

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE
STORY
AS IT'S
TOLD

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JUSTICE FOR ALL

2016 STATE OF THE BAND INCLUDES BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

PAGES 2-7

The Sweetgrass Girls sang traditional songs and the National Anthem at the Jan. 12 State of the Band.

CONCURRENT
JURISDICTION
APPROVED

ELECTION
PROCESS
UNDERWAY

FOOD
PROJECT
TAKES SHAPE

YOUNGEST
NATIVE
SPEAKER

Chief Executive Delivers Annual State of the Band Address

Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer

There are times when the only people who need to know what is happening are the people who are in the room.

That was the case with this year's State of the Band address, delivered by Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, on a cold Tuesday morning early last month.

She told the hundreds of Band members and others who attended the event, held at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs Events and Convention Center on Jan. 12, that her address was meant for family. In other words, it was meant for Band members, their families and Band employees who were in the room. The speech was filled with gratitude and accolades, but it was also about family business and hard topics that needed to be addressed rather than for public consumption.

To that end, there were no media outlets present, nor were the usual dignitaries invited to this year's event. This departure from previous years was welcomed by many who were overheard saying that was how it should be.

Some of the content was meant to go public, such as the big news that the Department of Justice had accepted the Band's Tribal Law and Order Application (see page 8). This means that crimes committed on the Reservation can be prosecuted in federal court, which will lead to stiffer penalties. The Band is the second tribe in the country to have its application approved.

Also highlighted were reminders of the successes that the Band realized in 2015 such as overturning state autopsy laws and the legislation that allowed Pine Grove Academy to reopen as a tribal satellite school — the first in the nation. Melanie also reminded attendees of the Band's efforts to exercise its tribal sovereignty to hold hearings about a proposed pipeline and its purchase of a hotel in Minneapolis.

"We have challenges, but overall, we are doing things right," she said. "We are planting seeds for our grandchildren and their grandchildren to be secure for seven generations into the future."

Another prevailing theme in Melanie's address was justice — social, economic and environmental justice. She shared with the audience the Band's plans to build the largest housing development it has ever carried out, that the Band continues to buy back the land it lost and that it has had record success in transferring land into federal trust status.

She talked about the diversification of the Band economy and investments, and she shared the news that she would like to implement her economic justice plan.

"As an employer, the Mille Lacs Band government should be providing a livable wage to every Band member who works for us," she said. "I want to lead the way by setting the example for the rest of the nation."

She wants to "right-size" government operations, reduce the demand on government programs and find ways to reduce the unemployment rate. Melanie also shared that she wants to reward Band members "who work hard every day," and don't rely on the Band's programs.

Melanie discussed the opiate crisis that has plagued Indian Country, the increase in crime and more importantly, the solutions that can help address these problems such as the development of an in-patient facility for Native people. She also talked about the development of a "one-stop center for families in crisis," which will break ground in 2016.

During her speech she reminded the crowd that "the most important thing that we can do is to follow the teachings that have been given to us as People. We need to value these cultural teachings and recognize the reason they have been passed down to us from generation to generation as Anishinaabe."

Joe Nayquonabe Jr. served as the master of ceremonies for the 32nd Annual State of the Band address that commenced with the ceremonial drum, grand entry by the AmVets Post 53, the Flag Song by Little Otter and the invocation by Lee "Obi-zaan" Staples.

Lee told attendees that during his invocation he said, "If we work together we will be much stronger."

He also talked about the devastating use of opiates by pregnant women and said, "I'm hoping here to be able to discourage our women from doing that."

He asked for help to prevent people from committing crimes due to drug use, and for support for bringing back the language, teaching and ceremonies. He asked that the Band members have faith and work together.

In her remarks to Band members, Secretary Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu shared how many Band Assembly meetings have been held, how many bills passed and how many resolutions have been made.

Carolyn highlighted the Band Assembly's goals, which included continuing to develop a legislative website and library. She said the Band Assembly is continuing to review and revise the revenue allocation plan and is seeking to revise statutes.

Carolyn shared some of the Band Assembly's accomplishments and plans that include more jobs in District I, building a powwow structure in DII and a new community center in Hinckley.

"We hold ourselves to the highest standards, and the Band Assembly is here to serve the people of Band," she concluded. "Our job is to find the best way to serve Band members."

In her remarks, Chief Rayna Churchill talked about strides the court is making in its efforts to settle disputes. She shared the court's caseload and its resolutions. She also saluted the court's peacemaker Lori Vilas for her work.

Rayna shared some grim statistics about students' absenteeism rates from schools and said, "We need to focus on Mille Lacs Band kids" to reduce the number of absences.

The full remarks from Melanie, Carolyn and Rayna can be found on pages 7 and 8 and at millelacsband.com.



2016 State of the Band Address

Chief Executive Melanie Mandaamin Benjamin January 12, 2016



Madame Speaker, Members of the Assembly, Madame Chief Justice, Judges of the Court of Central Jurisdiction, my fellow Band members...and family...it is my duty under Band law and my honor as Chief Executive to deliver the 2016 State of the Band Address.

I want to begin by saying Miigwech to my own family members. To my son Clayton, and daughter-in-law Candy...to all my grandchildren...my sisters and brothers...and especially my mother, Frances, Miigwech for the love and support you provide. Nimama, you are my inspiration.

Also, Miigwech to the other elected officials, who work so hard on behalf of every Band Member in this room. And a special thanks to each Mille Lacs Band Member here today.

There are so many Band Members who are devoted to our Band...who have deep love for who we are...and despite the challenges we face, will never move away, and will never give up trying to improve our community.

You work hard each day, not just as employees, but as community volunteers, as family members. Maybe you're an Elder who reads to children at school...maybe you coach a youth basketball team...maybe you are always there to help at funerals... maybe you have opened your home and your heart to a child in need...or maybe you are taking care of an Elder.

There are hundreds of Band Members who give...and love...and give again...but who do not expect to be thanked. Especially, our traditional people. Today, I say Chi Miigwech, to each of you. You are the heart of the Band, and so appreciated.

Lately, I have been thinking about justice. What does justice mean for us? In Chapter 24 of our Band Statutes, it says: "At times the circle of peace and harmony amongst the people will be disrupted.

This circle of life needs to be restored in a manner that permits the integrity of the individual to be maintained so that the community will continue to grow and prosper."

At times, it seems that we spend all of our time as a Band government fighting to restore justice. We spend all of our time trying to restore the circle of life so that people can maintain their integrity and the community can exist in harmony. Today we will talk about justice, we will talk about 2015...and we will talk about the future.

Achievements in 2015

2015 was an important year in the history of the Band. It was a year of real progress. Together, we accomplished great things.

In the spring, something historic happened. Our friend, Congresswoman Betty McCollum, helped us get legislation through Congress allowing us to reopen Pine Grove Academy. We had been working on this for three years together — and it was an uphill battle, because the Congress has a permanent ban on adding any new BIA schools to their inventory. It involved many trips to Washington D.C.

Thanks to Betty McCollum, the legislation passed, and Pine Grove opened as the first tribal satellite school nationwide! It is now permanently open for Band children, and we are a national pilot project.

Last winter, out of the sadness and the strength of one family — the law of the state was changed. The Aubid/LaPrairie family stood up for our right to say "no" to the state when it comes to autopsies of our people. After spending a night in a snowstorm, the family obtained a court order mandating the release of their loved one. But a major injustice was done, in the way they were discriminated against, as Anishinabe people.

We assigned our Government Affairs team to do whatever was needed to change state law. It became a full time job for them last spring. With the support of Senator Tony Lourey, who introduced and fought for the legislation...and with the brave testimony of Winnie LaPrairie...who changed the minds of many lawmakers, the bill became law. This was a battle for religious and racial justice.

Miigwech to the Aubid family for their courage, and our Government Affairs team, led by Band Member Jamie Edwards, the best lobbyist in Minnesota!

Last summer, when it seemed a done deal that Enbridge would be allowed to build a pipeline through District II...without consulting us...we exercised our tribal sovereignty to hold our own public hearing on the Sandpiper pipeline. Our people and staff testified about how this pipeline would defile our land...our water...and our rights. We demanded a full environmental analysis...rather than the shortcuts that the State Public Utilities Commission had decided to allow.

