

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

January 2008

"The story as it's told."

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2008 State of the Band Address



Steve Premo

Band members Lashelle Boyd (left), Courtney Boyd (center), and Randy Sam (right) were recognized for their achievements in completing a triathlon at Nay Ah Shing Schools this past summer. They were given the first annual Mille Lacs Band Champion Award and a pair of Nike Native Air shoes.

On January 8, nearly 1,200 Mille Lacs Band members, employees and visitors learned about Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin's top priorities for the year as she talked about achieving "the Anishinabe dream" at the 24th annual State of the Band Address at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs Events & Convention Center.

"Our Anishinabe dream is to create a life of hope, opportunity, education, and respect, while living Indian," said Melanie.

Among the attendees were Minnesota Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller and House Speaker Margaret Andersen Kelliher.

The event began with an invocation by Lee Staples, one of the Band's spiritual advisors, followed by a flag procession conducted by Mille Lacs Band

AMVETS Post 53. Band member Ashley Pendegayosh sang the National Anthem.

Commissioner of Health and Human Services Sam Moose served as the emcee.

Secretary/Treasurer Herb Weyaus called the Band Assembly to order, as the first official proceeding of the event. Herb said "family, culture and education continue to be our constant focus," as he discussed some of the Band's accomplishments over the past year – the development of the Band's Department of Athletic Regulation; the opening of two charter schools on the reservation; and economic growth of the Band's casinos, including expansions of Grand Casino Hinckley's convention center and hotel. He also said that a Chiminising Circle housing development will begin this

spring, which will provide new homes to Band members in Isle.

Chief Justice Alvina Aubele gave an update on the Band's Court of Central Jurisdiction and said that there was an increase of 17% in the court's case load from 2006. "As the Band continues to step up its law enforcement efforts, the courts will continue to hear more criminal cases each year," said Alvina.

Following these speeches, Melanie delivered her annual State of the Band Address and outlined four main priorities for the year:

Encouraging more Band members to consider becoming spiritual leaders

"In just ten years, we may not have anyone who can conduct our ceremonies," Melanie said, referring to the Band's need for a new generation of spiritual leaders, who will learn and later lead the Band's ceremonial traditions.

Safety on the reservation

Melanie announced starting a training program for Band members who want to work in law enforcement professions, including police officers, corrections officers, dispatchers, and legal workers.

Addressing Band children's health issues

Melanie recognized the Band's success with programs to help adults improve their health and its medical care for Elders,

but mentioned the need to address health issues among children. She announced an initiative to improve the health of the Band's children through efforts such as nutrition plans, additional sports and physical activity offerings, and more education about the risks of diabetes and other health issues.

Creating more Band member-owned businesses

Melanie issued a challenge to Band members to expand economic growth on the Mille Lacs Reservation by increasing the number of small businesses owned by Band members by 50% over the next five years. She particularly discussed focusing on creating new jobs in the East Lake area in District II of the Mille Lacs Reservation, and holding an economic development summit to share ideas on growing this area's economy. Part of the Band's overall economic development could include producing alternative energy resources, such as solar panels, for the Band and for other tribes.

"It is also our duty as Anishinabe people to lead the way in protecting the environment," Benjamin said in directing the Band's Department of Natural Resources to find more alternative energy options for the Band's businesses and Band members' homes.

You can read the complete texts of three elected leaders' speeches on pages 2-6.



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Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin's 24th Annual State of the Band Speech



Steve Premo

Aniin, boozhoo, good morning. Mr. Speaker, Members of the Band Assembly, Madame Chief Justice, Members of the Court of Central Jurisdiction, and my Elder Advisory Council. Most importantly, members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, I am honored to uphold our Band laws and tradition and speak to you today on the state of the Band.

A special chi mii gwetch (thank you) to our brave warrior veterans, our Ogitchidaag. Under the leadership of Commander Kenneth Weyaus, our veterans are always ready to serve. To all of our veterans, for all you have done in service to our nation, mii gwetch.

I also especially welcome our youth. On this day when we think and plan ahead for our future, this event is more about you than anything else.

Dreams play an important role in the lives of Anishinabe people. In our culture, dreams are viewed as an avenue for the Manidoog, or powers we rely upon to get their message across to us. As Chief Executive, as a grandmother, and as a Band member, I've been thinking a lot about dreams lately; how our ancestors would depend upon dreams to make their most important decisions and how we still use dreams to develop our vision for the Band.

I asked one of our spiritual leaders about the significance of dreams. In the old days, choices like where to move camp, when to make war, and how to make peace -- were informed by dreams, through messages received by the Manidoog.

Everyday life was guided by dreams as well. Through dreams, the Manidoog told of the spirits living in the waters that could help our people. The Manidoog asked that our people remember these spirits by offering up asema (tobacco), which we do at our ceremonies.

Sometimes, the teachings and songs that go with our ceremonial drums were taught to our Elders through dreams. And even today, our Anishinabe names come to us through dreams of our namesakes.

For our ancestors, dreams were important when a young person needed to choose a path in life. They would be sent into the woods to fast for up to four days. They would make some sort of sacrifice, like going without food or water. During the ceremony in the woods, our young people were given messages from the Manidoog through their dreams or visions. They were shown the compassion the Manidoog have for them. They were given direction and told what they should accomplish while on this earth.

I truly believe that every Band member in this room has something you are meant to accomplish in life. Whether you learn about this through ceremonies, through a dream, or through a vision that drives you, we each have a purpose.

Too often, I think we as Indian people get caught up in focusing on negative things that happened to us in the past, rather than thinking of ourselves as strong Anishinabe people with bright futures ahead of us.

If we are constantly dwelling on negative things, our purpose in life is hard to see. If we could each learn our purpose and focus on that, there is no limit to what we could accomplish as a Band. However, we need to listen to our dreams, and we need to dare to allow ourselves to dream. As a Band, we must be able to visualize a future of hope and prosperity. Only then can it become a reality.

I heard a senator say that Indian people need a chance to be part of the "American Dream." But what does that mean -- to get rich and marry someone good looking?

That doesn't fit for us. Our culture has always valued skills like hunting, cooking, and sewing. Looks were never important in choosing a spouse in the old days. Lee Staples likes to say, "You could be a very desirable spouse if you had good skills -- even if you were dirt-ugly!" (Of course, that's not a problem for us these days, anyway, since all Mille Lacs Band members are exceptionally good looking people!)

For the immigrants who came here, the American dream was of a new land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for all. After World War II, millions of Americans achieved the American dream.

Unfortunately, a million Indians were left behind. Many were our parents and grandparents. A century of progress for America would come at the expense of our lands, our resources, and our people.

We were never in search of a new land where we could achieve our dreams. For 150 years, we've been trying to gain back our lands and all that we've lost. But we do have dreams.

Patty O'Brien dreams of a community garden in District III, where she can grow healthy food for our Elders and families. Leonard Moose dreams of publishing an Ojibwe legends book for our youth. Larry Smallwood dreams the Language and Culture Grounds are filled with Band members wanting to learn. Mike Nickaboine and other Band members dream of devoting 100% of their time to building beautiful homes for Band members.

Rather than seeking the American dream, they seek, and we all seek, **an Anishinabe dream.**

One of the most important things I've learned is that a leader's vision must come from the community. As part of our strategic planning process, we've held many meetings in the community, with families and individuals, talking about our collective vision for the Band.

It all comes down to this: **Our Anishinabe dream is to create a life of hope, opportunity, education, and respect, while living Indian.**

This is our community dream. This is our Anishinabe dream. This is our challenge, this is what we must accomplish, and this is what I'm going to tell you about today: A plan for achieving our Anishinabe dream.

Let's first review 2007 and what we achieved as a Band. I am pleased to report to you today that the state of the Band is very strong. Our economy is firing on all cylinders. Our two casinos again earned record profits. We can meet the needs of today, and be prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

Even the state of the Band budget is strong. I especially want to commend my Commissioners for working so hard to keep the Band on a stable budget course. Here are just a few of our major achievements from 2007:

- Financing the opening of two new leadership academies
- Defending our boundaries and jurisdiction against Mille Lacs County
- Completing a study of the health of Band youth
- Finalizing plans for a homeless shelter
- Completing the Hinckley build-out

We achieved each of these goals and much more, and spent less than our budget targets. This was a huge accomplishment. It is important to note the hard work of our Commissioners. Very few people realize how stressful their jobs are. They are on the front lines 24 hours a day in service to the Band. They are your Commissioners, your family, your public servants. And they are some of the most committed people I've ever known.

Several have been with my administration since my first year in office. And every one of them began their jobs with jet black hair -- look for the gray-haired table to find them now. Even young Pete might have to start dying his hair!

Commissioners Christine Costello, Peter Nayquonabe, Joycelyn Shingobe, Samuel Moose, Curt Kalk, and Sarah Oquist: Please stand up and be recognized by your community, your family members, your Band.

I also want to introduce another Anishinabe from the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe, our new Solicitor General Rjay Brunkow. Rjay, please stand up and be recognized. Rjay, although our Turtle Mountain cousins are not bad looking people either, you are lucky to be surrounded by the great beauty of the Mille Lacs Band!

There are many other hard working people who keep the Band moving forward. Some have dedicated almost their entire adult lives to working for the Mille Lacs Band, and I want to take a moment and recognize their contributions. After 37 years of service as a nurse on the reservation, Gert Lambert decided to retire. After more than 20 years of service in cultural education, Millie Benjamin retired as well. Gert and Millie, if you are here, would you please stand up and be recognized? Mii gwetch.

There are many other people who have worked for the Band for more than 20 years -- you saw some of their photos on the screens as you walked in today. People like Elmer Nayquonabe, Arlene Weous, Jamie Short, Gordy Matrious, Francis Davis, and Joe and Rita Nayquonabe. When Ray Kegg began working for the Band, he was just a young man -- and his mother reminded me recently that Ray is now an Elder.

There are so many more people like these -- too many to name here today -- who are committed to our future, and that's a powerful thing. Mii gwetch to each of you. You are what keeps Band government going, and we are grateful for your dedication. As a Band, as a community with a vision, I now turn to your community dream -- an Anishinabe dream.

- **In our Anishinabe dream, we have strong spiritual leaders forever.**

Today, the youngest of our spiritual leaders is 60 years old. They've asked me: In another 10 years, who will name our children and our grandchildren?

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Who will help Band members begin their spiritual journey? Who will pray for our loved ones? Who will offer asema at our ceremonies?

They say this is the biggest crisis facing the Band: In just 10 years, we may not have anyone who can conduct our ceremonies. They say the ceremonies must be done in our language. We need people to speak at our ceremonial dances, for all the feasts and asema offerings to be made on behalf of our Band members, to speak for the asema in our sweat lodges, and to keep our Mide lodges going.

We must ensure that we have spiritual leaders 10 or 15 years from now, or we won't survive. We need to identify people among us – men and women – whose hearts and minds are ready to take up the most important education of their lives.

Our spiritual leaders told me that they know we have Band members who have been told, most likely through their dreams, to pursue this line of learning. You likely know who you are. If younger people don't follow in this path, we could lose everything that makes us Anishinabe.

If we lose what was given to us by the Manidoog, a major part of our identity, we will be Anishinabe in name only. As Lee Staples likes to joke – if we lose our ceremonies and language – we will be nothing more than a suburb of Garrison. Except that he's not completely joking. As nice as Garrison is, I don't think any of us want that.

One of the most important things I can do today is to ask each Band member to think seriously about this. Look inside your own heart. Also think of your relatives – maybe they are the right person and they don't know it yet. Anyone who is wondering should talk to our spiritual leaders. As a group, they will know who is suited for this work. After our spiritual leaders identify these people, the Band must support them in their education and livelihood.

