this class, she taught the attendees to make a basic skirt with ribbons straight across. Ribbon skirts have their own individual identity based on a woman's choice. They come in many colors and designs that reflect both a personal style and cultural identity.



Tricia Moose, center, enjoyed sharing her love of sewing and culture with Dawne Stewart and Kaya.

Tricia, who has been sewing all of her life, made her first shirt by hand and then learned how to use a sewing machine. She began teaching sewing about a decade ago to people outside of her family.

"The length of a skirt is a personal preference," said Tricia, who also does beadwork.

When she's teaching beginners, she often takes a blank sheet of paper and draws lines, curves and "S" shapes to teach people how to sew. They will sew over those shapes repeatedly until they master the task and before using fabric. In this class, the students went straight to the machines.

Kaya, 13, slowly and painstakingly used the sewing machine to make a red skirt with yellow and patterned ribbons. She has sewn a quilt before, and said she "was excited about learning to make a ribbon skirt."

Another attendee, Brittany Stewart, took the class so she could learn how to make a skirt for herself and now has plans to make skirts for her sister and aunts. She changed her mind a few times about the color pattern and fabric she wanted, but finally landed on a black fabric with feather-like pattern that she adorned with red and black ribbons.

Brittany said she is excited about taking more classes in the urban area in coming months.

That's welcome news for Wahbon, who agrees that "It's important that these classes are offered in the Urban area."



Brittany Stewart, Tehya, and Kaya were among the students who learned sewing skills from Tricia Moose at the Urban Office.

## ADULT BASIC EDUCATION NOW OFFERED IN DISTRICT I

Aanjibimaadizing is excited to offer Adult Basic Education for students working to improve basic skills that help prepare them for future education, training, or employment opportunities.

Through this program we are able to offer assistance in the following areas: Adult Diploma, GED, Basic Skills Enhancement, Credit Recovery, Family Literacy, and Workplace Literacy.

Instructor Jessica Crafton will be at the DI Classroom on Tuesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. to assist you with your ABE needs.

To apply, please visit the DI Aanjibimaadizing Office or call 320-532-7811.



## INAAJIMOWIN WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

# WHAT 'NATIVE PRIDE' MEANS TO ME

*The following are the winning entries in the first of our monthly contests. High school students were invited to submit 300 to 500 words on "What Native Pride Means to Me." The winner will receive \$200; second prize, \$100; third prize, \$50.*

### First Place: Chase Sam

I believe that sometime in late June we decided it was a wonderful idea to go to a powwow in East Lake, or Minisinaakwaang. We often plan these types of trips about a week ahead, and eventually the time came. It felt relaxing to take a break on a weekend and spend time with family, before heading out to Indiana for a while. I woke up early, although we didn't have to leave for some time yet. Grand Entry was at 1 p.m.

When my dad, my sister, and I arrived, there happened to be a moderate amount of people camping and such, lined up along the side of the road. In another area, there was a space for campers. The parking lot was filled with cars, and some of them had people preparing utilities, such as blankets, umbrellas, chairs, coolers, and — notably — dancers. I think a few cars even brought along canopies. Us three brought a small blanket and a handled cooler filled with some water and soda. It was pleasantly warm out, and it was a bit cloudy. Nonetheless, it was a very beautiful day.

Us three made our way to the registration area, and had my sister register as a dancer. She brought her full regalia. Every time I see her garments, I get amazed at how much work she put into her outfit. We found a shaded place in the bleachers and chose that spot for the day. I suppose it wasn't the cleanest, which is why I was a bit relieved that we took along the blanket.

Grand Entry didn't exactly start at 1 p.m., and the MC commented a silly joke about it. There were many drum groups that attended that first day. At the least, there were maybe 20. We had some time to spare, so my sister and I decided to look at all of the stands that were lined up just outside the arena. Some of them were food stands, and I'm quite sure we internally planned together to get some later in the day.

The announcement call for people to rise up and stand for the Grand Entry arrived. I remember the beating of drums, and the singing of voices. I remember the rising of people in unison and respect, and I remember the colorful array of dancers that filled the arena that day. Native pride is a feeling. It is love. And to me, it means everything.

### Second Place: Karli Nayquonabe

Native Pride to me is my family, like my grandma Robin Eagle. My grandma represents Native Pride to me because she encourages me and students here at Nay Ah Shing. My grandma also tells me to treat people how I want to be treated.

My culture's language is also an important part of what Native Pride means to me. My language is a huge part because my ancestors spoke it. Another reason it's a big part is because it's a unique language I can teach some people who want to learn it.

My culture's traditions are another big part of Native Pride for me. Traditions are big because they're what my ancestors

did, like powwows and pipe. One more reason that traditions are a big part of Native Pride for me is because they give my family and friends another reason to get together to celebrate.

My history is also something I think about as a part of Native Pride. When I look at, or think of, my ancestors' history and what they did, I am proud to be Native. That includes their accomplishments. There are many aspects of what Native Pride means to me. These four things: family, language, traditions, and history are the biggest of those. Native Pride means the most, though, because it's part of my culture.

### Third Place: Caleb Sam

Being native is more than just "being Indian," "being sober," or "being indigenous." Having native pride means being connected with Earth, and being connected with your history. Native pride is respecting all beings and bringing the language/culture alive.