That hearing made a huge impact. We generated national media attention...we shined a spotlight on the flaws in the state process, and the coziness between the oil companies and the state agency that is supposed to regulate them. After that hearing, the Band Assembly and I made the decision to intervene as a legal party in the state process. We hired one of the best environmental attorneys in Minnesota, and we used the hearing report in our request to the Judge. Officially, we are now a legal party in this process, and they are required to listen to us, whether they want to or not!

And with White Earth, Honor the Earth and other friends, we are making progress. Recently, the Supreme Court of Minnesota sided with us. Enbridge is now required to conduct a thorough environmental analysis. This is a great victory, although there is more work to do, including in Washington D.C.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will do whatever we must to stop this pipeline and other mining projects from harming our resources. This fight is about Environmental Justice — and we will win!

For our Band economy, this has been a very good year. We continue to diversify our economy and our investments. We now operate four lines of business: Gaming, Hospitality, Marketing and Small Businesses, and all are doing well.

Our big news in 2015 was that we bought the Doubletree Minneapolis Park Place hotel, just minutes from the Convention Center, Target Center and the new Vikings Stadium.

Growing our non-gaming businesses is crucial, because we must have other industries we can rely on. It is also essential that we develop our economy in District II, which remains our greatest challenge. An exciting business proposal has been brought to the Band Assembly, which I hope will be acted on soon.

We have challenges, but overall, we are doing things right. We are planting seeds for our grandchildren and their grandchildren to be secure seven generations into the future.

For tribal governments, this is Economic Justice.

A major success this year was getting 400 acres in District I transferred into federal trust status. At this sight, the largest housing development the Band has ever carried out will begin. The first phase will include 56 homes. The second phase will



bring the total to more than 90.

We are constantly buying back more of the land we lost, and we had record success transferring land into federal trust status, even though Mille Lacs County fought us on every transfer.

Last December, we opened the old Budget Host hotel as a place where anyone can stay. It is now called the "Mino Bimaadiziwin". Band Members in crisis now have a place to spend a few days while they turn things around, and our first year of operation has been a success. No Band Member should ever be homeless again.

This is Social Justice.

Our Anishinabe College has a new partnership with Fond du Lac Tribal Community College, offering 16 classes on the reservation, using technology to deliver teaching. Everything from American Indian studies — to business classes — to Calculus is being offered, and not just here in District I. Students in Districts II and III can take the same classes at the East Lake Community Center...and Pine Grove Leadership Academy.

Anyone can now earn an Associate of Arts degree! I learned on Facebook — our "High-Tech Moccasin Telegraph" — that Band Elder Carol Nickaboine earned all A's! Carol's family is so proud of her — she is a role model for all of us that it is never too late to earn your degree! And go even further. We have Mothers and daughters like LeAnn Benjamin and Joyce Shingobe earning their Master's Degrees together! College is possible for anyone! Access to Education is also about Social Justice.

Improving public safety in all districts is a top priority. We negotiated and signed an historic agreement with four other Minnesota tribes creating a joint Tribal Task Force. We can now share information and resources to stop crime on our reservations.

The Mille Lacs Band led this effort...which has already resulted in stopping criminals who go "Rez-hopping" around Minnesota. They can no longer run away and set up shop on one reservation after another, because our police ALL know who they are.

We are finally making progress with Aitkin County, and are closer than ever to a Mutual Aid Agreement that will recognize the authority of our tribal police to protect and serve Band Members in District II. However, we are also working very hard on legislation that will allow the authority of our tribal police to be recognized in all jurisdictions.

This work is about public safety and criminal justice.

There are many other achievements from 2015. We are now in a good place with the Governor of Minnesota. We sit down, we talk and he listens.

Our tribal court is a place where Band member families can seek justice. The court is getting more active, and serving its mission to restore the circle of peace and harmony.

And finally, I've never seen a more active Band Assembly, and commend Speaker Beaulieu, and Representatives Blake, Aubid and Davis for their hard work for the Band.

The Executive Branch runs the programs, but the Band Assembly decides how our funds are allocated, and conducts oversight of our programs. Each of these achievements I've been talking about were done together with strong cooperation between the branches. Miigwech, to each of the elected officials, for your outstanding leadership.

Last year, we held public meetings in all three districts. We heard from moms, dads, grandmothers, Elders, young people, even former drug addicts and those who spent time in prison. These were voices we needed to hear, and a dialogue we must continue.

Many ideas were offered: About prevention, police response, and community involvement.

I was so impressed with Band Members who have changed their lives after addiction, and even after time in prison...who bravely shared their stories about the impact drugs had on their lives, and their loved ones.

We took all the ideas and solutions offered at these meet-

ings, and created a Community Survey, which asks for your thoughts about each idea. If you have time, please fill out the survey today and leave it in the boxes in the back of the room as you leave. It will also be mailed to all households. This winter, we will hold more meetings to discuss these ideas. As with most problems we face, you — the Band members — hold the answers! Government cannot solve this problem alone. It will take everyone.

In the meantime, we have done more than talk...we are on the front lines fighting this epidemic. First, there was a massive education effort last year, which the government and community members were involved with. We held two statewide conferences at Mille Lacs with other tribes and health care experts...working to develop solutions.

We held a Band-wide conference as well, hosted by Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations, to generate ideas and solutions from Band Members. We met with state and federal officials. I also testified before the U.S. Senate about this crisis.

Out of this work, we have launched the Family Spirit program, a culturally based parent education program that educates women and their families in cultural parenting.

We have also developed a program for expectant mothers who suffer from addiction. This program will provide housing, treatment and support throughout pregnancy, as well as a safe place to recover and nurture their babies after birth. There is a beautiful location which we hope to use for this program, which could open as soon as this spring.

Last year, I told you about research we have done with a national laboratory that has found that we are more vulnerable to addiction than other ethnic groups just because of our DNA. We are rapid metabolizers, which means these chemicals go through our systems very quickly...and addiction can happen nearly instantly.

The Manidoo made our ancestors the healthiest people in the world. We were not meant for these poisons. We must arm our youth with this knowledge. We need the help of every Band Member to get the word out. Education is prevention, and the job of everyone.

We must also increase access for all Band men and women struggling with addiction to get in-patient treatment. Currently, there is no in-patient facility in Minnesota just for Native people. Filling that void has been a major priority of mine and Commissioner Moose. With the support of the Band Assembly, we are very close to making such a facility a reality, which would be the only Native American in-patient facility in Minnesota.

Last year, I also directed Commissioner Moose to work with the Band Assembly and the Tribal Court to develop a plan for a "one-stop" center for families in crisis. With the Band Assembly's support, this project will break ground in 2016.

This Center will offer a warm, welcoming, and friendly environment for children and their families, with a focus on nurturing and family preservation. Miigwech to the Band Assembly for their partnership in making this project a reality!

While there is much work to be done with addiction, we are making progress. How do I know this? Because somewhere, in our Band community, there are three women. I don't know who they are...or where they are from...but I do know they are Mille Lacs Band members. And they were suffering from opiate addiction when they found out they were pregnant.

These women loved their babies enough to ask for help. With intervention, support and medical help from our clinic and staff, in 2015 these three women delivered healthy babies who tested drug-free when they were born.

As a government, we have no way of knowing who is pregnant or who is using drugs. But families do. Whether it was increased awareness, the public education campaign, or encouragement from the family, these women took that step to ask for help.

Three babies now have promising futures filled with hope and opportunity, because they were born with the gift of health from their mothers. These three women are proof that there is

hope...it is possible to make progress and stop this epidemic.

Finally...there is one more thing...the most important thing... that we can do: Follow the teachings that have been given to us as People. We need to value these cultural teachings and recognize the reason they have been passed down to us from generation to generation, as Anishinabe.

But our spiritual leaders say that we also have to address the internalized racism that exists within our community. Internalized racism is when we consciously and subconsciously believe the negative stereotypes and images from the media...and from white history books...that defined us as being inferior.

The underlying sadness, frustration, anger and rage we have held over this happening to us...has caused us to turn upon ourselves...upon our families...and upon our own people. Internalized racism brings about self-hatred. It is the reason that we can be our own worst enemies.

It is also the pain of this self-hatred that has brought about the problems we are faced with today in our communities: The high incarceration rates and addiction...the stress related health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, depression and grief.

I was told that what we have gone through as Anishinabe is known as Collective Trauma — going through a distressing experience as a group. We have carried the stress from all of this within us and have never processed it...from generation to generation. Government programs, more housing, better schools, and better clinics can help to improve our lives. But all of these will fall short if we don't address the trauma.