Commissioners Moose, Shingobe and Nayquonabe: I direct the three of you to plan this initiative with our spiritual leaders.

- **In our Anishinabe dream, our reservation will be a place of safety.**

It's no secret anywhere in America that the Band has trouble with Mille Lacs County. At the heart of the County's problems with the Band is the belief by some that our reservation no longer exists. As a result, the Band was forced to end our law enforcement agreement with Mille Lacs County. In the meantime, tribal police and Sheriff Lindgren are working closely together to protect public safety.

When I testified before the Congress in November, I raised this issue. Congress is looking for solutions to this problem between tribes and counties. One option is to simply return criminal jurisdiction to the federal government and the tribes. If the Band takes over criminal jurisdiction, we will do a better job of providing justice to Band members.

However, legislation does not happen overnight. It can take years. If we decide to go this route, our system would look similar to that at Bois Forte and Red Lake. Whatever we decide, it must be a community decision. In the meantime, we need to begin discussing this.

We have other public safety issues we need to talk about as well. **We must have a zero tolerance policy for gang activity.** I have directed the Solicitor General to prepare legislation dealing with this matter. **Make no mistake about it: Gang members who target our young Band members will be dealt with very harshly by tribal, state and federal authorities.**

There are other issues that we will discuss as a community. Some Band members have suggested financial penalties for those who commit crimes, and restitution for victims. Some have suggested cultural ways of dealing with certain behaviors. These must all play into our public safety conversation.

A few years ago, I announced that we would train any Band member who wanted to go into C.D. counseling. Many of you came forward. Mii gwetch to all of you. Today, I am announcing a **Public Safety Initiative**, which will include similar support for Band members who want to become trained in the law enforcement profession – including officers, dispatchers, legal work, probations and corrections. We must prepare to eventually take over all public safety for all Band members. We must staff these jobs with our own people.

Commissioner Shingobe, Solicitor General, I direct you to work on this plan.

- **In our Anishinabe dream, our children grow up healthy and strong.**

Last year, many Band members and Band employees committed themselves to a healthier lifestyle (did any of you ever think that one day you would describe Jim Kalk as "buff"?). As a Band, we now have the programs, staff and equipment to assist Band members with their diet and exercise goals, and that's a wonderful thing.

As a Band, we've spent the past 15 years working to ensure that our Elders have what they need, especially in the area of medical care, and that's a wonderful thing.

And as a Band, we're slowing down diabetes among our adult population, and that's a wonderful thing.

However, there is one area that needs more of our attention: Our Band children and youth. In 2007, our Diabetes Prevention Team completed a study that found many of our youngest Band members are already at risk for diabetes. We must focus our resources over the next year on the health of our children and grandchildren.

Commissioner Moose, I direct you to coordinate the **Healthy Child Initiative**. This will include everything from personal nutrition plans for kids to more sports all year round. Also, as parents, grandparents and caregivers, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves about reversing the trend toward diabetes in our children.

Last summer, I witnessed something remarkable. I was there at the finish line when, after months of training, three of our Band youth finished a triathlon. At the beginning of the summer, 14 of our kids signed up for this event and began training. But as you'll recall, the temperatures last summer were hot. By the end of the training, three kids were still hanging in there.

On that hot August day, they began with a long swim, went on to bike several miles, and then ran several miles to the finish line. What they accomplished was inspiring. I was so proud of each of these strong, young people.

Courtney Boyd, Lashelle Boyd, and Randy Sam: When you crossed the finish line, all I could think of was how proud I was of you, and I wished I had something I could give you that would honor your achievement. Not only does the memory of you crossing the finish line motivate me when I'm getting tired at the gym, but you inspired me.

I'd like each of you to come up here and join me for a moment. I want to present each of you with the first annual Mille Lacs Band Champion Award, recognizing your courage, your determination, and your physical strength. To keep you running, we also have a brand new pair of Nike Native Air shoes for you donated by Nike. On your tables is a description of this award and the background. Mii gwetch to each of you.

I also want to take a moment and congratulate a group of our young girls. At the beginning of the Nay Ah Shing volleyball season, our team struggled. It was a hard season, but these young girls were determined to hang in there. In the end, they took first place in the conference – another group of young champions.

Girls, please stand up and be recognized. We also have something for you, which I'll ask my staff to pass out. Mii gwetch to you. You are young role models for our youngest Band members. Each of you honors the Band by your physical strength, your strong character, your sportsmanship, and your leadership. And we, in turn, honor you.

These young people are our future. This is where progress begins. This is where our future takes hold. Next year at this time, it is my dream that we will see progress and be celebrating improved health and strength among all of our kids.

- **In our Anishinabe Dream, our economy is thriving in each of our three districts.**

For the past several years, our focus has been on making our casinos which fuel our economy stronger, and we have been successful. Commissioner Oquist, this next year, all of your focus must be on creating jobs and new business opportunities in the District II area. This is your top priority.

For the past few years, we've held regional economic development summits. This year, I direct you to hold an economic development summit for District II, with the goal of creating jobs and building that economy. I want you to bring in business and finance experts from universities and non-profits across the nation to meet with the community.

We need fresh eyes, a fresh approach, and bold new creative minds to make the dreams of our Band members a reality. There is no shortage of voices that will tell you what will NOT work in District II. I want to know what CAN work.

When those efforts have taken hold, move on to District III, but focus in the Lake Lena Area, rather than Hinckley. The Band must provide more jobs in District III for Band members who cannot work in our casinos. We need more small businesses separate from gaming.

I'm also announcing today an aggressive challenge related to small businesses. In five years, I want to see a 50% increase in the number of Band member-owned businesses. Hold a small business fair for all Band members where they can meet with finance and business staff about their ideas.

If you are a Band member and you have a dream for a business, bring it to Commissioner Oquist. If you brought an idea to the Corporate Commission in the past and it didn't move forward – and if this is still your dream – bring it back again. In our Anishinabe dream, we must invest in our Band members and their vision. We must be bold and creative.

The only thing stopping us from expanding businesses right now in District I is land. We are currently land-locked in District I, with all of our property

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being used for housing or Band businesses. And so, Commissioners Kalk and Oquist, I direct you to develop a land acquisition and use program that matches our business strategy for economic diversification.

In the meantime, we will support business where it can expand right now, today. Home-based daycare is critically needed in all districts. There are other cottage industries and home-based businesses that could be up and running in the near future, with the right support. Work with Band members who are interested in going into business for themselves.

These are my four major initiatives for the next year. To each of my Commissioners, I have the following additional orders for 2008:

Commissioners Costello and Nayquonabe: I instruct you to put a training program into place for all government staff that focuses on customer service and cultural sensitivity for public servants. By 2009, I want all employees to have gone through this training and I want Band members to notice the results.

I also order you to revise the personnel policies and procedures and institute background checks for all employees who handle government funds, who have access to our financial accounts, or who handle purchase orders and check requests.

And finally, I want you to develop a policy to address substance abuse for government staff, but make sure this policy is supportive of those who are working to fight their addictions.

Commissioner Kalk: I direct you to focus your energy during 2008 on three areas. I want you to find alternative energy solutions for all Band homes and businesses. This will cut costs for Band members and the Band. Remember, it is also our duty as Anishinabe people to lead the way in protecting our environment.

Further, the County's actions have left us no choice but to begin placing as much of our land into federal trust status as possible. I direct you and your staff to prioritize this matter.

Finally, I direct you to bring back community gardens to each of the three districts. Our Elders want fresh produce, and our children need more of it. We have Band members who are willing to do the work – assist them with these gardens.

Commissioner Oquist: You have your work cut out for you already, but I'm about to give you more. Band members like Mary Sue Bohannon have been talking about the this idea for years. If the Band leads the way in alternative energy – with solar panels, for example – we could be manufacturing and producing them as well. The Band can do this for other tribes. We could create jobs and make money. I direct you to work with Commissioner Kalk on this idea.

Commissioner Moose: In taking the lead on the Healthy Child Initiative, your plate is also full. I also direct you to hire as many Band members as possible for those jobs in the health care field dealing with our Elders. We must increase the trust between our Elders and our health care workers.

Solicitor General Brunkow: In our dealings with this County, we don't back down, we don't compromise, and we don't lose ground. Continue these policies. I further direct you to continue your efforts to work with Band members who believe they've been mistreated by county judicial systems.

Finally, our separation-of-powers form of government is the basis for our success as an Indian nation. Our system was created on the principle that each of the three branches has a unique role to play: The Legislative Branch passes laws, the Executive Branch implements and enforces the laws, and the Judicial Branch interprets the laws.

I direct you to make sure that no single branch is ever allowed to interfere with the statutory business of the other branch, or reach beyond its constitutional authority. This is critical for ensuring our continued success. Separation of powers means three branches of government work for justice, compromise, and implementing the best policy for Band members.

An example of our process is going on right now. Currently, I am in the midst of a compromise hearing process with the Band Assembly. We are both trying to make sure that the existing Elder supplemental payments are funded, and of course they will be funded.

But I vetoed the bill requesting extra money for this program because I want to know why we fell short. I think we should be doing better on our investments. I wanted to know why we are getting such a small return on the investments we set up for the Elder supplemental fund.

The two branches of government will discuss this issue, and eventually we will come to an agreement. In the end, the best interest of Band members will be protected. What I am always striving for is that the Band members get the most from each dollar.

I believe we are only making half of what we could in our investments. That hurts the Band in the long run. I have been asking for a team of professionals to oversee our investments, and I think that is just common sense. In my view, we have outgrown the system where the Commissioner of Finance makes all the investment decisions. I am saying that our Band

members deserve a team of the best investment people in the country protecting our money and making it grow. This is our current debate.

So my last challenge is to the Band Assembly. I ask that we work within our system of government to improve the return we receive on our investments. Under our laws and system of government, I cannot do this alone – because as the Legislative Branch, you have the power of the purse. But let's work together for the long-term security of our people. Together, we will find the best strategy for our future.

As we begin 2008, we have other visions in our Anishinabe dream as well, and we will continue working to make these come true. In our Anishinabe dream:

- We want more support, opportunities and promotion in the job place.
- We want other job opportunities for those who can't work in our casinos.
- We want everyone who can work to be valued.
- We want the cycle of dependency to stop.
- We want skilled nursing home care for our Elders right here on the reservation.
- We want to protect our homelands and reservation.
- We want our kids who graduate from high school to go onto college.
- And we want them to have good homes available to them when they return home.

These are your priorities, your dream for the community. And I commit all of my energy to making these come true.

Sometimes our dreams are just stories that our imagination makes up, and don't mean anything. But sometimes they are very important, not just for ourselves, but for our family and community as well. Sometimes dreams prepare us for our future.

When I was very, very young, I had a dream. We were living in the projects of St. Louis, where my family was sent under the Indian Relocation Program. In my dream, I was walking down a long hallway. The walls and ceiling were white, the floor was made of marble, and my footsteps echoed. The hallway went on and on, it seemed, forever.

I had never seen anything like that before in real life. Not in a book, not on television, not even in a picture. Like most people, I slowly came to forget about this dream.

During the next 30 years, my life took many twists and turns, some good and some not so good. Eventually, with hard work and with people who believed in me, I earned my college degree. I didn't know where that degree would take me, but I hoped I would be guided in the right direction.

I was working for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe when Art Gahbow (then Chief Executive) began contacting me, asking me to apply to be the Commissioner of Administration. I was skeptical. But he was persistent.