Being native feels good/happy. Some of us are doing good, some of us are doing bad. But no matter what we do with our lives, we live happily by what we are doing at the time. In the future we make mistakes and regret what we have done in the past, but we solve our problems with the help of each other, and that's the key to having native pride. Doing something good will create a loop, meaning you help someone with their life and they'll help another person and so on.

Being native is passing on traditions and taking care of Aki (Earth) and her beings. Learning and passing on knowledge to the youth is a tradition to keep the language/culture alive. Being native is fun, attending powwows, learning our culture, designing cool beadwork. There isn't anything more fun than learning our history and culture. There isn't anything more entertaining than hearing our stories. There isn't anything more fun than doing native activities such as ricing, collecting maple sap, cooking sap, and making maple syrup the traditional way and parching/cooking/dancing on the rice.

To me native pride doesn't mean "being indigenous" or "being Indian" or "being sober." Having native pride is being well-connected with your history and your culture, and especially with Aki. Having native pride is respecting all beings, and keeping the culture alive. That's what having native pride means to me.

### Next Contest: Elementary Visual Art!

Students in grades kindergarten through 6 are invited to submit color or black-and-white drawings/coloring/painting that illustrate an aspect of Anishinaabe culture. Prizes to be announced. **Entries are due February 15.**

All entries will be judged by a rotating group of volunteers. Names will be blacked out to ensure unbiased voting.

The contests are open to Mille Lacs Band members and community members/employees who are enrolled in other tribes. Email entries to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or send them to Government Affairs, 43408 Oodena Dr. Onamia, MN 56359.

**Plan ahead:** The March contest will be for Adult Poetry/Personal Essay/Fiction and the April contest for High School Photography. Details in next month's *Inaajimowin*!

## URBAN AREA UPDATE

**Elder Lunch and Bingo:** Our next Elder Lunch and Bingo will be held on Saturday, February 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be food, games, and prizes. Please bring your favorite dish to share. Elders only.

**Tribal TANF openings:** Mille Lacs Band Tribal TANF program has openings for single parents and two-parent families. Tribal TANF can assist eligible participants with a cash grant as well as a small housing grant each month. Other services also offered to assist families with working towards a goal of becoming self-sufficient. For information on eligibility, contact the MLB Urban Office at: 612-746-4800 or stop by at 1404 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

**Census jobs:** Apply for a job as a 2020 Census worker! Census recruiters will be at the Urban Office on Thursday, February 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the computer lab. Earn up to \$27.50/hour!

**Community meeting:** The February community meeting will be held at 5:30 on February 27 at All Nations Church.

**Next Per Capita Day:** Checks will be available for pickup Thursday, February 6, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and no later. NO EXCEPTIONS. Must have a valid ID. Please note that the Urban Office does not make tribal IDs on per cap day.

**Circle of Health at Urban Office:** February 6 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call or stop by to make an appointment. Please bring Medicare cards, ID, list of medications, and clinic/pharmacy contact info. Medicare open enrollment ends mid-November.

**Tutoring:** Meet with a tutor at the Urban Office: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 2 to 5 p.m. in the computer lab.

**And more!** The Urban Office also provides current job postings, information, tribal IDs, DNR licenses, notary services, Band and local news, cultural events, classes, powwows, resources, support services, referrals, and applications for Band member services, including emergency services, Elder supplemental program, Elder/disabled energy program, home loans, housing, scholarships, enrollment, discretionary loans, and personal loans.

## DISTRICT IIA UPDATE

**Save the date:** The Chiminising Ziigwan Youth Powwow is coming March 21!

**Smoke alarms:** Free smoke alarms are available to Mille Lacs Band members who privately own homes. Contact Monte Fronk at 320-532-3430.

**Text alerts:** Please sign up for MLB text message alerts to be up to date on MLB Closings and community events. Information at front desk.

**Bi-Mawadishiwen:** Bi-Mawadishiwen (Come Visit) with Jason and Carrie Sam every Friday at 5:30 p.m. excluding holidays and half days.

**Rides for Elders:** Julie Skinaway will be in Isle on Tuesdays and Thursdays for Elders who need rides to appointments, get groceries, etc. Elders only. Call Chiminising for more information.

**Community Center usage:** When requesting personal usage of the community center, a two-week notice is required. No exceptions.

**Community meeting:** The February community meeting will be held on February 19 at 5:30 p.m. at Chiminising Community Center.

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS MUST UPDATE RECORDS

Students who received funding in the fall of 2019 and are enrolled for spring term need to provide Michele Berger in the Scholarship office with a copy of fall grades, a new class schedule, and bill for tuition!

New students need to submit an application packet, along with a copy of class registration and billing that contains remittance information and student ID number.

Remember that FAFSA is a requirement of the Scholarship program, and the program is a NEED-BASED source of funding, rather than a scholarship who would issue max term amounts.

These documents may be faxed (number below), emailed to address below, or sent via postal service to Band Government address 43408 Oodena Rd, Onamia, MN 56359.



# Q&A WITH BAND MEMBERS: WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT FOUR WINDS

By Rhonda Mitchell *Mille Lacs Band Member*

**What’s your favorite thing about working at Four Winds Lodge program?**

**Lindsay Misquadace-Berg:** Knowing that I am helping others on the road to recovery. I know that the road is hard to start out and for people to continue with their sobriety is very important to Four Winds Lodge Program. I have been in recovery for about seven years. Just knowing I can help others is where my passion comes in.

**Bob Eagle:** I like the camaraderie between the staff and the community members, the vibrations, which are upbeat and happy. It’s a feeling of healing.