At the next community meetings, we will talk about ways to do this. Justice for our Community is bringing back what we were given as a people. We were robbed, stripped and looked down on for practicing our teachings and ceremonies. It was the worst possible thing any government can do any people. We can recover. There is hope. But we need to celebrate and bring into our homes and lives all the Manidooq gave us.

Tribal law and order act

Our application to get Federal jurisdiction under the Tribal Law and Order Act was just signed last week, and now is official. This means we can get federal jurisdiction over the worst crimes on our reservation. Those criminals can be prosecuted in Federal court and will be sentenced to Federal prison. We are only the 2nd tribe in the United States to be granted this status!

We need this message to go out to drug dealers, gang members and anyone intent on committing violent crimes on our lands — we will catch you, and when we do, you are going to Leavenworth, not Stillwater...and you are not getting out for a very, very long time. Tell the dealers...if you don't want to go to federal prison, get off our lands now, and stay out.

Miigwech to the federal officials who did the right thing at the BIA, the Interior Department and the Department of Justice! Together, we will restore order to our lands — and fight for the right of our children and our elders to be safe in their homes. After all...that is what it is all about! That is justice!

Economic justice initiative

Each year, the Chief Executive issues directives to the Commissioners at State of the Band, and proposes new initiatives. I have many directives for our commissioners this year. But I am sharing those with you in writing, which you will find on your tables.

But there is one major initiative I want to discuss, that impacts every Commissioner and every Band member. With our Tribal Law and Order Act application in place and our reservation status firmly backed by the federal government...we are on the path to legal justice for the Band.

There are other kinds of justice we fight for...environmental justice, Social justice, racial and religious justice. We can influence some of these issues, but do not have complete control over them.

But there is another area of justice that the Band does have the power to shape...and make reality. It will mean transforming the way we have been operating...and transforming the expectations of individual Band Members.

But the end result could be the biggest change we have known in 25 years.

What I am talking about, is Economic Justice for each Band member. Economic Justice is when all people have the opportunity to earn enough money to live a dignified, productive, and creative life. Economic justice is when everyone who can contribute to society does so...and no one takes advantage of anyone else.

Band members, our revenue is stable now, but our enrollment continues to grow. Our non-gaming businesses will help us maintain per capita payments in the future...but with growing enrollment, we need a bigger plan. One that brings about economic justice, for each Band member. The Economic Justice Plan I am proposing has three components.

First — We will right-size and decentralize Band government.

Second, we will decrease the number of unemployed Band members who are dependent on Band government. Using Band programs is supposed to be temporary help to get on your feet...not a way of life.

Third, with savings from reduced government...I propose that we shift that savings to those Band members who work hard every day to provide for their families...who contribute to the Band...and who sacrifice for our community and their families.

Right-sizing government, while helping the working poor and middle class Band members get ahead, and moving the unemployed into the working world, is what economic justice is. The Executive Branch will immediately begin working on a strategic plan to reinvent, rebuild and reorganize the Executive Branch. There are two conditions that will make this work.

First, Band government must decentralize, and delay. We need services to be housed and delivered in each of the districts. We need equity, so the local village communities get better, faster service...and have more control over programs in their community.

Second, government which works better also costs less! Transforming the system will result in a more efficient Band government. We can reduce the government budget. I direct the Commissioners to begin this work immediately. Commissioners Colstrud and Palomaki...I direct you to lead the Commissioners in bringing this plan to me and the Band Assembly by May 1, with an estimate of the savings that will be achieved from reducing government.

The second part of my Economic Justice Plan is to reduce the need for Band programs. Unless a person is an Elder or disabled, they should be working. Per capitas are intended to supplement a working person's income, not replace it.

Most Band members are devoted to their families...they are providing for their families...sometimes on minimum wage...and they do not ask the Band for help. We have always had people who worked harder than others — that is just the way it is. We accepted people for the skills they had...and we found ways to exist by hunting and fishing together...by gathering rice and berries together...and by building our homes together.

The skilled helped out the non-skilled. The stronger helped the less strong. The young helped the Elders. The Elders taught the young ones.

As a Band, together we found ways to live through a thousand winters. But everyone, no matter who they were, no matter their age or their abilities, had responsibilities. There were no expectations that some people had a right to be taken care of without contributing anything.

There are a small number of Band members who are doing this. This is unfair to the Band members who get up every day and work hard to provide for their families. It is unfair to the elders who worked hard their whole lives and are now retired.

Sometimes it seems like 80% of our efforts in Band gov-



ernment are directed toward 20% of the people. This has to change.

We have Band members who need help, and we will continue to provide that help, but there is a difference between a hand up and a hand-out. We need to give people the chance to get off programs and into work. The Band can offer employment opportunities. But with opportunity, comes a responsibility on the individual...to take the chance...to use their ability and their potential to the fullest. And we must not only lift people out of poverty. We must transform their horizons and hopes as well — through helping people get the skills they need for better jobs.

The third point of my Economic Justice Plan, is a shifting of wealth to those who work hard every day, who struggle to make ends meet and are contributing to the community. The United States has become a country of the Haves and the Have-Nots. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. I am talking about the working poor. The federal minimum wage is not enough for a one or two parent household to live off of.

As an employer, the Mille Lacs Band government should be providing a livable wage to every Band member who works for us. I want us to lead the way by setting the example for the rest of the Nation. With the help of economic experts, I propose to the Band Assembly that we work together to reduce government and create an economy where every Band member who serves the Community feels the savings from reduced government.

There are many ways this could be done. But what I am sure it will mean, is a reduction of the demand on government programs...and that more people who are unemployed will want to become employed.

We always talk about helping the Band members in need. But isn't it time, that we help and reward the Band members who work hard every day...who try to always make the right choices...who sacrifice for their families...who have been carrying the weight as Band employees...and volunteers...isn't it time that these Band members receive a little economic justice of their own?

We want to give people a chance to fulfill their potential. We want to raise people's expectations and self confidence...

by giving them the tools to help themselves. We need government to become more efficient, and we need the working Band members to benefit from the savings of reducing Band government.

That is my plan for Economic Justice. We will work closely with the Band Assembly to try to move this forward.

Conclusion

We may feel angry, but we will always carry ourselves with dignity. It is our duty to live in a way that honors their sacrifices.

For years...we only knew injustice: From the theft of our land, to boarding schools, to a county run by people driven by resentment. But we have survived!

In our hearts and in our traditions, we seek justice to restore the circle of life. We seek justice to restore peace and harmony to the community...and to maintain the integrity of all. These are our ways — passed down from our ancestors.

For a thousand winters, days were spent in the outdoors. Children contributed to the survival of the group, which helped them to feel important and built their confidence. Adults looked for learning opportunities for kids whenever they could, and daily life included lessons in how to be a better person.

Elders in the community paid attention to kids, guiding them to find their true path as a useful member of the community. Elders were honored and young people had a clear vision of how to find their role in the Band.

Neither children nor Elders would feel lonely or confused, because they were part of a family and community that spent time together. They cared for one another. They knew that the survival of the individual was connected to the survival of the whole Band.

A Band, a clan, or an extended family, even if they were imperfect, served as a source of love for their members. Life was hard, but they needed each other to survive — and they survived and thrived. Their traditions, their language, their spirituality and their customs...were passed on to us.

In the summer, the Anishinabe gathered together in bands of 400 or 500 people. The frames of their wigwams were arranged in a circle with an open space in the center. No one owned the frames...they belonged to everyone. When a family

arrived at a summer village, they would choose a frame that was available. They wrapped a covering of hide around it. Then they covered the hide with bark. That was their home for the summer.

The circle was important in the life of our people, and the idea of the circle is the same for many tribes. Black Elk talked about the way an Indian looks at life.

He said: "Everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished."

As Anishinabe, the circle symbolized who we were, how we took care of each other and what we believed in. We lived in the circle of life. Our Band justice system is based on restoring the circle of peace and harmony to our people.

When we are free to exercise our own traditions and our own form of governance and justice, when we embrace our traditions, we can truly restore the circle of peace and harmony to our people.

But as we seek that freedom, we must protect our way of life.

We are a peaceful people. We do not seek conflict. Even when the very existence of our Band is threatened, we will be peaceful...but we will use the laws of this Nation to fight and we will always win.

We will always rebel against oppression and ignorance.

We will protect our heritage as Anishinabe! We will preserve our language, our culture and our traditions! And we will emerge out of these struggles, preserving our future for our children as Anishinabe not just for 7 generations, but forever!