Despite my resistance, there was something pulling me to work for the Band. I finally decided to give it a chance. I began working as Commissioner of Administration in July of 1989.

A few months later, we made a trip out to Washington D.C. We had a meeting with Congressman Jim Oberstar. There was one moment, when we stepped off the elevator in the Rayburn Capitol Building. As I looked down that hallway, I was pulled back to my childhood dream of 30 years earlier – a dream I had forgotten, but which now came back to me with full force.

This was the same long hallway of my dream, the one that seemed to go on forever. And I suddenly knew what that dream meant. This was the place where things happened to Indian tribes and people – good and bad things. Most importantly, this was where the business of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe was done, where we would fight for and win our rights as a Band.

At that moment, I knew for certain that I had a role to play, and that I had made the right decision and taken the right path. And I never doubted that path again.

Lee Staples told me that dreams have to be acknowledged and honored in our community as they were in the past. We've received so many negative messages about ourselves, that some of us have low self-esteem because we believe these messages. But he said that if our people could take the step of seeking spiritual support from the Manidoog, they would find the positive messages that would turn their lives around.

Listening to our dreams is one way of doing this. Our Elders understood the importance of young people knowing they were not alone in this world. When young people were sent into the woods to fast, they received this important message from their dreams: "Zhawenim mi goo wad iniw Manidoon" – that the Manidoog had compassion or pity for them. It was a critical message and a guiding force for young people and their future lives.

As a Band member, I want that back. I want our young people to hear that message and believe it. An Elder I respect wrote something I liked. He said, and I'm quoting now:

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"We all have to remember that each and every one of us has been put on this earth for a reason, that there is something that we need to accomplish while we are here and not a life to be wasted away through the use of alcohol or drugs. Life is a gift to us."

I agree with that. Each one of you, whether you are a child, middle-aged, or an Elder, is a gift to this world and to this Band. You have a purpose to accomplish on this earth.

As Chief Executive, it is my job to listen to your dreams and aspirations, and provide the opportunity for you to make your dreams a reality. As a government, we can provide the resources. But first, you must have a dream.

More than anything else, I want each Band member to have a dream. Think about that – what is your dream? There is no reason your dream shouldn't be big. Think about what you want to do with your life, what you would want if there were no limitations or barriers.

Because really, there are not any limitations, except those our minds invent. Think about what this community could be if we all pursued our dreams. Because I know that working together, we can make those dreams come true. We can have everything that life has to offer, and more: **We can continue to live Anishinabe.**

As a community, as a Band, and as a family, let us honor that gift, and achieve our Anishinabe dream together.

Mii gwetch.

Secretary/Treasurer Herb Weyaus's Legislative Report



Steve Premo

Aniin and happy New Year, family, friends, employees and guests. I also warmly welcome the other elected officials: Honorable Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, Honorable District I Representative Alicia Skinaway, Honorable District II Representative Marvin Bruneau, and Honorable District III Representative Harry Davis, as well as Honorable Chief Justice Alvina Aubele. It is also my pleasure to thank my granddaughter, Ashley Pendegayosh, for the wonderful job she did singing the national anthem for us here today. Good job, Ashley.

By the statutory authority and responsibility vested in me, I hereby convene the 13th Band Assembly, 1st session. Roll call please: District I Representative, District II Representative, District III Representative. We do have a quorum. At this time, I will now recess Band Assembly until 1 p.m., at which time we will reconvene in the Legislative Office. The meeting is open to the public.

As I look across the room and see so many faces of family and friends, I can't help but reflect on where we've come as Mille Lacs Band members. **THEN AND NOW, how far we've come!**

THEN, Mille Lacs Band members had limited job opportunities on the reservation, few new houses, no funds to assist the Elders, no funds to assist those with special needs, limited health care, and no funds to provide our Band members the education needed to secure their futures.

NOW, Mille Lacs Band members have unlimited educational opportunities, **NOW**, many Band members have new homes financed by the Band, **NOW**, Elders are provided new homes by the Band, **NOW**, special needs of all Band members are addressed with the many government programs provided daily, **NOW**, Circle of Health pays health care costs for all Band members, and **NOW**, good job opportunities on the reservation have become numerous.

Then and now...how far we Mille Lacs Band members have come, with the common goal of future self-sufficiency for all Mille Lacs Band members. Family, culture and education continue to be our constant focus, both then and now.

Today, each District Representative strives to bring jobs and prosperity to their home district, and has done so with great success.

In District I, Representative Alicia Skinaway relies on the advice and teachings of the District I Elder Panel. Alicia feels the Elder Panel provides wisdom and teachings of our culture through stories and lessons of the past. The District I Elder Panel will continue to meet through April 2008, followed by the men's and women's annual gatherings, held at the District I cultural grounds.

In District IIA Isle, housing development has been the focus for District II Representative Marvin Bruneau. Beginning this spring, the new Chiminising Circle housing development is set to begin in Isle and will bring many new homes for Band members. East Lake has also seen many new Band member homes over the last year, with commercial growth being the next focus in District II.

In late 2006, with the encouragement of District III Representative Harry Davis, a Department of Athletic Regulation for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe was formed. This department regulates professional boxing and other professional athletic events held at the Mille Lacs Band casinos. The goal has been met, and on February 1, 2008, the Mille Lacs Band looks forward to featuring its first boxing event showcased on Showtime TV, and broadcast live from the Hinckley Casino Convention Center.

District III also gained the new Grand Auto and RV Care, which recently opened next to Grand Casino Hinckley. The RV and auto care center has four stalls and provides auto and RV washing, oil changes, minor auto repairs, and tire service. This new small business provides service to local residents, but will serve primarily as an added amenity for our guests visiting Grand Casino Hinckley.

In September 2007, the Band entered into an agreement to sponsor two state charter schools to serve the needs of Band member students in Districts II and III. Minisinaakwaang Leadership Academy opened in District II and Pine Grove Leadership Academy opened in District III. As both schools are new, they are still working out the details of running a new school.

However, we have great hope that these leadership academies will continue to prosper and provide Ojibwe culture and language as part of their everyday curriculum.

Fortunately for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, the Band's two casinos enjoyed another year of growth and success.

Expansion of Hinckley Grand Casino and Hotel was completed in fall 2007. The new convention center now accommodates 2,500 people, gaming floor space increased nearly 38,000 square feet, 282 new hotel rooms were added, and Grand Harmony Spa opened in December 2007.

Going forward, all existing hotel rooms at Grand Casino Hinckley will be renovated to keep our property looking clean and new for our guests.

Again in 2008, each Band member can choose their own per capita payment frequency based on their own budget needs. The monthly per capita payment option is again most popular. In 2007, 1,025 adult Band members received their per capita payments monthly. In 2008, there will be 1,652 adult Band members choosing to be paid monthly.

In most successful and growing organizations, there will be a few bumps and rough spots along the path of growth. As a successful and growing organization, the Mille Lacs Band government is no exception. We, too, are subject to such bumps and rough spots. As you may have heard, there is an ongoing investigation into prior activities within the Mille Lacs Band Department of Community Development.

Through this investigation, wrongdoing will be identified and those involved will be held accountable. Band Assembly is viewing this rough spot as an opportunity to have an outside party review the current policies and procedures of the department, and make recommended changes.

The improvement of internal controls within this department will prevent future wrongdoing, and will be the positive outcome resulting from this very unfortunate situation.

At this time, I'd like to introduce and thank my mom, Jennie Weyaus, 93 years old, the oldest living Mille Lacs Band member, still teaching our Mille Lacs Band youth the Band's history, culture and language.

I'd also like to thank my wife Rosalie Noonday, my mother-in-law Rose Noonday, and all my other family members for their attendance here today, as well as their continued support throughout the years.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the Legislative and OMB staff for their hard work and service to the Band. They support the Band Assembly in their duties and provide all financial services for the Band government with superior performance! Thank you.

Next year at this time, we will have a new President of the United States of America. With new leadership comes change, positive change many times. A change many of us would welcome would be to end the war in Iraq and bring our soldiers home. As the war in Iraq continues after many years, we realize how lucky we are as Americans, free and living in peace. We realize the sacrifice many Americans make to serve our country, and we thank you veterans!

We honor our many veterans here today and those still serving our country here and abroad. Please join me for a moment of silence in remembrance of all veterans of war, as we owe you our freedom!

Go today, my friends, and live each day in peace with your family, your friends, and yourself!

Mii gwetch for being here today.

Chief Justice Alvina Aubele's Judicial Report



Steve Premo

Welcome to the 2008 State of the Band Address.

My name is Alvina Aubele. I am the Chief Justice for the Band's Judicial Branch. I will be making the annual report on the courts.

The MLBO Court of Central Jurisdiction has been in existence for more than 25 years. The Court is comprised of the District Court and the Appellate Court.

Paul W. Day is the District Court Judge. The Appellate Court is comprised of the Chief Justice (Alvina) and two Appellate Justices: Kathy

Hedstrom and Clarence Boyd.

The Court also has a Court Administrator, Clerk of Court, Assistant Clerk, Bailiff/Process Server, an Administrative Assistant, and a Law Clerk.

The Court Liaison Program operates out of the Court and has four (4) workers which serve all three districts.

The Court has a broad range of jurisdiction, both civil and criminal.

For example, when a Band member is charged with violating the Band's criminal laws, the court will conduct a trial to determine whether the evidence is sufficient to convict the charged party of a crime. In those cases the court is exercising its criminal jurisdiction.

The Court's criminal jurisdiction is limited to misdemeanors by the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968. If an offense rises to felony level, the defendant will be charged in state court – where a conviction may result in a prison sentence.

When the Court is handling non-criminal matters, such as child support, guardianship, adoption, name change, auto accident claims, divorce, to name a few, it is exercising its civil jurisdiction.

I would like to highlight some areas of the past year's case load by using the four graphs shown on the screens:

Graph number one shows the total number of cases filed in 2007 is up 17 percent from 2006. That averages out to nearly 30 cases per week for 52 weeks per year. As indicated, the Court's case load has dramatically increased.

Graph number two shows that the number of child support cases increased 23 percent and the civil lawsuits tripled from 2006 to 2007.

Graph number three shows the number of criminal complaints filed in 2007, which also tripled from 2006. The juvenile cases increased by 10 cases over last year. As the Band continues to step up its law enforcement efforts, the Court will continue to hear more criminal cases each year.

Graph number four shows the number of family law cases (such as CHIPS cases, child support, custody, guardianship, etc.) grew more than 5 percent in 2007.

This next section, I will talk about the achievement and goals of the Court:

1. In August of 2007, the Court was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to enhance our court services. The Court will use the funds to upgrade the courtroom recording system, court management system, create a clerk's manual, and others items.

2. The Guardian Ad Litem Program is now underway. We have three Band members and one non-Band member in training to become Guardians Ad Litem. The Guardian Ad Litem are appointed by the Court to represent the best interest of minor children, elderly and others who are unable to handle their own legal affairs.

3. During the coming year, the Judicial Branch will be preparing a "court information" Web site to add to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe general Web site. Included in the "court information" are the Chief Justice orders, precedent court cases, court forms, and other relevant information.

The last few slides show our judges performing the swearing-in ceremonies for numerous individuals who were appointed in 2007.

Thank you for attending.