**Chandell Boyd:** I enjoy working with the Four Winds community members and with my coworkers. We have a good team with one common goal, which is to provide the best care for the community members.

**Describe the work you do in your position.**

**Lindsay:** As Four Winds Lodge Treatment Director, I oversee the program, give employees the support they need, and find other programs that help people make the transition back to the community. We are excited to host our first powwow this summer.

**Bob:** We do a variety of cultural activities like maple syrup gathering and finishing, picking medicines and learning about them, pipe ceremonies, sweat lodges, and ceremonial dances. Our culture

groups cover traditional teachings like how to approach an Elder, Ojibwe names, tobacco, why we smudge, and clans. Other activities include culture outings, walks in the woods, forest bathing, and nature healing.

**Chandell:** As a counselor, I facilitate groups and use the Wellbriety curriculum, which focuses on healing the whole person. One of my favorites is Mending Broken Hearts, which concentrates on recognizing and healing from intergenerational/historical trauma.

### About Four Winds

Four Winds Lodge Noojimowigamig — The Healing Center — utilizes the Anishinaabe cultural approach, Bimaadiziwin, to clarify our beliefs in healing the whole person. The program lays the foundation integrating best practices in treatment of substance use disorders with a standard of cultural care and healing that helps our Native clients to work through issues of historical trauma and the impact of addiction on their lives.

Services at Four Winds are designed to provide treatment for all Substance Use Disorders. A multidisciplinary team considers all dimensions of recovery including physical health, mental health, spiritual health, and cultural health, as well as the need to manage life issues that will help to build a solid foundation for recovery.



## GAMING REGULATORY AUTHORITY UPDATE

# EMPLOYEE GAMING LICENSE WAIVER PROCESS

WHY DO WE NEED LICENSES FROM THE GRA? From Band Law, Mille Lacs Band Statute 15 — Gaming Regulatory Act: “[Vendors and Employees are licensed] to protect the morals, good order, and welfare of Band members and other persons on Band lands and to preserve the honesty, fairness, and integrity of [gaming activities].”

We make every effort to get as many people licensed as possible for employment at the casinos, especially Band members. When the GRA Board denies ANYONE licensure, it is because our background investigation led us to believe licensing that person would be a risk to our community members or casino patrons, or the integrity of the gaming enterprises.

The GRA promulgates regulation including minimum criminal history requirements for licensure. All GRA regulations can be found on the Mille Lacs Band website at <http://www.millelacsband.com/government/gaming-regulatory-authority>. Employee gaming license regulations are DGR 7 and DGR 7b.

In the table below is a summary view of the minimum criminal history requirements for employee gaming licensure detailed in DGR 7b.

### GAMING REGULATORY AUTHORITY

*Dedicated to providing protection, value, and regulatory excellence in gaming for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.*

The GRA Board has also established a separate set of minimum requirements, less stringent requirements, that an applicant can apply for via WAIVER. If an applicant can demonstrate sufficient rehabilitation since their charges, the GRA Board can elect to waive certain requirements to the standards outlined below. Sufficient rehabilitation is shown via a personal letter attesting to what you’ve done to get better (not required, but highly recommended), proof of compliance with any court-ordered treatment or aftercare program, proof of efforts towards

paying any fines, and three (3) notarized personal reference letters attesting to rehabilitation. Finally, the GRA Board requires attendance to your scheduled waiver hearing.

While the waiver process can be daunting, we are here to help! Please contact the GRA Licensing Offices with any questions you may have. Call Krista/Rebecca at 320-532-8253 (Mille Lacs) or Lori/Sally at 320-384-4742 (Hinckley) for assistance.

### What is the GRA?

The Mille Lacs Band Gaming Regulatory Authority (GRA) is an independent regulatory agency of tribal government established to separate the government’s regulatory function from the management function. More information and contact numbers can be found at [www.millelacsband.com/government/gaming-regulatory-authority](http://www.millelacsband.com/government/gaming-regulatory-authority). You can also LIKE us on Facebook at Mille Lacs Band GRA. GRA Board meetings are open to the public. This month’s meetings are at 9 a.m. on February 6 at Grand Casino Hinckley and 9 a.m. February 21 at Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures.

	Class A		Class B			Class C		
NEVER Crimes	No Gambling Crimes		No Gambling Crimes			No Criminal Sexual Conduct		
	No Criminal Sexual Conduct		No Criminal Sexual Conduct			~~		
	No Fraud Crimes		No Embezzlement Crimes			~~		
	No Embezzlement Crimes		~~			~~		
	No Misrepresetnation Crimes		~~			~~		
Pending Charges	No Active Warrants		No Active Warrants			No Active Warrants		
	No Pending Charges		No Pending Charges			No Pending Charges		
	No Stays of Adjudication		No Stays of Adjudication			No Stays of Adjudication		
	Minimum Requirement	Waiver MLB ONLY	Minimum Requirement	Waiver		Minimum Requirement	Waiver	
				Non-MLB	MLB		Non-MLB	MLB
No Felony or Gross Misdemeanor Charges	Last 7 Yrs	Last 5 Yrs	Last 5 Yrs	Last 3 Yrs	Last Year	Last 2 Yrs	Last Year	Last 6 Mo
No Substantial Incarceration ( > 365 Days)	Last 7 Yrs	Last 5 Yrs	Last 5 Yrs	Last 3 Yrs	Last Year	Last 2 Yrs	Last Year	Last 6 Mo



MAKADEKED A'AW OSHKINAWE — FASTING FOR YOUNG BOYS

By Lee Staples Gaa-anishinaabemod Obizaan and Chato Gonzalez Gaa-anishinaabebii'ang Ombishkebines

This article was originally published in the February 2015 issue of Ojibwe Inaajimowin. It is reprinted here to give Band members a chance to reflect further on Obizaan's teachings.