In a hundred years, those who seek to disrupt our way of life will be gone. But the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band will still be here. With the strength of our culture and our traditions...with the love for our Elders and our children...we will always persevere.

We always have, and we always will! Miigwech!!



Secretary-Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu's Address



Good morning and welcome! I am Carolyn Beaulieu. As the Speaker of the Band Assembly, it is my duty under the Mille Lacs Band Statutes to Call the 17th Band Assembly 1st Session to Order, and ask that the Clerk conduct roll call. (Roll call.)

I'd like to take this opportunity to pass on information important for all of us to know as Mille Lacs Band members.

For the last three decades, the Mille Lacs Band has operated as a Separation of Powers form of government. While we are still under the Constitution of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, (which I will refer to as the MCT moving forward) the Mille Lacs Band decided to write its own laws and establish its own form of government — unique from any other tribal government.

Under the MCT Constitution, that was established under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and approved in 1936, all six Bands have a Chairman, a Secretary-Treasurer and three representatives. At Mille Lacs, we call the Chairperson the Chief Executive and we call the Secretary-Treasurer the Speaker of the Band Assembly. Chief Executive Benjamin and I represent the Mille Lacs Band at the Tribal Executive Committee.

Under the MCT Constitution, the six Bands of the MCT are together for three principle reasons.

First, we write an election ordinance for all six Bands.

Second, we approve membership decisions of the Bands.

Third, we hold trust lands in common. The MCT also collectively passes resolutions that impact all of the Bands and at times, national Indian policy. The remaining governing power remains with each of the Bands.

As you know, 2016 is an election year, and we want you to be well informed of what's going on. Please know that election information is available as it comes in on the legislative website and legislative bulletin board at the government center and community centers. I encourage all enrolled MCT members to get involved in their elections.

Today, Band Assembly writes laws and appropriates funds for programs and services; the Executive Branch implements the laws and administers the programs and services funded by the appropriations; and the Judicial branch adjudicates disputes and hears cases.

I would like to take a moment to introduce our staff (please hold your applause until the end):

First, Shelly Day, Office Manager;

Danielle Smith, Legislative Coordinator;

Linda Quaderer, Legislative Office Assistant;

Kim Kegg, Legislative Librarian;

Nancy Wood, Legislative Receptionist;

Stacey Thunder, Legislative Counsel;

Caryn Day, Communications Liaison

Darcie Big Bear, Band Assembly Clerk/Parliamentarian.

I also want to introduce the District Employees:

For District I, Bille Jo Sarcia, Megan Ballinger, Semira

Kimpson; For District II Raina Killspotted, and District II-A Chilah Brown; For District III Monica Benjamin, and the Deputy Registrar for the Department of Motor Vehicles is Deanna Sam. Lastly, the Commissioner of Finance Adam Valdez.

The Commissioner of Finance oversees the Office of Management and Budget and plays a key role in advising Band Assembly on finances and other matters that impact the Band government. The Office of Management and Budget provides the financial services to the tribal government and its members.

To date since I started my role as speaker of the Assembly, the current Band Assembly has had 129 Band Assembly meetings, passed 84 Bills and 160 resolutions (this includes joint resolutions that require concurrence of the Chief Executive), besides those main documents, our other day-to-day work includes:

- Reviewing Commissioners Orders
- Reviewing Solicitors Opinions
- Ratifying commissioners, judges, and board members
- Writing Statutes and amendments to existing laws
- Reviewing and approving Contracts
- Conducting Appropriation hearings
- Approving Budget Revisions
- Approving Memorandums of Understanding or Agreements
- Reviewing and approving Land Leases
- Reviewing and approving Grant Applications
- Overseeing Investments

In general, the Band Assembly attempts to work with the Chief Executive and all of the Band's Commissioners on the effective and efficient running of the Band government.

For Band Assembly, we have several goals for 2016, and I'd like to share just some of those:

- Continued development of legislative website — we want to give you the best information as quickly as we can.
- Continued development of the legislative library. We went through minor office space renovations and hiring of staff, and we hope to have a fully functional library by the end of the year.
- Review and revise the Revenue Allocation Plan. Under Federal law, this is the plan as to how casino funds are spent. Our needs have changed over the years, and we need to make adjustments in this area. It ultimately gets approved by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. On this matter, we will meet with the Chief Executive and the Commissioners to discuss spending and we will share these discussions with the community before implementing any changes.
- Consult Legislative District Committees to assist with statute revisions. We want to involve Band members in writing and revising our statutes. We need your help in revising a number of Statutes that are not limited to but include Titles 3 & 4, the Legislative and Executive Branches. Under Band law revising these laws requires public comments prior to changes.

I asked the district representatives what information they

would like to pass on here today:

For District I, Representative Blake has been working hard and has been in support of many appropriations.

Notably, Eddy's Resort and the Mpls. — St. Paul Hotels. These investments will ensure diversity in our revenues and are great assets for the Band. The Budget Host is an appropriation that was well worth supporting as it assists our Band members in District I with a helping hand.

Earlier this past year, Representative Blake sponsored a Bill to begin the infrastructure of the Sher Property development, which will become an addition to our community of over 90 homes with sites for a new Community Center and Clinic. Before the work began on the Sher Property, Representative Blake worked along with Commissioner of Community Development Percy Benjamin to ensure that proper protocol was followed with the setting of a dish and asking the Manidoo's blessings and letting the spirits know of our intentions to build homes for our people there.

New job positions were created at the community center and Representative Blake is working towards adding more to enhance community activities such as open gym.

Jobs are also being developed for the Cultural Grounds in District I.

Representative Blake is invaluable to this Band Assembly for her guidance, experience, and strong leadership qualities.

For District II, their new powwow was a success, and we will have a permanent infrastructure ready by this summer's annual powwow. We also continue to pursue economic development opportunities in District II.

For District III, we are in the planning of a new Hinckley Community Center and recently approved the expansion of the Rutledge Immersion Grounds.

As I said, in addition to heading the legislative branch, under the MCT Constitution, I am still the Band's Secretary-Treasurer. In that role:

- It is my duty to ensure that Band funds are protected and they are invested well.
- Consult regularly with the Commissioner of Finance to ensure our fiscal house is in order.
- When it comes to investing its money, the Band follows the strictest protocols and procedures. Our investors adhere to a Mille Lacs Band approved investment policy.
- In all matters regarding the Band funds, Band Assembly and the Commissioner of Finance hold ourselves to the highest standards when making decisions.
- It's your money, we want to keep it safe and productive for you, your children and grandchildren.

I do want to end on this note: The Band Assembly is here to serve the People of the Band. It is our honor to serve your interest. Writing good laws that reflect the Band traditions and values is a most important job! Ensuring that the funds of the Band are handled with the utmost caution and great care is of paramount importance to us! To me — our job as a government is to find the best way to serve the Band members. And I am honored and very grateful to have the opportunity to serve the Band. Miigwech!!



2016 State of the Judiciary

Rayna Churchill

Honorable Chief Executive, principled members of the Band Assembly, my fellow Mille Lacs Band Members, employees and guests, welcome to the 2016 State of the Band Address. It is my honor to provide you with the State of the Judiciary Address as prescribed by the Band Statutes.

I currently serve as the Chief Justice. I also serve as the Appellate Justice for District III. The Honorable Clarence Boyd serves as the Appellate Justice for District I and the Honorable Brenda Moose serves as the Appellate Justice for District II. If you are in the audience, please stand and be recognized. Thank you!

This year I am happy to introduce the Honorable David Christensen as the District Court Judge. Judge Christensen is a familiar face to many because he previously served in the Band's Solicitor General's Office and Legislative Office in the 1990s. Please stand and be recognized. Judge Christensen brings a wealth of legal knowledge and expertise to the Tribal Court, which will assist him in handling cases that come before the District Court. During his eleven months in office, he has been working hard to overcome the backlog of cases, which I can say were plenty. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

As indicated in 2015, the Court's goal is to complete our strategic planning and needs assessment in conjunction with Family Services, Band Member Legal Aid and the Peacemaking program. We have taken the liberty to place at each table setting a survey and request that each Band member take the time to complete the survey prior to the conclusion of the State of the Band Address. Your opinions are extremely valuable and essential in assisting us in the creation of a five-year plan for the three aforementioned departments and Tribal Court. Please leave the completed survey at your table, and a staff member will pick it up. Our goal is to complete this process by the end of the year. Upon completion, we will provide you with the goals and objectives in the Band newsletter and on the website.