Diabetes Team Updates

Diabetes Team poster recognized at healthy heart conference

By Sue Swanson, Registered Nurse and Certified Diabetes Educator

The Diabetes Education Team presented its poster "Journey to a Healthy Heart" this week at the national Healthy Heart conference, in which 70 tribes from across the United States competed. The poster featured tribal members from the Mille Lacs Band and the St. Croix Chippewa participating in Healthy Heart activities including talking circles, exercise, recruitment activities, diabetes bingo, and Healthy Heart luncheons. The poster received honorable mention in two categories – the "Easy on the Eyes" Award and the "Best Use of Space" Award. We thank everyone on our team for their efforts in creating this poster.

Start 2008 in a healthy way

You're invited to a diabetes class. Join others to learn how to manage your diabetes with our American Diabetes Association-recognized diabetes education program. Bring a friend to

receive a free gift and meet our Diabetes Education Team. Lunch is provided.

- When: Tuesday, February 12, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Where: District I Community Center
- What: Balancing Your Life and Diabetes

You'll be happy you came. We have great door prizes too!

Reserve your spot by calling Lorna Garbow at 320/532-4163.

Great American Eat Right Challenge

On Tuesday, February 5, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the District I Community Center, there will be a presentation on healthy eating and the value of a healthy lifestyle, exercise, and weight control in preventing cancer. A meal will be prepared from the Great American Eat Right Cookbook, which is provided by the American Cancer Society.

The event is open to community members; participants will receive a t-shirt. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please contact Marlene Poukka or Betty Nichols at the public health building at 800/709-6445.

Events at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum And Trading Post

Sweetgrass basket workshop

Sweetgrass, considered a sacred herb in American Indian culture, is known for its aromatic fragrance. Under the direction of Band Elder Margaret Hill, participants will construct their own coiled sweetgrass basket to take home. This two-day workshop will be held on Saturday, January 26, from 12-4 p.m. and from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sunday, January 27. The cost is \$50 for the public, \$45 for Minnesota Historical Society members, and \$30 for Mille Lacs Band members. There is also a \$10 supply fee.

Sewing and beading circle

Participants are invited to bring unfinished projects to the Mille Lacs Indian Museum to work on them in a group setting the second weekend of each month through May. Museum staff and Band Elder Margaret Hill will be on hand to help guide projects. The next event will be on Saturday, February 9,

from 12-4 p.m. and from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sunday, February 10. The cost is \$25 for the public, \$20 for Minnesota Historical Society members, and \$10 for Mille Lacs Band members.

The People's Day

Experience Minnesota's American Indian History during "The People's Day" event on Sunday, February 10, from 12-5 p.m. at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum. The cost for this event is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and college students, \$4 for children ages 6-17, and admission is free for children under 5, Minnesota Historical Society members, and Mille Lacs Band members.

Hours of operation

Although the museum is closed for the season, you can still arrange a group tour or attend some great events. Group tours can be scheduled by calling the museum at 320/532-3632. Interactive television programming and outreach programming are also available.

Gert Lambert Retires After 37 Years as Nurse on Reservation



Photo submitted by Gert Lambert

Thirty-seven years ago, poverty and a lack of transportation made health care a luxury for many on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Many Band members didn't have phones. There were even local tuberculosis victims still being treated in sanitariums.

This was the reality when Gert Lambert began working as a nurse on the reservation in 1970. When she retired in December 2007, Gert still saw some of the same issues – such as heart disease and diabetes – that she had known throughout her career, but there have been countless improvements in health and health care on the reservation during that time.

The early days

Gert, then a member of the Franciscan Sisters in Little Falls, was searching for a new job. Knowing that the nursing school where she was teaching would soon close, she began as a Head Start nurse on the reservation.

Gert became a full-time nurse for patients of all ages after a year had passed. She worked out of the old community center in District I, which consisted of an office and one exam room. A doctor from Onamia originally came there one day a week, and a doctor was on call the other days. Gert and the doctor dispensed samples donated by the drug companies whenever possible, and called the closest pharmacy if necessary.

In addition to having office hours, Gert did home visits. "All services in those days were more limited," she said, indicating the difficulty created by a lack of phones and transportation. "Unless someone came to their homes,

people had to travel to clinics and pharmacies in Onamia, Hinckley, Pine City, or McGregor, which was a real distance issue."

Gert fondly remembers making home visits, not only for the visiting, but for what she had the opportunity to see. Many people would be working on birch bark crafts, beading, or parching when she arrived. She also loved hearing the stories. "Those are some of the things I miss the most," she said.

Gert was also a part of the advancements made in health care facilities on the reservation over the years. From the old community center, she moved to a clinic where Grand Casino Mille Lacs stands now, then to trailers near the present-day government center, and finally into the Ne-la-Shing Clinic and the District II and III clinics.

Health care improvements

Although many of the same health problems persist that Gert helped treat throughout her long career, she has seen vast improvement in accessibility, treatment, and people being more proactive about their own health.

"There are more providers, more specialists, and more traditional practitioners available close by," she explained. "And some people have already looked up their symptoms on the Internet before they even see their doctor."

Much has changed in terms of medicine since Gert began her career as a nurse, but one constant that she has always enjoyed is being around people.

Gert's final day as a primary care provider/nurse practitioner with the Band was December 27. She looks forward to being at home on her farm near Onamia.

Thank you

The Mille Lacs Band wishes to thank Gert for all of her hard work, dedication, and personal touch. She will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

Educator Millie Benjamin Retires after 29 years with Nay Ah Shing Schools



"Our traditions are a way of life that's still alive here at Mille Lacs," said Millie Benjamin, a long-time teacher at the Nay Ah Shing Schools.

In December, Mille Lacs Band Elder Millie Benjamin retired after 29 years working at the Band's Nay Ah Shing Schools. She joined Nay Ah Shing in the late 1970s as a teacher's aide. Around that time, the schools' cultural teachers approached her about talking with some young female students about Ojibwe traditions.

"I talked to the girls about our traditional ways of taking care of young women when they reach puberty, but I was surprised to learn that many families didn't practice them anymore. This is when my interest really started in teaching students the Ojibwe culture."

Millie grew up in a traditional Ojibwe family in District I of the Mille Lacs Reservation. She often tells people that she went to "Clark University," which refers to the teachings she learned from her parents – John and Lucy Clark. With the knowledge she learned from her parents, Millie taught Nay Ah Shing students how to make traditional crafts, such as beadwork, moccasins, and dream catchers. As a fluent Ojibwe speaker, she also taught the language at Nay Ah Shing and at Brainerd Community College, where she attended college.

"The most important thing that I could have taught students is the old traditional ways of the Mille Lacs People," said Millie. "Wild ricing, how to do a funeral ceremony, how we name our little kids – it's things

like this that I've taught that will make a big difference."

Millie was recognized for her work in 1993, when she was selected as the Minnesota Indian Education Association's Teacher of the Year, and in 1997, when she was chosen as the National Indian School Board Association's National Indian Teacher of the Year.

Millie also served as the coordinator of the Band's Ojibwe Language and Culture Program, which gives students the opportunity to be immersed in the language by listening to conversations by fluent Ojibwe speakers. The program is used at the Band's Nay Ah Shing Schools, day care facilities, and Head Start programs.

Later in her career, Millie earned a certificate in education from St. Mary's University, which held classes in the Mille Lacs area.

Retirement

In her retirement, Millie is planning to write a book about her mother's sayings and the traditions her mother taught. Millie is also teaching the Ojibwe language to her granddaughter who lives with her.

"I'll tell her how to set the table in Ojibwe and she'll understand and set the table. She's picking it up well," said Millie.

Millie's family, friends and former students are invited to attend a retirement celebration on January 18 at Nay Ah Shing High School at 10 a.m.

Congratulations to Millie on her many accomplishments and service to the Band.

Ask Melanie

By Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin

Should Band members voice support for the Elder Supplemental Assistance Plan or the proposed Pension Plan?

I believe Band members should express support for both, just as I have. You don't need to choose one or the other.

The Elder Supplemental Assistance Plan is already law, and currently provides up to \$400 a month to eligible Elders age 62 and older and disabled Elders 55 and older. This plan is need-based. Payments are not taxed, because needy Elders don't pay income tax.

The Pension Plan that I've proposed would go to **all** Band Elders, regardless of income, when they turn 62. This plan would **not replace** the Supplemental Assistance Plan; it would be **in addition to** it. These payments might be taxable, depending upon the Elder's income. If that is the case, we may need to revise the proposal for the pension plan, because no one wants to see Elders taxed.

Another difference between the plans is that the Elder Supplemental Assistance payments remain the same each month. The Band Assembly is currently considering increasing the Elder Supplemental Assistance monthly payments from \$400 to \$500 per month, but otherwise these payments are the same year to year. However, payments from the Pension Plan would gradually increase over time. In the

plan's first year, Elders who turn 62 would receive approximately \$1,500. In 11 years, the Pension Plan payment would be about \$6,000, and in 50 years, it could be close to \$1,000,000. Again, this money would be in addition to the \$400 maximum that eligible Elders already receive.

I strongly support the Elder Supplemental Assistance plan. I also support the Pension Plan, and believe we can and should have both available to Elders. What I want to see changed and improved is the interest rate we are earning on our invested money that allows us to provide the Elder Supplemental Assistance payments. If we don't change our investment strategy, this fund will run out of money in a few years. If we do change our investment strategy and get a higher interest rate of return on our invested money, we could afford both of these plans.

The Band Assembly and I are currently discussing these issues. In the end, we will do what is best for Band members. We may need to revise one or both plans, or combine them in some form. As we are having these discussions, we will keep the good of all Band members in mind and do the right thing for all Elders and future generations.

Do you have a question?

If you have a question that you would like me to answer, please fax it to 320/532-5800 or mail it to:

Chief Executive's Office
Attn: Ask Melanie
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

Chief Executive Calendar

To keep Band members informed about what Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin has been working on, here is a look back at just a few of the items from her recent schedule:

- Attended Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) finance meeting on the Fond du Lac reservation
- Convened the 24th Annual event, and delivered the State of the Band address
- Held an Elder Advisory Board meeting

- Traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend Tribal Self-Governance meetings
- Met with Indian Health Service (IHS) representatives on Mille Lacs Band issues in Washington, D.C.
- Met with individual Band members on various issues
- Held organizational and planning meetings for Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations (WEWIN) conference

Election Calendar for 2008

- January 4: Last day for sitting RTC Member to give notice of resignation to file for other RTC office
- January 16: Last day for sitting RTC Member to give notice of resignation to file for vacated RTC seat
- January 18: Notify MCT on choice of appellate forum
- January 21: Election Announcement
- **January 22: Opening of period for filing for office**
- **February 1: Closing of filing period**
- February 22: Notice of Certifications to TEC
- February 27: Deadline for appointment of Election Boards
- February 27: Deadline for appointment of Election Contest Judge
- February 29: TEC provides ballots for Primary Election
- February 29: Notice of Primary
- April 1: Primary
- April 2: General Reservation Election Board certifies Primary Results
- April 3: General Reservation Election Board publishes Primary Results
- April 4: Deadline for Request for Recount
- April 8: 5:00 p.m. - Deadline for Contest of Primary election
- April 9: (Results, if Allowed or 7th or 8th If earlier request) - Decision on Request for Recount and Results of Recount
- April 18: Decision on Contest
- April 21: Deadline for Appeal to Court of Election Appeals
- April 24: Record of Contest to Court of Election Appeals
- April 28: Last Day for Hearing on Appeal
- May 7: Last Day for Decision on Appeal
- May 9: Notice of Regular Election TEC provide ballots
- June 10: General Election
- June 11: General Reservation Election Board certifies results of Election
- June 12: General Reservation Election Board publishes election results
- June 13: Deadline for Request for Recount
- June 17 (5:00 p.m.): Deadline for Notice of Contest
- June 18 (or 17, 16, if Request for Recount Is filed before deadline): Decision on Request for Recount and Results of Recount, if allowed.
- June 27 (or ten days from Notice of Contest whichever is sooner): Decision on Contest
- June 30: Deadline for appeal to Court of Election Appeals
- July 3: Record of contest forwarded to Tribal Court of Elections Appeals
- July 7: Last Day for Hearing on Appeal (hearing within 7 days of notice of appeal)
- July 8: Winning candidates assume office by operation of law, unless sooner seated, or the election is subject of appeal to the Court of Election Appeals
- 10 Days from Hearing on Appeal: Deadline for decision of the Court of Elections Appeal
- Day following Decision of Appeal: Winning candidate prevailing on appeal takes office

Hand Drum Contest at Grand Casino Mille Lacs

A hand drum contest will be held on February 16 at Grand Casino Mille Lacs. Sessions begin at 1 and 7 p.m. There is a maximum of five singers per team. There will also be a hoop dance demonstration by Brandon Fairbanks.