Mii dash owapii a'aw oshki-inini gii'igoshimod, mii iw makadeked ezhiwiinjigaadeg. Ishke i'iwapii a'aw gwiizwens ani-oshki-ininiwid, maagizhaa gaye i'iwapii bakaanigondaaged ani-gaagiigodod. Mii owapii bagwaj da-ni-izhaapan.

When a young man fasts it is called Makadeked. It is at the time that a boy is becoming a man; maybe it is at the time when a change in his voice is heard as he talks. It is then that he could go out in the woods to fast.

Ishke dash mii owapii ogitiziiman maagizhaa gaye iniw odedeyan ininamaagod imaa oninjiin gii-atood i'iw wiisiniwin naa iwedi bezhig akakanzhe gii-atood. Mii dash imaa ininamaagod iniw odedeyan a'aw oshki-inini. Giishpin mamood i'iw wiisiniwin gaawiin mashi inendanziin bagwaj da-izhaapan. Ishke dash a'aw mamood i'iw akakanzhe, mii dash imaa wiindamaaged wii-kii'igoshimod.

It is at that time one of his parents, maybe his father extends

out his hands, in one hand he has food and in the other hand he has ash from the fire. It is then that his father extends his hands to the young man. If the young man takes the food, it means that it is not his time to go out in the woods to fast. If the young man takes the ash, he is letting it be known that he is ready to fast.

Ishke dash dabwaa-maajitaad da-kii'igoshimod, mii imaa zinigobidood i'iw akakanzhe imaa odengwayaang, da-makadewiingwed dash megwaa bagwaj imaa wii-ayaad. Mii iw wenji-izhiwiinjigaadeg makadeked a'aw gwiizwens. Miinawaa booch iniw asemaan da-ayaawaad a'aw oshki-inini da-baa-aabaji'aad megwaa imaa gii'igoshimod. Miinawaa giishpin opwaaganan ayaawaad, mii gaye inow ge- aabaji'aajin megwaa bagwaj imaa wii-ayaad.

Before the young man goes out to fast, he takes the ash and rubs it all over his face so that his face is all black while he is out fasting. That is why fasting for a young boy is known as Makadeked. The young man must also have tobacco on him to use while he is out fasting. And if he has a pipe, he can also use it while he is out there fasting.



Ishke dash wii-ni-wawiingezid a'aw Anishinaabe miinawaa debinaak wii-ni- doodawaasig iniw Manidoon, akawe imaa da-zagaswe'idim asemaan miinawaa wiisiniwin da-ininamawindwaa ingiw Manidoog giizhaa da-nanaandomindwaa weweni da-zhawenimaawaad miinawaa weweni da-ganawenimaawaad inow weshki-bimaadiziniin megwaa imaa gii'igoshimonid. Miinawaa mii owapii gaye ge- ni-aabajichigaazod a'aw Anishinaabe menidoowaadizid da-izhiwinigod imaa bagwaj waa-kii'igoshimod. Mii inow ge-ni-ganawenimigojin gaye megwaa imaa ayaad bagwaj ayaapii da-ni-dapaabamigod gaye.

If the Anishinaabe wants to be efficient and not do things half-heartedly to the Manidoog, a feast is held first where tobacco and food is offered to the Manidoog ahead of time asking that they show compassion and watch over the young man that is about to go out and fast. It is also at that time that an Anishinaabe that is gifted maybe as a medicine man takes the young man out into the woods to do his fasting. It is also that same Anishinaabe that will watch over as he is fasting and check on him periodically.

Bebakaan igo gii-izhi-waawiindamawaawag ge-izhichigeng i'iwapii bagwaj izhiwinaawaad inow weshki-bimaadiziniin. Aanind ingiw ishpinim imaa mitigong odoozhitamawaawaan da-ayaaminid da-ni-nanaamadabinid inow waa-kii'igoshimonijin, naa aanind gaye mii-go imaa jiigay'ii imaa mitigoong gii-wawenabi'indwaa. Wigiwaam aanind ogii-ozhitamawaawaan igaye imaa biindig gii-nanaamadabinid waa-kii'igoshimonijin. Ishke dash gaye aanind azhigwa gaa-ni-giizhiitaawaad gii-kii'igoshimowaad mii imaa madoodaswaning gii-piindaganindwaa gaye.

There are little differences in the way people are taught on what is to be done when they take a young man out into the woods to fast. Some were taught to make a platform up in a tree where the young man can sit as he fasts. Some were also told to sit by a tree as they fasted. There was also some who made a wigwam for the young man to sit in as he fasts. As some finished their fasting they were taken into a sweat lodge.



You can learn Ojibwe words and find out more about the language with The Ojibwe People's Dictionary at <http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu>.



Biboon—It is Winter

Biboong, zoongingwaashiwag ingiw makwag. Onzaam gaawiin gidaa-nibaasiimin. Giwii-wapaa'ininim. Onishkaag! Gego gawishimoken! Daga aatebidoon i'iw mazinaatesijigan. Moozhag, minochigeg! Mamaajig! Giga-minwamaanji'om. Endaso-giizhik giwii-minwendamim giinawaa bimoseyeg. Gidagindaanaawaan niiztana diba'igaansan. Howah!