An objective outlined in our 2012 grant allowed for the courts to implement a Peacemaking program for family law cases. The Peacemaker, Laurie Vilas (please rise), has been making great strides in assisting families via the Peacemaking circle. Her role is to help settle disputes as a neutral third party by using Ojibwe values as a foundation within the circle process. This year the peacemaker had 60 cases, of which 15 have been resolved, 39 cases are still in the Peacemaking process, 2 cases were resolved on their own and 4 are stalled. Many of the cases were referred to her by Tribal Court, Family Services

Social Workers or at the request of the County to assist in resolving issues with Band member parents, grandparents and other family members. Thank you, Laurie, for your hard work this past year.

Another objective is to improve security throughout the courtroom and court administration area. Court administration will be creating a team to review safety issues, which will include members from Tribal Police, Public Safety, and the Solicitor General's Office, among others.

In 2016, Judge Christensen would like to review existing court rules and modify those to include Rules of Evidence, Rules of Procedure and Rules for Juvenile Procedures. He will be requesting the assistance of the Solicitor General's Office and Band Member Legal Aid.

The final goal for 2016 is to review the use of the Panel of Elders as stated in Mille Lacs Band Statutes.

In 2015, 1,395 cases were filed in Tribal Court. Of those cases:

- 213 were child support;
- 70 were general civil;
- 39 petitions for Orders of Protection were filed, which include domestic abuse and harassment. Nine cases were domestic abuse and the remaining cases were harassment. Of the harassment cases, seven were filed which indicated that grandchildren were stealing from their elderly grandparents. Though seven is not a large number, there may be more unreported cases because others are not coming forward.
- In Family law, cases totaled 184, which is an increase of 60% from last year. The Family Law cases consist of Children in need of Protective Services, Guardianship, Custody, Visitation, Adoption, Divorce, Paternity, and Name Changes.

During 2015, 69 cases were filed for children in need of protective services, 29 of those cases were for educational neglect and 40 were for other forms of abuse or neglect within the home. Of the 40 cases, 88 children were removed from their homes. However, 23 children were reunited with their parents who worked a case plan with family services. Eight of the 40 cases stemmed from prenatal exposure, which is a reduction from last year. Although the numbers show a decline in prenatal exposure, we, the Band, still need to address all of the reasons why children are removed. We need to ask ourselves, as Anishinaabe, how are we going to resolve this issue so the children's lives are no longer second, third or at the bottom of our priorities? The well being of children is of



the utmost importance to the continued existence of our Anishinaabe way of life.

As indicated earlier, truancy and chronic absenteeism from school has resulted in 29 educational neglect cases being filed since April 2015. Six of those cases are from the present school year. The youngest child in these cases is seven years old and the oldest child has been 15, due to statutory limits. In two separate cases, an elementary student had 56 unexcused absences and a high school student had 57. Those numbers do not include the excused absences for each child. In reviewing the amount of days in a school year, it is accurate to say that in these two examples, the children missed a quarter of the school year. The court has involved the Healing Circle, led by KC Paulson and Kim Sam, to assist in resolving truancy and chronic absenteeism issues and will require the families to work with them. I repeat again, we need to concentrate on our Mille Lacs Band children. Without adequate education, how can they live a good life or function in a modern, technological world?

In closing, I'd like to mention that Mille Lacs Band Statutes reference the judicial philosophy, which in a nutshell means the Tribal Court strives to provide peace and harmony amongst the Band to ensure that the circle of life be restored so that the community can continue to grow and prosper. By reviewing our methods of handling truancy, drug and alcohol issues, elder abuse and neglect of our children, the court can aid in resolving those problems, but the court needs the support of the community and elected officials. You can show your support by completing the community survey. This will aid the court in achieving its ultimate goal, which is to provide a forum where litigants can resolve disputes in a fair and timely manner.

Thank you for attending the 2016 State of the Band Address.



New Officers Take Oath of Office

Five new Mille Lacs Tribal Police officers — Brian Murphy, Jeff Dorr, Julian Walker, Dusty Burton and Ashley Stavish — were sworn in on Thursday, Jan. 7, by Judge Brenda Moose.

Department of Justice Approves Concurrent Jurisdiction

Second assumption of federal jurisdiction under historic tribal law and order act

The Department of Justice has granted a request by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe for the United States to assume concurrent criminal jurisdiction on the tribe's reservation under the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act.

At her State of the Band Address on Jan. 12, Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin thanked federal officials and said the decision means criminals can be prosecuted in federal court. "We need this message to go out to drug dealers, gang members and anyone intent on committing violent crimes on our lands: We will catch you, and when we do, you are going to Leavenworth, not Stillwater, and you are not getting out for a very, very long time. Tell the dealers, 'If you don't want to go to federal prison, get off our lands now, and stay out.'"

The Band applied for concurrent jurisdiction on the 61,000-acre Mille Lacs Reservation in 2013. Mille Lacs County opposed the application, saying it was not necessary and that the 1855 Reservation was disestablished and no longer exists.

The Department of Justice rejected those arguments, and Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates announced the decision in a Jan. 12 news release.

The decision was the second assumption of jurisdiction granted by the Department of Justice under the landmark

Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (TLOA), which gave the department discretion to accept concurrent federal jurisdiction to prosecute violations of the General Crimes Act and the Major Crimes Act within areas of Indian country that are also subject to state criminal jurisdiction under Public Law 280. Public Law 280 is the 1953 law that mandated the transfer of federal law enforcement jurisdiction for certain tribes to six states, including Minnesota. The first assumption of federal jurisdiction took place on Minnesota's White Earth Reservation in March 2013.

The decision will take effect on Jan. 1, 2017. Tribal, state and county prosecutors and law enforcement agencies will also continue to have criminal jurisdiction on the reservation.

"We believe this decision — made after a careful review of the tribe's application and the facts on the ground — will strengthen public safety and the criminal justice system serving the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe," said Deputy Attorney General Yates. "This is another step forward in the Justice Department's commitment to serve and protect American Indian and Alaska Native communities, to deal with them on a government-to-government basis and to fulfill the historic promise of the Tribal Law and Order Act. Strong law enforcement partnerships with the Tribe, as well as state and local counterparts, will be essential to the success of this effort."

"We want to make certain that the outcome of this decision will benefit the residents of the Mille Lacs Band and improve the safety of the community," said U.S. Attorney Andrew M. Luger of the District of Minnesota. "As we work towards full implementation, we will work to strengthen the bonds between our tribal and local partners in pursuit of our common goal of providing a safe environment where this community can thrive."

The Department of Justice already has jurisdiction to prosecute certain crimes, such as drug trafficking, wherever they occur in the United States — including on the Mille Lacs Reservation. The change announced today will expand this existing jurisdiction to allow federal prosecution of major crimes such as murder, rape, felony assault and felony child abuse.

The decision followed careful consideration of the request and information provided by the Mille Lacs Band Tribal government, as well as by the Justice Department's Office of Tribal Justice, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. District Court, state and local law enforcement partners and other sources.

Chief Executive, District I Representative up for Reelection

Mille Lacs Band Secretary/Treasurer Carolyn Beaulieu announced on Jan. 15 that the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe will hold a Regular Election on the Mille Lacs Reservation June 14, with an April 5 primary if necessary. Positions to be filled are Chairperson (Chief Executive) and Committee person District I (District I Representative). Both are four-year terms.

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin also issued a Writ of Election Jan. 15 announcing that elections for Nay Ah Shing School Board will also be held on June 14, with an April 5 primary if necessary. Open school board positions are Chair, District I member and District II member.

The filing period for open seats was Jan. 19 through 4:30 p.m. Jan. 28. For a list of those who have filed, the official MCT announcement, and the Chief Executive's Writ of Election, see millelacsband.com and millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com. Watch the websites, Facebook and next month's *Inaajimowin* for information on candidate forums.