General admission is \$5; Elders and children 10 and under are free.

Attend Your Precinct Caucus On February 5

Later this year, Minnesotans will help elect a new President and numerous other federal, state and local officeholders. Although the November 2008 elections are nearly ten months away, you can be a part of the decision-making process beginning in February.

Precinct caucuses – to be held on February 5 at 7 p.m. – are the first step taken by Minnesota’s major political parties to select the candidates and issues they will support this November. These caucuses are open to all members of the public who are eligible to vote on November 4, 2008.

At the beginning of each caucus, a Presidential poll will be taken. Then you will discuss issues that are important to your party, which may become part of the party platform. You will also choose delegates to state Senate district conventions, where state

legislative candidates are endorsed. You could be a candidate for delegate or precinct office yourself, and perhaps attend party conventions at the state Senate district, congressional district, state, or even national levels. Just bring a spouse, friend or neighbor from your precinct to nominate you.

If you want to attend your precinct’s caucus, call your county auditor or call/e-mail the state political party of your preference for location information.

- Minnesota DFL Party
www.dfl.org
651/293-1200
- Minnesota Republican Party
www.mngop.org
651/222-0022
- Minnesota Independence Party
www.mnip.org
612/487-9700

Still Time to Get Your Flu Shot

By Monte Fronk, Emergency Management Coordinator

Flu season is here and typically reaches its peak in Minnesota anytime from December to April. It is still a good time to get a flu shot if you haven’t already done so. It is especially important to get one if you have a higher risk of getting influenza or spreading it to others. Some people with a higher risk include:

- People ages 50 and older and children
- People with chronic medical conditions
- Women who are pregnant during the flu season
- Health care workers
- People who care for others with chronic medical conditions

The Band’s clinics offer flu shots to Band members and employees on a walk-in basis. For more information about flu shots, call one of the clinics or visit the Minnesota Department of Health Web site at www.mdhflu.com.

Volunteer opportunities with emergency response group

The Central Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit is made up of volunteers with emergency preparedness training who can be called to respond to emergency situations, such as natural disasters or pandemic illnesses. Volunteers include emergency medical technicians, nurses, dentists, mental health professionals, veterinarians, pharmacists, doctors, and other health care professionals.

Fourteen counties in central Minnesota make up the unit, and each county’s health department helps coordinate volunteers. Central Minnesota Responds MRC volunteers receive some initial training and an emergency bag that they can use in emergency situations.

If you are interested in serving in this unit, please contact me at 320/532-4181, ext. 2558 for more information.

Photo Correction



Correction: In the December edition of *The Inaajimowin*, Francis Staples was misidentified in the Thanksgiving Feast photos. Pictured here at the Thanksgiving feast are Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin (far left) and her family: (left to right) Martha Davis, Cheyenne Hayes, and Francis Staples.

Band Families Enjoy Festivities at Urban Area Holiday Party



Photo courtesy of Barb Benjamin-Robertson

More than 350 people enjoyed food and socializing during the urban area holiday party held on December 15 at the Jack Cornelius Boys & Girls Club in Minneapolis. Corporate Commission staff and many valued volunteers helped with the event, which included a buffet dinner, door prizes, and a visit with “Santa” for Band members and their families.

Corporate Commission staff who volunteered at the party included Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Sarah Oquist, Selena Haines, Angela

Heikes, Phil Gaffney, Tom Herzfeldt, Mike Wacker, and Andrea Yardley.

“The work done by the Corporate Commission staff and our volunteers was exceptional,” said Barb Benjamin-Robertson, Urban Program Administrator.

Protect You and Your Family From Carbon Monoxide Hazards

By Rob Thompson, Safety/Risk Manager

This month’s article deals with carbon monoxide (CO), an odorless and colorless gas. The long winter heating season exposes all of us to the risk of CO, and if CO is not dealt with appropriately, the outcome can be fatal.

Carbon monoxide (CO)

CO is a toxic gas that is impossible to see, taste or smell, so it can harm you before you are even aware that it is in your home. If you are exposed to lower levels of CO, it can cause mild flu-like symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, headaches, dizziness and disorientation. These effects can vary depending on each person’s overall health and amount of CO exposure.

Sources of CO

Typical sources of CO include leaking furnaces and chimneys, gas water heaters, fireplaces, wood and gas stoves, gasoline powered equipment, and tobacco smoke. Incomplete combustion in gas stoves and unvented gas heaters/furnaces can cause high levels of CO inside our homes. Exhaust from automobiles in attached garages or nearby

parking areas can also be a source of CO.

Reducing CO exposure

Following are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of CO exposure:

- Maintain gas appliances and make adjustments as necessary
- Make sure that flues are open when using fireplaces
- Have your central heating system (furnaces, chimneys, etc.) professionally cleaned and inspected each year
- Do not leave your car running inside your garage without the garage door open
- Use a CO monitor (similar to a smoke detector) in your home to warn you if CO levels become dangerous

Remember, CO is nothing to take lightly. With a few precautions, CO exposures can be easily controlled.

If you would like more information about CO, please contact the Mille Lacs Band Housing Maintenance Department in your district. Please direct any questions to the Housing Department at 320/532-4181.

Vehicle Forfeitures

By East Central Legal Services

What is vehicle forfeiture?

A vehicle forfeiture is when an agency seizes your vehicle for certain offenses, and it becomes the property of the agency that took it.

What types of vehicles can be seized?

Passenger cars, SUVs, ATVs, snowmobiles, motorcycles, or any vehicle used in the commission of a designated offense can be taken. There are other kinds of property that can be taken as well, but for this article we are concentrating on vehicles only.

What crimes might affect the removal of a vehicle?

Crime or designated offenses including driving while impaired (MN Statue 169A.20), driving while impaired first degree, (160A.24), or driving while impaired second degree (169A.25) can result in vehicle seizure. Anyone driving with a cancelled, Inimical to Public Safety (IPS) driver's license that has not been reinstated, or anyone who is in violation of a restriction on their license that prohibits the consumption of any amount of alcohol or a controlled substance may also have their vehicles taken. Vehicles can also be seized if they are used in certain drug-related and other crimes.

What can I do to get my vehicle back?

There is a procedure called "Request for Judicial Determination" that can be filed

with the county where the offense occurred. If the vehicle is worth less than \$7,500, then you can file it in small claims (conciliation) court and pay no filing fee. If it is worth more than \$7,500, then you must file your petition in district court. These forms must be filed within 30 days from the incident. This gives you a chance to explain why you need the vehicle back. Minnesota statues state that if an owner can show by convincing evidence that the owner did not know that the vehicle was going to be used to break the law, or that the owner took reasonable steps to stop the other party from using the vehicle, then there is a chance that the vehicle will be returned to the owner. There are other defenses as well.

If you or someone you know is having problems with a vehicle forfeiture, East Central Legal Services may be able to help. Please call us at our toll-free number 800/622-7772. We are also available for intakes at the following places and times:

- District I at the Tribal Government Center's workforce office, Wednesdays, noon-4:30 p.m.
- East Lake Community Center, every other Tuesday, 8 a.m.-noon
- Chiminising Community Center, every other Thursday, 8 a.m.-noon
- Lake Lena Community Center, alternate Tuesdays, 8 a.m.-noon
- Urban Workforce Center, by appointment only
(The above times are subject to weather conditions and other factors; please call our toll-free number for the exact dates.)

Circle of Health Update

By Circle of Health Staff

Diagnostic tests billing

This is to inform all Band members who have radiology tests (X-rays, MRI's, CT scans, etc.) that we continue to have problems with the billing process. Even if you present your card at the time of your visit, it seems as though the provider will not bill us until you receive your first statement and make a call to their billing office to verify your Circle of Health information. If you receive a second statement, please make another call to the provider and let us know you have encountered problems, so we can take care of it before it is turned over to a collection agency.

Medicare Part D coverage

If you have Medicare Part D coverage, you should apply for the low subsidy assistance. This can reduce your Part D premium, or all together eliminate it. To determine if you could be eligible for help with prescription drug plan costs, Social Security needs information about your (and your spouse's, if married and living together) income and resources. Documents that may help you prepare include:

- Social Security card (a Medicare card with effective dates is best);
- bank account statements, including checking, savings, and certificates of deposit;

- Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), stocks, bonds, savings bonds, mutual funds, and other investment statements;
 - tax returns;
 - payroll slips;
 - your most recent Social Security benefits award letters or statements for railroad retirement income, veterans benefits, pensions and annuities; and
 - cash value and face value of any life insurance policies you have (check with your insurance agent for the amount you would get if you cashed in your life insurance policies today).
- Once you have this information, you can apply online with Mille Lacs Elder Medical Social Worker Kim Benjamin-Rivers at 320/532-7814, Circle of Health Benefit Coordinator Dawn Chosa at the Ne-la-Shing Eye Clinic on Mondays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., or you should receive information on an annual basis from Social Security.

Reimbursements

On a final note, please allow reimbursement claims a two- to six-week grace period from the date of submission to process. If you still haven't received a reimbursement or denial after six weeks, contact Michele Palomaki, Circle of Health Director; David Boyd, Claims Processor for A-L; or Roberta Lemieux, Claims Processor for M-Z, at 320/676-8214 or 800/491-6106.

American Indian Actor Adam Beach Visits Mille Lacs Band Schools



Nay Ah Shing students met actor Adam Beach when he visited the Mille Lacs Reservation in December. From left to right: Juanita Weyaus, Amber Buckanaga, ValaReya Leecy, Adam Beach, Renae Short, Miranda Nickaboine, and Kelly Friend.

Photo courtesy of Nay Ah Shing School

In December, American Indian actor Adam Beach visited Nay Ah Shing Upper School and the Minisinaakwaang Leadership Academy to speak to students about respect. He shared stories about his youth, when he was involved in a gang, and how he turned his life around in a positive way and pursued acting. Adam, who grew up on the Dog Creek Reserve in Ottawa, Canada, is currently starring on the television show, *Law and Order*. He has been in more than 50 movie and

television productions, including *Smoke Signals*, *Joe Dirt*, and *Flags of Our Fathers*.

After speaking to students, Adam posed for pictures and mingled with the crowd. Adam also spoke with others on the Mille Lacs Reservation during his visit.

[EMILY - CAN YOU PROVIDE ANYMORE INFORMATION?]