(When it is winter, they are in a deep sleep those bears. Too much we should not sleep. I want to disturb your sleep. Get up from lying down! Don't lie down! Please, turn off the television. Often, do something good! Be in motion! You all shall be healthier. Everyday you all will be happy, you all, when you walk. You all count them, twenty minutes. Alright!)

Bezhigh—1

OJIBWEMOWIN (Ojibwe Language)

Double vowel system of writing Ojibwemowin. —Long vowels: AA, E, II, OO Onzaam—as in father Gego—as in jay Gaawiin—as in seen Moozhag—as in moon

—Short Vowels: A, I, O Idash—as in about Ingiw—as in tin Onishwaag—as in only

—A glottal stop is a voiceless nasal sound as in A'aw.

—Respectfully enlist an elder for help in pronunciation and dialect differences.

Questions “W” question words

Who (pl)—Awenen (ag) What way, How—Aaniin Where—Aaniindi, Aandi When—Aaniin apii Why—Anishwiin also: Giishpin—If, Apegish—I hope Always speak verbs in conjunct form following the “W” question words. There is also an initial vowel sound change. Aaniin ezhi-ayaayan? How are you? Aandi ezhaayaan? Where am I going? Awenen waa-pimibaatood agwajiing? Who wants to go running outside?

Niizh—2

Circle the 10 underlined Ojibwe words in the letter maze. (Translations below)

A. Bimosedaa! Bimibaatoodaa! Izhaadaa noongom!

B. Gagwejim, “Aaniin ezchichigeyan noongom?”

C. Ganabaj gibimose dash giiyiose miikinaang.

D. Giniim ina? Maazhaa ina biboong

ginitaa-zhooshkwaada'e?

E. Zaaga'iganing ina gemaa agidaaki gizhooshkwaagime?

F. Daga gego zagaswaaken!

G. Naadin onagaans idash minwanjigen! Mii'iw.

I C A P L Z B G A X B O H G I F I I N G A O D H N M A L G A O A M O O A E W J D I A I V S G K E X I A T K S Y E A M J N W A A T I R D D A G I G I I Y O S E A A N G M A A Z H A A Q G A S N V A O U Z P I S A

Niswi—3

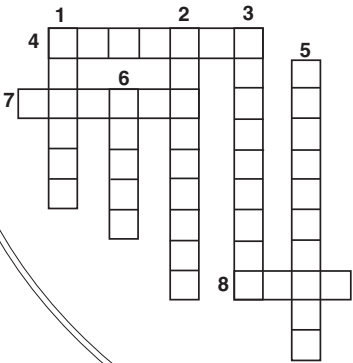
IKIDOWIN ODOMINOWIN (word play)

Down:

- Go get it!
- Do you dance?
- Be in motion!
- Do good things!
- Those (animate).

Across:

- Now, today
- Greetings, how or in what way?
- Don't!



Niiwin—4

“W” Questions/Answers

Aaniindi wenjibaayan? Where are you from? Onigamiinsing nindoonjibaa. Duluth, I originate from there. Aaniin apii gaa-maajaawaad. When did they leave? Gii-naawakweg gii-maajaawag. When it was noon they did leave. Anishwiin wejibwemoyeg? Why do you all speak Ojibwe? Niminwendaamin ojibwemoyaang miisa go geget! We are happy when we speak Ojibwe, for sure!

Goojitoon! Try it! Translation below.

- Boozhoo \_\_\_\_\_ ezhinikaazoyan?
- \_\_\_\_\_ gaa-aagimosewaad giiwedonong?
- Bijiinaago \_\_\_\_\_ gaa-pimoseyeg?
- Apane \_\_\_\_\_ amwang bookadiniganag?
- \_\_\_\_\_ waa-jiibaakwaadang gitigaanensan?

Aandi

Aaniin

Awenen

Anishwiin

Aaniin apii

Translations:

Niizh—2 A. Let's all go walking! Let's all go running! Let's all go now! B. Ask him or her, “What are you doing today?” C. Perhaps you are walking and hunting on the trail. D. Do you dance? Maybe? when it is winter you are skilled at skating? E. On the lake? or on top of a hill do you ski? F. Please don't smoke! G. Fetch a small plate and eat well! That's all.

Niswi—3 Down: 1. Naadin! 2. Giniim ina? 3. Mamaajig! 5. Minochigeg! 6. Ingiw Across: 4. Noongom 7. Aaniin 8. Gego! Niiwin—4 1. Hello. How or in What way are you? 2. When did they go snowshoeing to the north? 3. Yesterday, where did you all go walking. 4. Always why are we all eating doughnuts? 5. Who wants to cook the vegetables.

There are various Ojibwe dialects; check for correct usage in your area. Note that the English translation will lose its natural flow as in any world language translation. This may be reproduced for classroom use only. All other uses by author's written permission. All inquiries can be made to MAZINA'IGAN, P.O. Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861.

Originally published in Mazina'igan Winter 2005. Reprinted by permission. Miigwech to GLIFWC and Shelly Ceglar.



# TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

## FEBRUARY ELDER BIRTHDAYS

Bruce Alan Anderson  
Laura Ann Ashcroft  
Mahlon Scott Barnes  
Melanie Ann Benjamin  
Maurice Wayne Benjamin  
Debra Jean Blake  
Sandra Lee Blake  
Judy Ann Carlson  
Harry Richard Davis  
Dennis Wayne Davis  
William Carl Erickson  
Eileen Frances Farah  
Nicole Anne Froemming  
Beverly Ann Graves  
Mary Louise Hoffer  
Donald Ray Houle  
Sharon Louise Howard  
Colleen Michele Johnson  
Kurt Drew Keller  
Carolyn Dawn Lewis  
Ornorfo Zachary Lyons  
Wesley Dean Merrill  
Scott Armond Meyer  
Victoria Gina Mitchell  
Gilbert Wayne Moose  
Lawrence Mark Nickaboine  
Debra Lee Northrup  
Patricia Ann O'Brien  
William John O'Brien  
Robin Lou Oswaldson  
Robert Halvor Oswaldson  
Rhonda Lynn Peet  
Alan Pindegayosh  
Lawrence Virgil Reynolds  
Ellen Marie Roth  
Bette Sam  
Gladys Diane Sam  
Pauline Marie Sam  
James Allan Sam  
Darrell Duane Sam  
Kelvin Ray Shingobe  
Alvera Marie Smith

Bennie David St. John  
Edward Louis St. John  
Stanley Conrad St. John  
Robert Lee Staples  
Richard Jay Staples  
Emma Edna Thomas  
Gary Marshall Thomas  
Valetta Irene Towle  
Michael Leo Towle  
Kenny Jack Towle  
Ramona Joyce Washington  
Patrick Weyaus  
Marilyn Jean Whitney  
Clyde Manuel Wind  
Rose Marie Wind  
Dorothy May Wistrom

## HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday **Chris Jr.** on 2/7, love the Harrington family • Happy birthday **Baby Jacob** on 2/13, love the Harrington Family • Happy Birthday **Jacob** on 2/16, love the Harrington family • Happy Birthday **Max Blake** on 2/18 • Happy Birthday **Pat Weyaus** on 2/21 • Happy Birthday **Princess** on 2/22, love Auntie Val • Happy Birthday **Braelyn** on 2/22, love Dad, Daphne, Payton, Eric, Wes, Waase, Bryn, Gally, Bam, Papa Brad, Grannie Kim, Papa Kyle, Stranger, Auntie Val, Dan, Kev, Pie, Myla, Montana, Auntie Randi, Bruce, Jayla, Lileah, Rachel, Rory, Jay, Taylor and Guy • Happy Birthday **Cordell** on 2/23, love the Harrington family • Happy Birthday **Sandra Blake** on 2/23 • Happy Birthday **Max Blake Jr.** on 2/24 • Happy Birthday **Nadia Blake** on 2/26



## DRUM AND DANCE IN DISTRICT I

The winter season of Drum and Dance continues on February 3, 10, and 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 at District I Community Center.



## SAVE THE DATE FOR PET CLINICS

Pet Clinics will be held in all districts in 2020, and a clinic at Meshakwad Community Center has also been added May 24. See below for dates in other districts.

## NOTEBOARD AND CALENDAR GUIDELINES

The Tribal Noteboard welcomes Band member submissions, including birthdays, congratulatory messages, and memorial tributes. For birthday messages, send name, birthday, and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS** to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or **320-495-5006**. The deadline for the March issue is February 15. Photos may be included if space allows.

If you would rather not have your name included in the Elder birthday list, please contact the Government Affairs office at 320-495-5006 or email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) before the 15th of the month preceding your birthday. Send calendar items to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-495-5006.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Mille Lacs Band members and community members from other tribes can be paid for news stories published in *Ojibwe Inaajimowin*.

For stories of 500 words or more, compensation is \$400. The deadline for stories is the 15th of each month.

If you have a story to submit or would like more information, please email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-495-5006.

## ELDERS NEEDED!

The Government Affairs Department is seeking Elders to tell their stories for a new Moccasin Telegraph series as well as to preserve video and audio in the Mille Lacs Band archives for future generations.

If you are willing to participate in a two-hour video interview to share your memories, please email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-495-5006.

Elders will be compensated for their time.

# MILLE LACS BAND RECOVERY GROUPS

### District I Mille Lacs

#### Community Drumming

Mondays, 6 p.m., 17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia (brown building next to the Halfway House).

#### Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition

Mondays, 5:30–7 p.m., 17222 Ataage Drive, Onamia (brown building next to the Halfway House). Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-4768.

#### Wellbriety Migizi Meeting

Mondays, 7 p.m., Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel, 777 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.

#### NA/AA Welcome

Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Hosted by Mille Lacs Band Halfway House, 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 320-532-4768.

### District II East Lake

#### AA Group

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

#### District IIa Chiminising

#### Bi-mawadishiwen

Fridays, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Chiminising Community Center.

#### District III Hinckley & Aazhoomog

#### Wellbriety Talking Circle

Mondays, 6 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 12-Step Group

Thursdays, 6 p.m., Meshakwad Community Center.

## DRUG TIP HOTLINE

The Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department's anonymous drug tip line is 320-630-2458. Feel free to leave voicemails and/or text messages. If you would like a call back, be sure to leave your name and phone number. In case of emergency, dial 911.