ELECTION CALENDAR 2015 – 2016 Regular Election

- **December 30, 2015:** Last day for sitting RTC member to give notice of resignation to file for other RTC office.
- **January 11, 2016:** Last day for sitting RTC member to give notice of resignation to file for vacated RTC seat.
- **January 15:** Election Announcement
- **January 19:** 8 a.m. — Opening of period for filing for office.
- **January 28:** Close of filing period
- **February 5:** Selection of Election Court of Appeals Judge (For certification of candidate)
- **February 12:** Deadline for Notice of Certifications to TEC.
- **February 17:** Challenge certification or non-certification to MCT by 4:30 p.m. on the second business day following receipt of certification.
- **February 18:** Complete record of all documents related to challenge submit to Minnesota Chippewa Tribe by 4:30 p.m.
- **February 18:** Deadline for appointment of Election Boards.
- **February 18:** Deadline for appointment of Election Contest Judge and alternate Election Contest Judge.
- **February 19:** Decision of certification or non-certification or within 48 hrs. of appeal.
- **February 22:** Notice of Primary Election and Posting.
- **February 26:** TEC provides ballots for Primary Election.
- **April 1:** Notify MCT on choice of appellate forum.
- **April 5:** Primary (Polling places open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.)
- **April 6:** General Reservation Election Board certifies Primary Results. (Prior to 8 p.m.)
- **April 7:** General Reservation Election Board publishes Primary Results.
- **April 8:** Deadline for Request for Recount. (Filed with General Election Board prior to 5 p.m.)
- **April 12:** 4:30 p.m. — Deadline for Contest of Primary Election. (Filed with Reservation Election Judge and Executive Director of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe).
- **April 13:** (Results, if allowed or 11th or 12th if earlier request): Deadline for Decision on Request for Recount and Results of Recount, if allowed.
- **April 22:** Deadline for Decision on Contest
- **April 25** (or within 3 days of decision on Contest): 4:30 p.m. — Deadline for Appeal to Court of Election Appeals. (Filed with the Executive Director of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and with Reservation Tribunal rendering Decision).
- **April 28** (or with 3 days upon receipt of Notice to Appeal): Record of Contest forwarded to Court of Election Appeals.
- **May 2** (hearing within 7 days notice of appeal). Last Day for Hearing on Appeal
- **May 12** (10 days from hearing on appeal): Last Day for Decision on Appeal
- **May 13:** Notice of General Election
- **May 13:** TEC provides ballots for General Election.
- **June 14:** General Election (Polling Places open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.)
- **June 15:** General Reservation Election Board certifies results of Election. Prior to 8 p.m.
- **June 16:** General Reservation Election Board publishes Election results.
- **June 17:** Deadline for Request for Recount. (Filed with General Election Board prior to 5 p.m.)
- **June 21:** 4:30 p.m. — Deadline for Notice of Contest. (Filed with Reservation Election Judge and Executive Director of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.)
- **June 22** (or 20, 21, if request for Recount is filed before deadline): Decision on Request for Recount and Results of Recount, if allowed.
- **July 1st:** Deadline for Decision on Contest for General Election.
- **July 5th** (or within 3 days of decision on Contest): 4:30 p.m. — Deadline for appeal to Court of Election Appeals. (Filed with Executive Director of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and Reservation Tribunal rendering Decision).
- **July 8** (or within 3 days upon receipt of Notice to Appeal): Record of contest forwarded to Court of Election Appeals.
- **July 12** (hearing within 7 days notice of appeal). Last Day for Hearing on Appeal.
- **July 12:** Winning candidates assume office by operation of law, unless sooner seated, or the election is subject of appeal to the Court of Election Appeals.
- **July 22** (or Ten 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.

Integrated Food Program Focuses on Health, Jobs, Sovereignty

A new initiative in all three Mille Lacs Band districts will bring together a broad array of gardening, farming and commercial activities to provide Band members with healthy food, meaningful jobs and a stronger economy.

The Mille Lacs Band Integrated Food Systems Program will be a partnership between the Band's programs that have a food component, and our communities to produce healthy foods for Band members to eat, share and sell.

The Band's Administration Department is working with the Honor The Earth Organization to identify best practices, measure community interest and develop logical phasing of the project.

Commissioner of Administration Catherine Colsrud has been working on food sovereignty since she took her position in 2014, but she points out that Band members in all three districts have led the way for years by developing food projects and encouraging others to make food health a priority.

Years ago, for example, Leonard Sam established gardens at the old Sodbusters property in District I, when he was working for the DNR. Other long-time visionaries, Catherine says, are Dale Greene in District II, and Ed St. John, Harry Davis and Trisha Moose in District III.

Rayna Churchill has also been a promoter of traditional foods and healthy lifestyles, and she's pleased that the project is moving forward. "We are aware that Native Americans suffer from the worst overall health disparities of any ethnic/racial group in the United States," says Rayna. "The solution to the problems is the restoration of more traditional, natural, healthy foods in addition to other strategies leading the way to improving the overall nutritional health of all Americans, and not just the people of Indian Country."

In recent years, projects have sprouted up through the efforts of Nay Ah Shing schools Nutrition Services Coordinator Deb Foye, Emergency Services Greenhouse Technician Kevin Pawlitschek and several others. Gardens and greenhouses are in place at Sodbusters, the powwow grounds in District I, and the ALUs in Districts I and II. In District III, Pine Grove Academy is planning to start a garden, and Band employees have been experimenting with "aquaponics" — a combination of "aquaculture" (growing fish) and "hydroponics" (growing vegetables in water).

Individual Band members are already raising livestock, growing apple trees, harvesting fish, making maple syrup and processing wild rice.

"Our communities have great ideas, and our Band members are very passionate about improving our collective lives," said Catherine. "We know what we want, we know we have the support, and we know we have the interest from the communi-

ty, but what we don't have is the time investment this project deserves, to gather the information from all the districts and interested community members into one cohesive, logical plan, so we can start growing this year."

Winona LaDuke, who is managing the project for Honor the Earth, has been visiting all three districts to gather and share ideas (see story below).

For Catherine, the project has potential to address a number of different problems in the Mille Lacs Band community: reentry of incarcerated people into the community; unemployment among members who can't work at the casinos and those who desire to work outside instead of doing office work; a local economy in need of diversification; and health problems like diabetes and heart disease due to lack of access to affordable, fresh and healthy food.

"Through this project, we can put people to work and give access to healthy food to those want it," Catherine said. "And our elders who can't garden anymore will benefit from it, our school children can learn the importance of taking care of the land, and those small, independent producers will have increased access to established distribution systems. Growers need to have an avenue to sell their products, and one part of this integrated food system project will increase this opportunity."

Dale Greene is a District II elder who is excited about the project. He remembers the days when every family grew a "victory garden" during World War II. Everyone canned their excess, from tomatoes to venison — even bullheads.

Dale gardened most of his life but finds it difficult now. "I used to have a big garden back here," he said. "I had corn and beans, tomatoes, onions, carrots. I'd try different things. Everybody likes to eat their own vegetables, but some of us can't get out and weed anymore."

Dale was in the food business for many years as a wild rice processor and dealer. To him, here's nothing better than healthy traditional foods, including fresh produce from the garden. "I'd like to see some of that real corn come back, the organic corn seeds," Dale said.

He would also like the food sovereignty project to revive social relationships among members, as they work together to grow food and provide for those in need.

Dale would like the Band government to require all employees to spend one day per month in community service. Some of those hours could be spent helping elders with their gardens.

"I'd like to see it as a community thing," he said. "If I have too many carrots, I'll give some to somebody less fortunate. It doesn't have to be an Indian either. I can give them to my neighbor down the street."

"Through this project, we can put people to work and give access to healthy food to those want it. And our elders who can't garden anymore will benefit from it, our school children can learn the importance of taking care of the land, and those small, independent producers will have increased access to established distribution systems."

— Catherine Colsrud



Indigenous varieties of corn.

Traditional Foods Improve Health, Environment, Economy

By Bradley Harrington



"I don't think we can call ourselves sovereign if we can't feed ourselves."

— Paul 'Sugarbear' Smith, Oneida

Winona LaDuke of Honor the Earth has been visiting each district to share and gather ideas for the Mille Lacs Band Integrated Food Systems Program. She talks about the environmental, financial and health-related factors to what we put inside our bodies.

Traditional food production is better for the environment because it absorbs and stores carbon from the air. Financially, it can save millions per community. She did a study in White Earth and determined that close to \$7 million was being spent in the nearby community with most of it spent on unhealthy foods.

Up until about a hundred years ago, most Ojibwe were self-sufficient in the ability to grow and gather their own food. In the 1840's, the Ojibwe were

the farmers that sold food to non-native traders. She talked about many varieties of corn the Ojibwe people grew.