Agriculture

Morning Sun Angus Co.
21862 County Road 10
Deerwood, MN 56444
Curt Kalk
T: 218/534-3778

Running Home Farms
56706 North Highway 123
Askov, MN 55704
Gordon Matrious
T: 320/224-4772

Willow Ridge Boarding Stables
24383 Williams Road
Hillman, MN 56338
Jackie McRae
T: 320/277-3540
E: willowr@brainerd.net

Artists

Beadwork Art
3300 38th Avenue S
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Barbara Benjamin-Robertson
T: 612/722-3281
E: robertsonb@qwest.net

JD Original Custom Knives
Route 2, Box 358
Hinckley, MN 55037
Joe Dunkley

Migizii Regalia
16031 Migizii Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
Robert Kegg

Native Images
16235 Nay Ah Shing Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
Vincent Merrill

Pauline's Custom Designs
415 West Main Street
Hinckley, MN 55037
Pauline Moose
T: 320/384-0989

Quilts & Things
RR 3, Box 402
Hinckley, MN 55037
Mary Reynolds

Skin-O-Vations
2481 Evergreen Court Apt. C
Hinckley, MN 55037
Perry Skinaway
T: 218/213-7832

Business Services

Black Dog Computer Services, LLC
20570 Iteri Avenue
Lakeville, MN 55044
Joe Hendron
E: blackdog@blackdogcomputers.com
T: 651/387-0946

Eagle Clan Productions
18834 460th Street
Garrison, MN 56450
Rick Anderson
T: 320/282-5650

Eagle Rock Associates
11533 Bay Pointe Drive
Breezy Point, MN 56472
Hank Bonga

Eagle Signs
2620 Chiminising Drive
Isle, MN 56342
Cheryl Miller
T: 320/279-0026
E: cgmill@ecenet.com

First Nation's Distributing, Inc.
9462 State Highway 27
Onamia, MN 56359
William Schaaf
T: 320/492-5686
F: 320/203-0947
E: schaafb@hotmail.com

Paramount Embroidery
6941 Ticonderoga Trail
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
Scott Meyer
T: 952/294-8530
F: 952/223-4773
E: ParaEmb@mn.rr.com
W: www.ParamountEmbroidery.com

Red Circle Agency
212 3rd Avenue, North Suite 445
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Chad Germann
T: 612/372-4612
F: 612/372-4617
E: chad@redcircleagency.com
W: www.redcircleagency.com

Shield Services, LLC
13560 - 89th Street NE
Otsego, MN 55330
Gary Dorr
T: 612/366-1039

Corporate Commission of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Small Business Development Program
is proud to present

Mille Lacs Band Member Businesses



320/532-8850
700 Grand Avenue, Onamia, MN 56359

November 2007

Construction Services

Anthony Costello Exteriors
313 10th Avenue North
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
Anthony Costello
T: 320/230-0503
C: 320/492-5943

Applegate Building Restoration
7795 Alpha Road
Princeton, MN 55371
Jerry Applegate
T: 763/389-1194
C: 952/261-5795

Churchill Construction
46458 Grace Lake Road
Sandstone, MN 55072
Jayson Churchill
T: 320/237-6303

Churchill Contracting Co.
11575 East Laketown Drive
Albertville, MN 55301
Albert "Joe" Churchill
T: 612/799-6730
E: churchill@charter.net

DECO, Inc.
14275 Golf Course Drive,
Suite 250
Baxter, MN 56425
Robert A. Dorr
T: 800/968-9114

Double D Construction & Carpet Sales
6315 County Road 138
Garrison, MN 56450
David Granger
T: 320/692-6092
C: 320/279-1167
E: gravedangerDD@hotmail.com

John Sutton Carpentry
8730 County Road F
Danbury, WI 54830
John Sutton
T: 715/656-3414

Kalk Construction Co., Inc.
41893 310th Lane
Aitkin, MN 56431
Brad Kalk
T: 218/838-7696
F: 218/927-2375
E: BKalk@KalkConstruction.com

KLS Construction
1440 10th Avenue #105
Newport, MN 55055
Kevin Schaaf
T: 651/769-1717
C: 651/428-5914
E: klss2003@yahoo.com

Lone Eagle Construction
20304 Driftwood Street
McGregor, MN 55760
Michael W. Davis
T: 218/768-2249
C: 218/851-8550

Nickaboine Construction
16245 Nay Ah Shing Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
James Nickaboine

Northland Quality Builders
28114 Cindy Street
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Michael J. Nickaboine
C: 218/841-5222
T: 218/847-5812

Maintenance Services

Badgun Enterprises, Inc.
10575 360th Street
Onamia, MN 56359
Gilda Burr
T: 320/532-0961
F: 320/532-0962
E: tabrn@hotmail.com

Nickaboine Lawn Care Services
1490 Nay Ah Shing Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
Ole Nickaboine Sr.
T: 320/532-5884

Soo Line Towing, LLC
10474 Stevens Road
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-4600
F: 320/532-4555
Toll-free: 866/869-2488

Soo Line Tire, Inc.
507 Main Street West
P.O. Box 536
Onamia, MN 56359
Joe Mojica
T: 320/532-5503
F: 320/532-4555

Wiikwaibaan Inini
915 John Avenue
Superior, WI 54880
Robert Dowell
C: 218/349-7762
C: 218/349-7757
E: warf60@chartermi.net

Personal Services

Carole's Grand Salon, Inc.
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
Carole Higgins
T: 320/384-7737

Hear More Hearing Aid Center
(4 locations)
1445 White Bear Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55106
T: 651/771-4019
F: 651/771-9941

106 Central Avenue
Osseo, MN 55369
T: 763/391-7433

1001 Center Avenue
Moorhead, MN 56560
T: 218/287-0508
Toll-free 800/664-6780

9424 Lyndale Avenue South
Bloomington, MN 55420
T: 952/884-3007
Donald Olson
W: www.hearmorehearingaidcenter.com

Warrior's Fight Promotions
Hinckley, MN 55037
Bobby Anderson
T: 320/384-7409
E: warrior@youbetnet.net

Recreation

Backstage Planet, LLC
20777 State Highway 6
Deerwood, MN 56444
Dan Boyd
T: 218/534-9204
C: 218/330-8924
F: 218/534-9205
E: dan@backstageplanet.com
W: www.backstageplanet.com

Mission Creek Paintball, Inc.
13435 Emma Road
Hinckley, MN 55037
Timothy Jackson
T: 651/491-0077
W: www.missioncreekpaintball.com

Retail

Native Grounds Coffee Shop
777 Grand Avenue
Onamia, MN 56359
Lew Boyd
T: 320/532-4548

Two Eagles Art & Floral
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
Rod Matrious
T: 320/384-0674
E: twoeaglesart@wmconnect.com

Velvet Bean Coffee Shop
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
Solita Reum
T: 320/384-7499

Corporate Commission Businesses

Candy Cupboard
777 Grand Avenue
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-5178

Crossroads Convenience Store
Route 3, Box 266, State Highway 48
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 320/655-4412

East Lake Convenience Store
36040 State Highway 65
McGregor, MN 55760
T: 218/768-3344

Eddy's Resort
41334 Shakopee Road
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-3657

Grand Auto & RV Care
650 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 320/384-4822

Grand Casino Hinckley Hotel & Events Center
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 800/472-6321

Grand Casino Hinckley Amphitheater
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 800/472-6321

Grand Casino Hinckley RV Resort & Chalets
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 800/995-4726

Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel & Events Center
777 Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 343
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 800/626-5825

Grand Hinckley Inn
777 Lady Luck Drive
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 800/468-3517

Grand Makwa Cinema
16550 Ataage Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-3929 (Movie Hotline)
888/GO MAKWA

Grand Market Grocery
16600 Ataage Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-4055
F: 320/532-4054

Grand Northern Inn
600 Weber Avenue
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 800/468-3517

Grand Ventures Travel, Inc.
700 Grand Avenue
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 866/983-5757
F: 320/210-0277
E: travel@grcasinos.com
W: www.grandventurestravel.com

MLB Convenience Store
40955 U.S. Highway 169
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-3940

MLB Subway
40955 U.S. Highway 169
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-3142

Time For You Salon & Spa
777 Grand Avenue
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-5030

Tobies Mill Mall
540 Weber Avenue
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 320/384-4645

Woodlands National Bank
(5 locations)
16602 Ataage Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-5463
F: 320/532-5486

P.O. Box B
Onamia, MN 56359
T: 320/532-4142

P.O. Box 190
Hinckley, MN 55037
T: 877/406-9234

P.O. Box 187
Sturgeon Lake, MN 55783
T: 218/372-3105

240 North Road
Cloquet, MN 55720
T: 218/878-5999
F: 218/878-4762

W: www.woodlandsnationalbank.com

WEWIN Conference Free to First 50 Women Who Register

Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations (WEWIN), a non-profit organization that provides education, advocacy, training, and leadership development for female American Indians, will hold its fourth annual conference on July 29-31 at Grand Casino Hinckley. Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, one of the organization's co-founders, is sponsoring the first 50 female Band members who register for the conference by contacting her office at 320/532-7486.

WEWIN was founded in 2004 to provide American Indian women with the knowledge, support, and resources they need to achieve success in their professional and personal lives. The organization nurtures women's understanding of tribal responsibilities, issues faced on reservations, and political challenges experienced at the state and federal levels.

Mille Lacs Band Of Ojibwe Tribal Government Monthly Financial Report

August 2007

	Approved Budget for FY 2007	Actual Expenditures through 8/31/07	% of Budget Expended
Administration (1)*	14,046,954	10,487,238	74.7%
Workforce*	9,113,401	5,142,636	56.4%
Judicial	948,944	731,904	77.1%
Law Enforcement*	3,720,453	2,704,780	72.7%
Education*	18,713,196	14,381,536	76.9%
Health and Human Services*	24,119,441	19,415,550	80.5%
Natural Resources*	5,549,828	4,344,398	78.3%
Community Development*	48,795,563	24,577,462	50.4%
Gaming Authority	4,314,052	3,620,299	83.9%
Bonus Distribution	37,134,140	34,002,501	91.6%
Total Expenditures	\$166,455,972	\$119,408,304	71.7%

Financial Notes:

- (1) Administration includes Chief Executive, administration, finance, Solicitor General, legislative, government affairs, and district operations.
- (2) The amounts above do not include casino operations. However, they do include government operations funded by casino distributions.
- (3) The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has its financial statements audited every year by an independent public accounting firm. Audit reports from previous years are available for review at the government center.
- (4) Economic development appropriations have been excluded as of October 31, 1997. As of October 1, 1997, the Band has separate accounting functions for the Corporate Commission from the tribal government.

* These departments include continuing appropriations from the 2006 fiscal year.

All Aboard With Reading First



Photo courtesy of Nay Ah Shing School

Second grade students in Mary Winskowski's and Julie Nelson's class reached their reading benchmarks in December for the Reading First Program. The benchmark "trains" are on display at Abinoojiiyag Elementary School. From left to right, (front row) Jason Boyd, Amber Taylor, Davis Deyhle, Jamison Deane, Wyatt Oswaldson, and Tyler Nayquonabe (back row) Ian Bearheart, Ronald Hardheart, Thomas White, Misty Tiessen, Hevin Shingobe, Alizayah Nickaboine, Chelsea Benjamin, and Teri Boyd.

By Cindy Bunting, Reading Coach for Nay Ah Shing Schools

Nay Ah Shing K-3 students have something to celebrate – earning 41 bright shiny blue balloons to add to the reading benchmark "trains" for reaching their goals in December.

What is Reading First?

The Reading First Program at Nay Ah Shing Schools focuses on putting proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. Through Reading

First, states and districts receive support to apply scientifically based reading research curriculums – and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research – to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade.