## RECURRING EVENTS

**Language tables:** Tuesdays 6–8 p.m., District I Community Center; Thursdays, 6–8 p.m., Meshakwad Community Center

**Drum and Dance:** February 3, 10, 24, 5:30–7:30 p.m. District I Community Center

**Volleyball:** Thursdays, noon, District I CC

**Zumba:** Wednesdays, noon, District I CC

**Open Gym:** M-Th, 5–9 p.m., District I CC

**Women's Group:** Thursdays, 3–4:30 p.m., District I CC

**SOS: Sharing Our Strength Women's Group:** Fridays, 1 p.m., Red Brick

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Treaty Rights Day:** March 20, 2020. Government offices close at noon.

**Chiminising Ziigwan Youth Powwow:** March 21

**Chiminising Pet Clinic:** April 25–26

**Hinckley Pet Clinic:** May 24

**Minisinaakwaang Pet Clinic:** June 27–28

**Aazhoomog Pet Clinic:** October 10–11

**Nay Ah Shing Pet Clinic:** November 14–15



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>BAND ASSEMBLY MEETINGS</b> Band Assembly meetings are open to the public at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at rotating locations throughout the districts. <b>Dates, times, and locations are subject to change.</b> Call the Legislative office at 320-532-4181 with questions or follow the Legislative Branch of Facebook.			<b>SHARE YOUR IDEAS!</b> Join the Inaajimowin team at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, February 4, at the newly remodeled Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures building in District I to share your thoughts and ideas. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to darla.roache2@millelacsband.com or 320-495-5006.		<b>VISIT THE WEBSITE</b> Millelacsband.com is updated regularly with news, job postings, events, and information about programs and services. The homepage, millelacsband.com, has links to all of those pages as well as government departments, programs, and services.	
					<b>1</b> <i>Millelacsband.com is updated regularly with news, job postings, events, and information about programs and services.</i>	
<b>2</b> <b>Wellbriety Sons of Tradition</b> 1–3 p.m. District I	<b>3</b> <b>Wellbriety, AA, NA</b> District I, II, III <b>Community Drum and Dance</b> 5:30–7:30 p.m. DI Community Center	<b>4</b> <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. District I <b>Wellbriety</b> <i>See page 18</i> <b>Band Assembly</b> Biidaabinookwe Government Center <b>Inaajimowin meeting</b> 11 a.m. Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures	<b>5</b> <b>NA/AA Welcome</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>6</b> <b>Band Assembly</b> Biidaabinookwe Government Center <b>GRA meeting</b> 9 a.m. Grand Casino Hinckley <b>Wellbriety 12-Step</b> <i>See page 18</i> <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center	<b>7</b> <b>SOS: Sharing Our Strength Women’s Group</b> 1 p.m. Red Brick, District I <b>Bi-mawadishiwen</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	<b>8</b> <i>The deadline for the March issue is February 15. Send submissions to news@millelacsband.com or call 320-495-5006.</i>
<b>9</b> <b>Wellbriety Sons of Tradition</b> 1–3 p.m. District I	<b>10</b> <b>Wellbriety, AA, NA</b> District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i> <b>Community Drum and Dance</b> 5:30–7:30 p.m. DI Community Center	<b>11</b> <b>Band Assembly</b> Minisinaakwaang ALU <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>12</b> <b>District I Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. District I Community Center <b>NA/AA Welcome</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>13</b> <b>Band Assembly</b> Chiminising Community Center <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <b>Census Job Recruiters</b> 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Urban Office	<b>14</b> <b>SOS: Sharing Our Strength Women’s Group</b> 1 p.m. Red Brick, District I <b>Bi-mawadishiwen</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	<b>15</b> <b>Elder Bingo</b> 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Urban Office
<b>16</b> <b>Wellbriety Sons of Tradition</b> 1–3 p.m. District I	<b>17</b> <b>Chief’s Day</b> Government offices closed.	<b>18</b> <b>Band Assembly</b> Aazhoomog Community Center <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>19</b> <b>District IIa Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center <b>District III Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley	<b>20</b> <b>Band Assembly</b> Meshakwad Community Center <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <b>Wellbriety 12-Step</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>21</b> <b>GRA meeting</b> 9 a.m. Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures <b>SOS: Sharing Our Strength Women’s Group</b> 1 p.m. Red Brick, District I <b>Bi-mawadishiwen</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	<b>22</b> <i>Look up words or practice your Ojibwemowin at <a href="https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu">https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu</a>.</i>
<b>23</b> <b>Wellbriety Sons of Tradition</b> 1–3 p.m. District I	<b>24</b> <b>Wellbriety, AA, NA</b> District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i> <b>Community Drum and Dance</b> 5:30–7:30 p.m. DI Community Center	<b>25</b> <b>Precinct Caucuses</b> Various locations <i>See <a href="http://www.sos.state.mn.us">www.sos.state.mn.us</a>.</i> <b>Band Assembly</b> All Nations Church <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>26</b> <b>District II Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. East Lake Community Center	<b>27</b> <b>Urban Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. All Nations Church <b>Band Assembly</b> Big Sandy Lodge <b>Language Table</b> 6–8 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <b>Wellbriety 12-Step</b> <i>See page 18</i>	<b>28</b> <b>SOS: Sharing Our Strength Women’s Group</b> 1 p.m. Red Brick, District I <b>Bi-mawadishiwen</b> 5:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	<b>29</b> <b><i>Make a plan to vote in the presidential primary on March 3. See page 12 for more information. If you need a ride to the polls, call Government Affairs at 320-495-5006.</i></b>





**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE**  
43408 Oodena Drive  
Onamia, MN 56359

[millelacsband.com](http://millelacsband.com)