Being the northern most corn producers, the Ojibwe grew corn 100 miles past Winnipeg. She passed around a basket that had a few of the varieties of corn that she grows. She is offering assistance in the creation of household and community gardens. Mille Lacs has major potential in being food producers not only for the Ojibwe people but across the nation.

Part-time, contract jobs will be available in each district for this program through "Honor The Earth". If you are interested in this program, like the Facebook page "MLBO Farming Project." More information can be found at anishinaabefoodsovereignty.com/millelacs/



Vince Merrill, center, with his Minisinaakwaang language apprentices. Back: Branden Sargent and Anthony Buckanaga. Front: Olivia Killspotted and Misty Morrow.

Youngest Native Speaker Inspires Youth

Brett Larson Staff writer/Photographer

Vince Merrill may be the youngest native speaker of Ojibwe in the state of Minnesota, and now he's passing that knowledge on to a new generation by overseeing Ojibwe Language Apprentices at Minisinaakwaang Leadership Academy in District II.

Vince is 50 years old, but his memories of early childhood sound like those of someone much older. He lived with his grandparents, Frank and Maggie Misquadace, in East Lake, and when it was time to go to school, he didn't speak a word of English. The teachers were at a loss.

"They didn't know what to do with me," Vince recalls, "so they sent me home. I didn't know what was going on. I was enjoying it."

He went to live with his mother in Minneapolis and attended a Catholic school, but they were no better equipped to deal with Vince, so he ended up getting in a lot of trouble. "Because we lived so close, when one of them would punish me, I'd run away and hide in the garage and wait until someone came home," Vince says.

Vince begged his mom to let him come back to East Lake, and the following fall he started kindergarten again. He was confused because the kids he had started school with a year earlier were now in a different grade. "It always bothered me, so I'd play with the older kids who remembered me. It was a real bizarre experience."

Vince got help from other bilingual East Lake residents like Bernice Parks. He eventually learned enough English to get along, but school remained difficult.

"I don't think I really started getting it until third grade," he says. "I think they just passed me along because what else could they do?"

Learning English was not enough to insulate him from the realities of rural Minnesota life, however. "In seventh or eighth grade I was formally introduced to bigotry," Vince says. "I was dating one of the local girls, and we both took a lot of heat. I didn't think society could be so cruel."

Vince eventually joined the Army and spent time away from

home. During those years he lost some of his connection with the language and culture, but it came back when he returned home and began speaking on behalf of the community and the drum.

Vince is a Drumkeeper on a drum that was first given to Misquadace, his grandfather's father. Misquadace became a chief after the assassination of Hole-in-the-Day. When Vince's grandfather died, Vince became a Drumkeeper at a young age — only the third in line dating back to Misquadace.

In the 1990s, Vince lived in District I and was involved in various language teaching roles. His passion for teaching and his concern about the loss of the language have grown throughout the years.

Vince is now employed at Minisinaakwaang overseeing the school's language apprentices — four young people who are committed to becoming language teachers. "With the rapid decline of the language, we need these young people to step up and do this," Vince says.

The four apprentices — Anthony Buckanaga, Olivia Killspotted, Branden Sargent and Misty Morrow — will rotate between classrooms and lessons with Vince.

Vince hopes to bring a new generation of speakers to the point where they can speak spontaneously rather than relying on rehearsed speeches.

"My greatest fear is that there won't be anybody to do any of the language speaking for ceremonial purposes. What it boils down to is that it's all situational. It's not memorizing a speech. That's my greatest fear: that we will lose contact with the ways we were given to conduct ourselves. Prior to gaming we were all very connected to these ways because that's how we were able to function in response to society's growing expectation for Native Americans to be more like them. At that time there were lots of speakers to perform these things, and now we're down to a handful. What good is having a pile of money if we can't do anything for our people and give them back their spirituality and their language?"

I am learning Ojibwe:

Nibiminizha'aan iw Ojibwemowin

He/she is learning Ojibwe:

Obiminizha'aan iw Ojibwemowin

You are learning Ojibwe:

Gibiminizha'aan iw Ojibwemowin

I speak Ojibwe:

Nindoojibwem

Let's speak Ojibwe: Ojibwemodaa

February News Briefs

Sandpiper secrets: According to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (Jan. 5), a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency staffer sent emails expressing opposition to the Sandpiper pipeline, in spite of Gov. Mark Dayton's support of the proposed pipeline. Rep. Pat Garofalo, R-Farmington, claimed that the emails betray a secret bias against the project in the governor's office. The governor has initiated an investigation to determine if the emails were inappropriate and what should be done about it.

Walleye at the Roundtable: The Mille Lacs walleye population was a hot topic at the Jan. 15 Fishing Roundtable hosted by the Minnesota DNR. Fishery expert Jim Martin was brought in by the DNR to examine the Mille Lacs "situation" from an outsider's perspective.

Ricing arrests: Charges have been filed against two Mille Lacs Band members, Harvey GoodSky Jr. and Morningstar Shabaiaash, for ricing without a permit on Gull Lake last summer. According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, they were among several treaty rights activists involved in a protest to claim gathering rights throughout territories ceded in the Treaty of 1855.

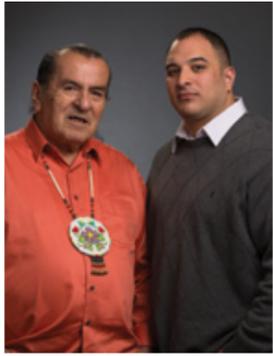
White Earth shakeup. *Native News Online* reported on Jan. 20 that White Earth Chairwoman Erma Vizenor's resignation had been accepted by a 3-0 vote of the tribal council. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe's Tribal Executive Committee censured Vizenor in December after she attempted to implement a new constitution. As a member of the MCT, White Earth is bound by the MCT Constitution. Vizenor faced a potential removal by the tribal council, but said earlier she would run again if removed.

A few good signs: White Earth is seeking to install highway signs in Ojibwe along Becker County roads. Cultural Coordinator Merlin Deegan appeared before the Becker County Board to explain that the signs, which would be paid for by a grant, could help young people to be exposed to culture in their day-to-day lives, according to the *Duluth News Tribune*. When Deegan asked that the Ojibwe words be above the English on the signs, however, he met with opposition from county commissioners.

Advisory Committee gets legal advice: The Minnesota DNR's Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee met on Jan. 11 at Izatys to discuss management of the lake and the decline in walleyes. On hand was DNR Deputy General Counsel David Iverson, who told the committee about the legal framework that determines harvest limits, according to the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Some advisory committee members — primarily Mille Lacs area businesses and fishing groups — want public access to the state-tribal Fisheries Technical Committee meetings. Some members said the public opposes tribal gill netting; others said they want the state to renegotiate co-management with the tribes. The DNR repeated that gill netting is not the cause of a decline in the walleye population. Government Affairs Director Jamie Edwards represents the Band on the committee.

Ontario Chippewa fight Enbridge, too, eh?

The Thames River First Nation of Ontario is taking Enbridge Inc. to court over the Line 9 pipeline, according to the *Huffington Post*. The first nation says it wasn't properly consulted (sounds familiar) when Enbridge sought permission to expand and reverse the flow of oil.



Opwaaganag Ceremonial Pipes

Lee Staples Gaa-Anishinaabemod Obizaan Chato Gonzalez Gaa-Anishinaabewibii'ang Ombishkebines

Mii dash noongom ani-dazhimagwaa ingiw opwaaganag gaa-miinigoowiziyangig anishinaabewiyang ge-ni-apenimoyangig giniigaaniiminaang.

Today I am going to talk about the ceremonial pipes that we were given as a people to rely on for our support in our future.

Ishke inendaagoziyan da-miinigoowiziyaa a'aw opwaagan ge-aabaji'ad, mii-go gomaapii da-miinigoowiziyaa. Ishke aanind a'aw Anishinaabe niwaabamaa adaawed inow opwaaganan waa-aabaji'aajin. Gaawiin i'iw akeyaa daa-izhichigesiin a'aw Anishinaabe. Inendaagoziyan a'aw opwaagan da-ayaawad, mii-go da-miinigoowiziyamban. Giga-miinigoog ingiw Manidoog. Gaawiin memwech gidaa-omichi-gagwedwesiin da-miinigooyan gaye.

If it is meant for you to have a ceremonial pipe, at some point the Manidoog will provide one for you. I see some of our Anishinaabe purchasing the pipes that they want to use. Anishinaabe should not do this. If it is meant for you to have a pipe, you will receive one. The Manidoog will give you one. You do not necessarily go and ask for one either.