Nay Ah Shing Abinoojiiyag Elementary School is well into its fourth year and is rated among the top Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Reading First schools in the nation. In the last four years, Reading First has

touched the lives of some 4,600 children within 24 BIE schools in 11 states. Students in grades K-3 primarily learn to read, while on the other hand, grade 4-12 students read to learn.

In its first year of the Reading First Program in 2004, Nay Ah Shing was ranked average among 17 BIE Reading First schools. In 2006, Nay Ah Shing was ranked second overall among BIE schools in the nation, making leaps and bounds (a total of 77% of students made their benchmarks). Nay Ah Shing was also ranked number one in K-3 students achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), with 81% reaching this goal. In comparison, 45% of students in BIE schools made AYP in 2004 and 62% of students made AYP in 2006.

Is the success of the Reading First Program due to the consistency of the reading mastery program? One may answer yes, but hard working, dedicated staff, parents, and community members who support Nay Ah Shing Schools are all factors into the equation of success.

Reading First a success

"Reading First has truly empowered our kids with confidence in reading. Our increased reading scores are proof that it works."

– Marie Hendrickson, Second Grade Teacher

"Having 90 minutes, uninterrupted, for reading at first was a tough adjustment for both students and teachers. Now we still work very hard, but we understand the benefits are tremendous. The teachers became believers, and the students are better readers."

– Govinda Budrow, Third Grade Teacher

"Students walk into the reading session knowing what will happen and knowing they can be successful. They are enthusiastic learners who are now willing to take risks. They are gaining self-confidence in their ability to read."

– Mary Simon, Former Special Education Coordinator

"Reading class has made me a better reader. Now I can read at a higher grade. Someone I know who is a great reader is Joe Bastedo. I also think it's important to read to get smarter."

– Toni Weyaus, Third Grade Student

Tribal Noteboard

Happy January birthday to:

Janet, on January 1 with love from Jen, Wes, Tracy, Kelly, Rachel, Taya and Noah • **Tracy**, on January 14 with love from Kelly, Rachel, Taya, Noah, Deek, Jen and Wes • **Karen**, on January 2 with love from Ashley, William, Rodney, Melissa, mom, Ellianna, Damian and Ada • **Rodney Boyd Sr.**, on January 15 with love from mom, Rodney Jr., Jonathan, Ashley, William, Melissa, Ellianna, Damian and Ada • **Derek Smith Jr.**, 5, on January 15 with love from mom, dad, Brook, Rihanna, and the Sam-Smith family • **Brooklyn**, 2, on January 27 from mom, dad and brother • **Zach Pike**, on January 7 with love from dad, Marie, grandma, Christine, Becky, Anthony, John, Ariana, Alissa, Tony and Melissa • **Stormy Pike**, on January 27 with love from daddy, Marie, grandma, Christina, Becky, Anthony, John, Ariana, Alissa, Tony and Melissa • **Mother**, on January 4 with love from Lorelei • **Brother Slick**, on January 25 with love from your sister Plow • **Machia Marie**, 2, on January 3 with love from Auntie Rosebud, Amare, Junior, Kamryn, and Daityn • **Paul Jourdain**, 18, on January 9 with love from Rosebud Jourdain, dad, and the rest of the family • **Brandon Wiedewitsch**, 21, on January 15 with love from mom, Brandi Jo, John, Elias, and all your friends and family • **Jeremy Harrington**, on January 22 from Tammy, Brandon, Brandi Jo, John, Elias, Aaron, Carrie, Renae, Zachary, Jerry and Kira • **McKayla Boyd**, on January 21 with love from Auntie Tammy, Brandon, Brandi Jo, John, and Elias • **Danielle Smith**, on January 31 with love from Auntie Tammy, Brandon, Brandi Jo, John, and Elias • **Lamya Morrison**, on January 3 with love from Auntie Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin, and Lia • **Michael A. Christensen IV**, on January 4 with love from Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin and Lia • **Anton Thompson**, on January 5 with love from gooney goo goo, Jereck, Larissa, Elmo, and Lia • **Earl Monchamp**, on January 19 with love from Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin and Lia • **Lia Weyaus**, on January 24 with love from mom, dad, your sister and brother • **Gloria Anderson**, on January 25 with love from Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin and Lia • **Amber Day**, on January 15 with love

from Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin and Lia • **Robert Sam**, on January 27 with love from Raenelle, Jereck, Larissa, Corbin and Lia • **Francis**, on January 1 with love from your we-eh Raenelle • **Bernadine Bullchild-Perez**, on January 10 with love from Donna and Big Joe • **Jazzie Schwenson**, on January 11 with love from Donna and Big Joe • **Jordin Perez**, on January 29 with love from Donna and Big Joe • **Asin Dexter**, on January 29 with love from Donna and Big Joe • **Jaeden King**, 6, on January 17 with love from mom, dad, and brother Makoons • **Keith**, 40, with love from Caryn, Jaeden and Makoons • **Deondre Sam**, on January 7 with love from Meany, Chaddy, Jaxin, Tommy Lee, Huck, Aaron, Carrie, Renae, Zachary, Jerry, and Kira • **Tommy Lee**, on January 27 with love from mom, dad, Chaddy, Jaxin, Deondre, Tina, Grandma Loris, Jay and family, and Grandma Tisha • **Alicia Rose Dorr**, 14, on January 24 with love from mom and dad • **Cheryl Woo**, 21, on January 13 with love from mama, Jo and Racho • **Dad**, 71, on January 13 with love from Sheila and family • **Shane James**, 20, on January 15 with love from mom, dad, Courtney and Connor • **Rodney Sr.**, on January 15 with love from Louise, Shane, Courtney and Connor • **Louise**, on January 7, with love from Rod, Shane, Courtney and Connor • **Bobby Dee**, on January 27 from Louise, Rod, Shane, Courtney and Connor • **McKayla Boyd**, 11, on January 21 with love from mom, dad, Lydell, Gramma Gladys, Papa Ron, Roland, Collin, Camille, Lance, Terrell, Tierra, LaDarius, Clay, Candy, Clayton, Aubrey, and Roxanne • Roseanne Boyd, on January 14 from Aaron, Carrie, Renae, Zachary, Jerry, and Kira.

Happy January birthday to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Gloria Anderson
Mary Bellonger
Art Benjamin
Gladys Benjamin
Daniel Boyd Jr.
Edith Bush
Patricia Clark
Eugene Davis
Lorna Day
Isabel Eubanks
Dorothy Frye
Evelyn Granger
James Hill Jr.

Rose Holmquist
Katherine Jackson
Charles Johnson
Grover Johnson
Richard Kegg
Russell Kegg
Lucille Kuntz
Priscilla Lowman
Gloria Lowrie
Bruce Martin
David Matrious
Temperance McLain
Mary Merrill
Mushkooub
Barbara Nelson
Rosalie Noonday
Dorothy Olson
Donna Pardun
Diana Poitra
Patricia Potter
Dora Sam
Joycelyn Shingobe
Bonnie Shingobe-Neeland
Larry Smallwood
Kathleen Vanheel
Elleraine Weous
Walter Weyaus Sr.

Anniversary

Happy anniversary to **Roger and Bev Garbow** on January 16 with love from Tammy, Brandon, Brandi Jo, John, Elias, Ron, Gladys, Collin, Roland, Desi, Lydell, McKayla, Camille, Lance, Terrell, Tierra, LaDarius, Clay, Candy, Clayton, Aubrey, and Roxanne.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Nikki and Dennis Hyatt on the birth of their new baby girl **Alivia Patricia Hyatt**. Alivia was born on December 20, she was 6 lbs., 6 oz., and was 19 in. long. She is welcomed home by sisters Ashley, Justine and Jada. With love from Stacey and Angie.

• • •

Congratulations to **Tony, Marie, and Christina Pike** on the finalization of their adoption. From all your family and friends.

Thank you

Chi mii gwetch to Lee Staples, Rica DeCouteau, Kim Zykodova, and Jonas Bearheart for providing a traditional funeral service for our father, Sylvester Thomas Shingobe. Special thanks to Joyce Shingobe and the family of Gladys Ray-Shingobe for their support and assistance during this difficult time. We also appreciate those that helped with the food for his feasts, the

family in attendance, and those sending their sympathies. We will miss our father's laughter and smiles so much. He is now complete and with his family that has gone before him. Sincerely, Carmen Hernandez-Shingobe and family and Lana Burdette-Shingobe and family.

Wedding announcement



Photo submitted by Wendy Cole

Cody St. John and Wendy Cole would like to announce their engagement. Their wedding is being planned for October 18, 2008.

Elder In-Home Monitoring Systems

Many Elders have inquired with the Mille Lacs Band Health & Human Services Department about in-home monitoring systems for Elders living independently. There are a number of in-home monitoring systems on the market, such as Life Alert. This system provides Elders with a pendant (worn either around the neck or wrist) that has a button that can be pushed to call for help. When the button is pressed, Life Alert contacts the Elder immediately about his or her emergency and dispatches the appropriate emergency personnel. If an Elder's Life Alert button is activated but no response is heard, Life Alert immediately sends an ambulance.

There are also options to add smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors through Life Alert, which contact emergency workers if the detectors go off.

It is important to note that this system has an installation charge of approximately \$300 and a monthly fee of \$50 or more, depending on the amount of services provided. Band Elders are responsible for the costs of in-home monitoring systems such as Life Alert.

For more information, contact Henry Pregaldin at 800/294-4553, ext. 217 or Jackie Reese at ext. 238, or visit www.lifealert.org.

Showtime to Televis February Boxing Bout at Grand Casino Hinckley



Photo courtesy of Anibal Miramontes

Boxer Timothy Taggart (left) won a technical knockout against Shrome Blatcher (right) in his professional debut during the December boxing event at Grand Casino Hinckley.

Showtime's ShoBox series is coming to Grand Casino Hinckley on February 1 to televise two main professional boxing bouts – junior middleweight boxers Alfredo Angulo vs. Ricardo Cortes, and junior lightweight boxers Mickey Bey vs. Juan Castaneda. The Mille Lacs Band Boxing Commission is hosting the event, which will begin at 7:30 p.m. with several non-televised bouts. The two main events will be televised on Showtime at 10 p.m.

Tickets are \$20, \$35 and \$60 and went on sale on January 8. To purchase tickets, visit the Grand Casino Mille Lacs or Grand Casino Hinckley box offices, call Ticketmaster at 651/989-5151, contact any Ticketmaster outlet, or visit grandcasinomn.com.

About the boxers

Angulo is a boxer from Mexico who competed in the 2004 Olympics, and will go head-to-head with Cortes, who began competing as an amateur boxer in California when he was 15. Bey also started competing as an amateur boxing as a teenager. He earned a spot on the 2004 U.S. Olympic team, but did not compete due to illness. Bey will take on Castaneda, a professional boxer who has won several national amateur championships in his home country of Mexico.

Other boxers include Kenny Kost, Anthony Bonsante, Paul Fernandez, and Timothy Taggart, a Grand Casino Hinckley Associate.

December boxing bouts draw fans to Grand Casino Hinckley

The Mille Lacs Band Boxing Commission hosted an evening of exciting boxing matches on December 15 at Grand Casino Hinckley. The main event featured Zach "Jungle Boy"

Walters, who beat Jim Strohl by technical knockout (TKO) after four rounds.