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 30308



FEBRUARY 2020 | VOLUME 22 | NUMBER 2

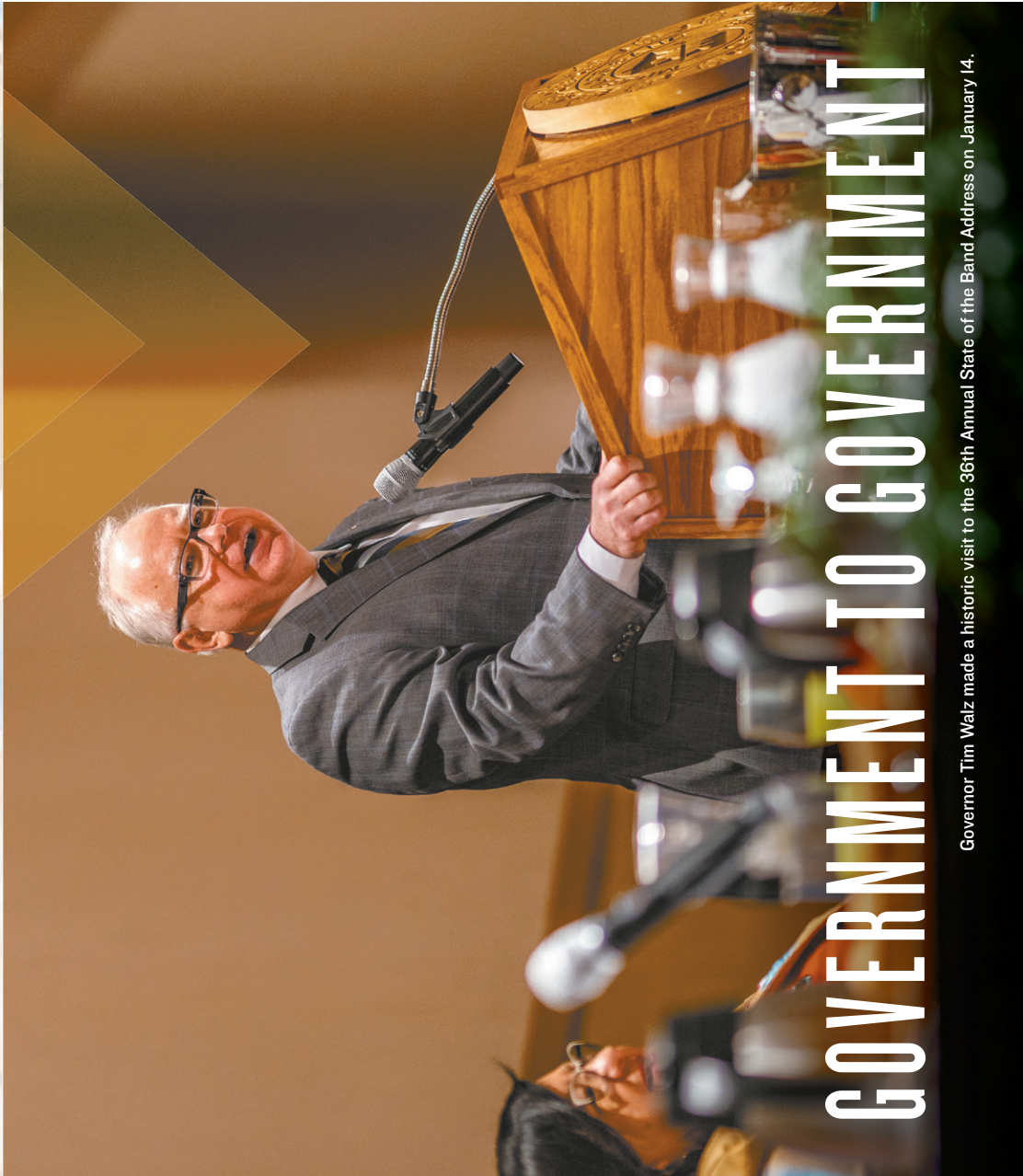
T H E S T O R Y A S I T ' S T O L D

## ABOUT US

Ojibwe Inaajimowin is produced monthly by the Government Affairs Department of the Mille Lacs Band's Executive Branch. Please send questions, comments, corrections, or submissions to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-495-5006. The March issue deadline is February 15.

## UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

If your address on file with the Enrollments Office or Office of Management and Budget is incorrect, you may not be receiving important mail from the Band. Each time you move, you need to fill out a Change of Address form from Enrollments (320-532-7730) and OMB. You can download a Change of Address form at [millelacsband.com/services/tribal-enrollments](http://millelacsband.com/services/tribal-enrollments).



Governor Tim Walz made a historic visit to the 36th Annual State of the Band Address on January 14.

## GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT

**COMMISSIONER  
APPOINTED LIAISON  
TO STATE DNR**

page 1

**SPEAKER LAYS  
OUT LEGISLATIVE  
PROGRESS**

page 10

**CENSUS 2020  
QUESTIONS AND  
ANSWERS**

page 13

**STUDENTS SHARE  
WHAT NATIVE PRIDE  
MEANS TO THEM**

page 15

## NEED HELP?

If you or someone you know is injured or in immediate 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.

**Addiction/Behavioral Health:** 800-709-6445, ext. 7776.

**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.

**Batterers' Intervention:** 320-532-8909.

**Heating, water, or other home-related maintenance problems:** If you live in a Mille Lacs Band Housing-maintained home, call our Customer Service Representative during regular business hours 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: 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; 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.