Other results included:

- Carl Daniels won a TKO against Fred Moore
- Robert Kliewer won by a majority rule against Jeffery Osborne
- Timothy Taggart won a TKO against Shrome Blatcher
- Harley Kilfian won against James Taylor by a knockout

February kickboxing and mixed martial arts competition

On February 15 at 7 p.m. at Grand Casino Hinckley, kickboxers Mitz "the Hannuman" Bandiera will take on Mark Streater for the Canadian Welterweight Championship title. The event will feature amateur and professional kickboxers and mixed martial arts fighters competing in full-contact matches. Other competitors include Jon "Lights Out" Lewis from Cellar Kickboxing, who will make his professional kickboxing debut, and Joe Jones, a Mille Lacs Band member who will compete in mixed martial arts.

Tickets are \$25, \$40 and \$55 and are on sale now. To purchase tickets, visit the Grand Casino Mille Lacs or Grand Casino Hinckley box offices or call Warriors Fitness & Fight Promotions at 320/384-7409, Cellar Kickboxing at 651/633-0107, or Mitz Bandiera at 807/472-6437. One dollar from each ticket sold will be donated to the Diabetes Foundation.

Warriors Fitness & Fight Promotions will host the event and the Band's Boxing Commission will regulate the professional matches. For more information, contact Bobby Anderson at 320/384-7409.

Dr. Arne Vainio Shares Story Of Mentor's Impact

Mille Lacs Band member Dr. Arne Vainio works on the Fond du Lac Reservation and is sharing his personal stories in a series of articles in News From Indian Country.

Below is an excerpt from Arne's fourth article:

Earlier today there was a message on my voicemail – "Arne, it's Joy. Dr. Haller is really, really sick." Joy and I were in the same medical school class. I tried to call her back, but there was no answer.

When she finally was able to call me, my worst fears were confirmed. Ed had fallen twice in the past week. He had a scan done – there was a four centimeter mass in the right frontal area of his brain. He was intermittently confused. I hadn't wanted to call his house until I knew something. I didn't want to intrude on him or his family. I didn't know if I was calling at a bad time. After I hung up with Joy, I looked up his number in the phone book.

His wife answered the phone. "Hello?"

"Irina, it's Arne Vainio. I just heard about Ed. How's he doing?"

"I'm glad you called. He'll want to talk to you. I'll put him on."

"Hello, Arne?" Ed's voice was soft and quiet.

"Ed, I just heard. How are you?" I asked.

"Not as good as you," he answered.

He proceeded to tell me that his mass was diffuse (spread out) and was non-operable. It was a large tumor. It was Friday now, and he had a biopsy scheduled for Monday. This was to be a stereotactic biopsy – the neurosurgeon was going to have the tumor localized from two different directions in order to go in to get a tissue sample. At this point, the two most likely possibilities were either a lymphoma (cancer of the immune system) or a glioblastoma, which is a primary brain tumor. If this turned out to be a lymphoma, there are chemotherapy drugs that work fairly well. If it turned out to be a glioblastoma, the options were less well-defined.

"We'll put out tobacco for you," I told him. "Is there anything else we can do?"

"Come and visit," was all he said.

I first met Ed Haller when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota,

Duluth (UMD). He was faculty at the medical school and taught physiology. He's been a pioneer in funding efforts for Native American programs at the medical school and worked with Native American undergrad students for some of the medical school summer programs. Right from the start, he became one of my primary mentors. Initially this started out as an academic relationship, but over time we became friends. Ed was always there to support me and to answer questions.

When I was in my first two years of medical school, we were in the same building, so I visited him often. For my third and fourth years of medical school, I was in Minneapolis and didn't see him. I went to Seattle for my residency after that and lost contact with him for the most part. When I finished residency and came back to Minnesota, I always meant to stop in and visit him, but rarely got to the medical school. He retired and I saw him only if I bumped into him by chance. He always wanted to talk longer, but I was always late or behind schedule and didn't spend the time with him that I needed to. I promised I would try to stay in touch.

How do promises get broken? Not intentionally. When I was working with Ed, I really think he thought of me as a son. He was always ready to bail me out or to offer advice, or just to listen. Did I return that favor? Not really. But I never meant it to happen that way.

In the course of writing these articles, I have thought long and hard about the many people who have helped me along the way. Ed Haller was on that list right from the start, but this isn't the way I wanted to thank him.

However, I don't know how long Ed can wait for this. I want to thank him while he can still read this and know that I appreciate all that he has done for me. He has been a source of strength and inspiration for me from the first time I met him.

I am going to visit Ed this weekend, and as often as I can. I am going to keep my promise. It's the least that I can do after all he's done for me.

Thank you, Edwin W. Haller, Ph.D.

To view Arne's entire article, visit www.indiancountrynews.com and click on the food and health section.

Calendar of Events

January 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		15	16	17 All District Elder Meeting District III ALU 11:30 a.m. Contact: Nora Benjamin, 320/532-4181	18 Clay Walker* GCML 7:30 p.m. nightly	19 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Sarah Oquist, Commissioner of Corporate Affairs 877/239-2444
20 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Sarah Oquist, Commissioner of Corporate Affairs 877/239-2444	21 All offices closed for Civil Rights Day	22 District II Community Meeting East Lake Community Center 5:30 p.m. Contact: Jenny Waugh, 218/768-3311	23 District IIA Community Meeting Chiminising Community Center 5:30 p.m. Contact: Carmen Green, 320/676-1102	24	25	26 A Night of Southern Rock* GCH 7:30 p.m. <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Sam Moose, Commissioner of Health & Human Services 877/239-2444
27 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Sam Moose, Commissioner of Health & Human Services 877/239-2444	28 District I Community Meeting District I Community Center 5:30 p.m. Contact: Becky Sam, 320/532-7423	29	30	31 Urban Area Community Meeting All Nations Indian Church 5:30 p.m. Contact: Pat or Barb, 612/872-1424		

February 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>If you would like an event included in the community calendar, please contact Kelly Sam at 651/292-8062 or write to Kelly at 255 E. Kellogg Blvd. Suite 102 St. Paul, MN 55101</i>	Commissioners on call A Mille Lacs Band Commissioner is available every weekend to help Band members handle emergencies. If you have an emergency, please contact the Commissioner on call at 877/239-2444. The emergency phone is answered from 5 p.m. Friday- 8 a.m. Monday.	*To Purchase Tickets Visit a Grand Casino box office, call TicketMaster at 612/989-5151, or visit www.ticketmaster.com			1 Oak Ridge Boys* GCML 7:30 p.m. nightly	2 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Joycelyn Shingobe, Commissioner of Education 877/239-2444
3 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Joycelyn Shingobe, Commissioner of Education 877/239-2444	4 Pine Grove Leadership Academy Meeting Aazhoomog School 6:30 p.m. Contact: Skip Churchill, 320/384-6970 Onamia Indian Education Parent Committee Meeting Onamia School District Office Conference Room 12 p.m.	5	6	7	8 ShoBox Professional Boxing* GCH 7:30 p.m.	9 Raindrops and Boondocks Tour* GCH 7:30 p.m. <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Curt Kalk, Commissioner of Natural Resources 877/239-2444
10 <i>Commissioner on Call</i> Curt Kalk, Commissioner of Natural Resources 877/239-2444	11 AMVETS Meeting Grand Casino Mille Lacs 6 p.m. Contact: Ken Weyaus 320/309-6925	12	13	14	15 ProAm Kickboxing and Mixed Martial Arts* GCH 7 p.m.	16

What is Your Favorite Part of Winter in Minnesota?

Lisa Murphy



"My favorite part of winter is cross country skiing."

Ashley Blue



"My favorite part of winter is sledding with my daughter."

Raina Killspotted



"My favorite part of winter is the outdoor activities we share as a family. It makes winter special."

Penny Hill



"My favorite part of winter are the snow days, definitely the snow days."

Gloria St. John



"My favorite part of winter is bakwezhigan and naboob."

Lacey Ballinger



"My favorite part of winter is there are no bugs."

Bobby Anderson



"My favorite part of winter is when it snows, it looks pretty and peaceful."

Melanie Benjamin



"My favorite part of winter is when the snow falls on the trees, it amplifies the beauty of our surroundings, tenfold."

Photos courtesy of Rick Anderson

Nay Ah Shing School Updates

Nay Ah Shing School baked goods bring holiday cheer

By Eric North, Nay Ah Shing School Principal

Photo courtesy of Nay Ah Shing School



Students involved in the American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) chapters held a bake sale to raise funds to attend the national AIBL conference this spring. From left to right: Marcus Boyd, Yolanda Armendariz, and Jaime Boyd.

Students at Nay Ah Shing School took on a special project during the holiday season – a holiday bake sale and raffle. The project was implemented by our American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) chapters, which are student-led organizations at Nay Ah Shing Schools.

Students took orders for baked goods from school and community members. The response was

overwhelming. Filling the orders kept the students very busy, as they worked during and after school. Students who had finished all of their work were allowed to help with a variety of tasks, such as mixing cookies, cutting out and decorating cookies, baking breads and pies, and making almond bark pretzel rods.

The overall project was supervised by AIBL Chapter Advisor Mary Simon, Family and Consumer Science Teacher Donna Benson, and Activities Director Bugs Haskin. The total number of orders were 49 dozen pretzel rods, 27 dozen M&M cookies, 20 dozen chocolate chip cookies, 49 dozen spritz cookies, 18 dozen cut-out sugar cookies, 12 dozen pretzel rings, 21 dozen haystacks, 13 dozen gingerbread men, 30 pies (apple, peach, blueberry and cherry), 16 loaves of banana bread, and 24 loaves of poppy seed bread. The project was a very positive experience for all involved.

The students would like to thank everyone who supported this project. The money raised will be used to send students to the national AIBL conference in April. The theme of this year's conference is "Empowering Nations, Inspiring Generations." At the national conference, students will participate in various activities designed to stimulate, enhance and expand educational experience beyond what is taught through traditional academic methods. They will address contemporary business issues impacting Indian Country. Some of the fun activities planned for this year include:

- AIBL chapter competition
- AIBL chapter business competition
- Interactive "hands-on" workshops
- Motivational speakers and panel discussions
- Career/professional development activities
- Awards banquet and entertainment

Chi mii gwetch for all of your support with this student-run organization.

Nay Ah Shing to offer entrepreneurship class

Nay Ah Shing School will participate in an entrepreneurship education initiative as part of a pilot program. The U.S. Department of the Interior provided funds for teacher certification training on entrepreneurship, which was completed in October. Funds were also provided to purchase classroom materials such as textbooks, workbooks, and teacher support materials developed by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE).

This specialized entrepreneurship curriculum offers hands-on, interactive learning opportunities for participating students. NFTE's curriculum covers a range of topics such as return on investment, supply and demand, opportunity recognition, personal finance, cost/benefit analysis, sales and marketing, venture capital, business ethics, taxes, and much more. NFTE teaches young people to think like entrepreneurs – to take risks, be open to learning, and be empowered to take control of their lives. NFTE teaches its students how to start and maintain their own small businesses. In the process, students develop important understandings about business, lifelong learning, adult roles, and themselves.

Victor Christiansen, Senior Policy Analyst from the Division of Economic Development, said, "To create economic development opportunities on or near reservations, it is essential that local businesses develop and thrive and that Native Americans develop the necessary skills to develop successful businesses that can compete locally, nationally, and in the global arena. In order to accomplish this task, young Native Americans must develop their individual business skills and talents."

NFTE's results are well documented and prove that exposure to entrepreneurship can give hope, increase interest in educational pursuits, spur enterprise, and assist in the renewal of neighborhoods and communities. NFTE is helping young people dare to dream for brighter futures and, by doing so, is preparing a new generation of leaders – successful entrepreneurs, marketable employees, responsible family members, and conscientious members of their communities.

Nay Ah Shing School is very excited to offer this entrepreneurship course to students. The course will begin at the start of the new semester on January 22.