Azhigwa dash oshki-miinigoowiziyaa a'aw opwaagan, booch a'aw asemaa miinawaa wiisiniwin gidaa-atamawaag ingiw Manidoog dabwaa-aabaji'ad a'aw opwaagan. Ishke dash a'aw opwaagan, niizhiwag ingiw Manidoog gaa-nakodangig da-ni-aabajichigaazowaad ge-onjikaad dash a'aw opwaagan. Mii dash a'aw Gimishoomisinaan, mii a'aw bezhig a'aw Manidoo gaa-nakodang wii-naadamaaged o'ow akeyaa. Mii dash imaa asiniwid a'aw opwaagan, mii dash a'aw Gimishoomisinaan ezhiwiinind.

Once you are given a new pipe, you need to put tobacco and food for the Manidoog before you use the pipe. When it comes to the pipe there are two Manidoog that agreed to come together in this way and to form the pipe as we know it. One of the Manidoo that agreed to help this was our Grandfather Rock. That is the stone part of the pipe, his name is Gimishoomisinaan.

Mii dash awedi bezhig a'aw Manidoo gaa-nakodang gaye wii-naadamaaged o'ow akeyaa, mii dash a'aw Mitigwaabiwinini ezhiwiinjigaazod. Mii i'iw okij gii-ozhichigaadeg, mii imaa gaa-ondinigaadeg imaa mitigoong.

The other Manidoo that agreed to help in this way is Mitigwaabiwinini. That is where the pipe stem is made from, it comes from the tree.

Azhigwa dash dabwaa-aabaji'ad gidooopwaagan, asemaan gidaa-o-ininamawaa a'aw Anishinaabe netaa-apagizomaaged inow asemaan zagaswe'idid a'aw Anishinaabe. Mii dash a'aw ge-bi-gaagiigidod, weweni da-apagizondamawaad inow Manidoon enabinid inow gidasemaaman naa i'iw giwiisiniwin. Mii imaa naaniigaan ge-ni-apagizondamawind gidasemaam naa gaye giwiisiniwin ingiw niizh Manidoog gaa-nakodangig wii-maamawinikeniswaad imaa dash gaa-onjikaad a'aw opwaagan.

Before you use your pipe, you should take tobacco over to someone who knows how to talk at Anishinaabe ceremonies. That person can come talk and offer up your tobacco and food to where those Manidoog sit. The first place your tobacco and food is sent to is to those two Manidoog that agreed to come together to form the pipe.

Mii gaye imaa nanaandomindwaa ingiw Manidoog da-wenda-mashkawaamagadinig imaa ge-onjikaamagadinig azhigwa ani-aabajichigaazod a'aw opwaagan. Miinawaa gaye mii a'aw ge-ni-naadamook giniigaaniiming da-ni-maminoseyan.

The Manidoog are asked to help making sure that the strength and power is there as the pipe is used. It is also asked that this is the pipe that will help you to live a good life in the future.

Ishke dash gaye wayeshkad a'aw Bwaan gaa-nagadenimag, mii a'aw opwaaganan gaa-miizhid. Mii dash iwapii gaa-miizhid inow opwaaganan, geget nigii-kagwaadagitoo iwapii. Ningii-wenda-onzaamiikaanaaban i'iw minikwewin enigaa'igod a'aw Anishinaabe. Mii dash imaa gii-mikwendamaan gaa-onji-naadamaagoowizid gige-anishinaabeminaan. Mii i'iw wiin gaa-izhichiged, mii-go apane endaso-giizhik gii-asemaakawaad inow Manidoon.

It was a Sioux friend that gave me my first pipe. At the time he gave me the pipe, I was going through a difficult time. I had been drinking heavily at the time. It was at that time that I remembered how the old Anishinaabe got their help. What the old Anishinaabe did was put their tobacco out everyday for the Manidoog.

Ingii-kotaan da-aabiinji'igoyaan i'iw minikwewin, mii dash imaa gii-inendamaan endaso-giizhik da-aabaji'ag a'aw indoopwaagan. Mii dash imaa endaso-gigizhebaawagak imaa aabita-diba'igan awashime gii-tazhitaayaan gii-mooshkina'ag a'aw indoopwaagan. Mii imaa bangii asemaa gii-mamag gii-ininamawagwaa bebezhiig ingiw Manidoog weweni gii-kanoonagwaa biinish dash imaa gakina ingiw Manidoog gii-asemaakawagwaa, mii dash imaa gii-saka'wag indoopwaagan. Mii dash i'iw ginwenzh eni-izhichiged a'aw Anishinaabe, mii-go iwidi eni-apiichitaad da-ni-asigishininid inow odasemaan enabinid inow Manidoon. Booch igo gomaapii oga-naadamaagoon inow Manidoon.

At the time I was afraid that the alcohol would get the best of me. So it was then that I decided to use my pipe on a daily basis. So what I did was every morning I sat there for a half-hour or more filling my pipe. What I did was take a pinch of tobacco and offer it to each of the Manidoog until I did that to all the Manidoog that I knew. It was then that I lit my pipe. As Anishinaabe does this on a continuous basis, his tobacco collects where those Manidoog sit. Eventually those Manidoog will help him.

Ishke dash i'iw akeyaa niin gaa-izhi-naadamaagoowiziyaan i'iwapii, ingii-odisigoog imaa nibawaajiganing ingiw Manidoog. Mii-go gaa-izhi-moozhitooyaan inigokwekamig i'iw zhawendaagoziwin gegigaabawiwaad ingiw Manidoog gaa-pi-naazikawijig, mii dash i'iw gaa-piingigeshkaamagak imaa nijichaagong. Mii dash i'iw gaa-miinonigoyaan.

The way I was helped by doing this, the Manidoog began to appear in my dreams. I could feel the compassion of those Manidoog stand with and I could feel that energy go into my spirit. It was that which straightened my life out.

Ishke dash i'iwapii gii-wenda-inigaawendamaan bimaadiziyaan. Ishke dash ingiw Manidoog gii-pi-naazikawiwaad imaa nibawaajiganing, mii imaa gii-moonendamaan zhawenimiwaad ingiw Manidoog. Mii igo awegwen a'aw Anishinaabe i'iw akeyaa eni-izhichiged, mii-go gaye wiin da-naadamaagoowizipan.

It was at that time that I was really pitiful. And when those Manidoog appeared in my dreams, it was then that I realized how much compassion they had for me. Any of our Anishinaabe who wants to do this will be helped in the same fashion.

Mii gaye gaa-izhi-gikinoo'amaagooyaan ani-aabaji'ag a'aw indoopwaagan, mii i'iw gaa-igooyaan, "Mii i'iw akeyaa ezhi-ganawenimad a'aw gidooopwaagan, mii i'iw akeyaa ge-ni-izhi-ganawendaman gibimaadiziwin." Ishke weweni doodawad, weweni gashkapinad, weweni biini'ad, miinawaa weweni nanaa'inad ani-giizhi-aabaji'ad a'aw gidooopwaagan, mii gaye gaawiin debinaak giga-ni-doodanziin i'iw gibimaadiziwin.

The teaching that I was given when I was first given my pipe, I was told, "The way you take care of your pipe, is the way you will lead your life." If you treat your pipe in a good way, take care in tying it up, doing a good job cleaning it, and putting it away in a good way once you are done using it, you will also do a thorough job in taking care of your life.

Mii gaye gaa-izhi-gikinoo'amaagooyaan da-ni-ganawaabandamaan aaniin ezhichigeyaan ani-biini'ag a'aw indoopwaagan. Weweni gidaa-doodaan i'iw akakanzhe. Gego imaa endazhi-apagiji-ziigwebinigenig gidaa-atoosiin i'iw akakanzhe. Mii-go izhi-bezhigod a'aw asemaa naa i'iw akakanzhe. Weweni dash gaye akakanzhe gidaa-doodaan.

I was also taught to be careful as I clean my pipe. You need to treat the ash respectfully. Do not throw it in the garbage. The tobacco and the ash are one in the same. So as a result you need to treat the ash respectfully.

A'aw nizigosiban Amikogaabawiikweban nigii-wiindamaag, baanima niiwing midewid a'aw Anishinaabe, mii owapii ge-ni-aabaji'aapan inow mekadewiziniin inow opwaaganan. Mii i'iw akeyaa nebowa a'aw Anishinaabe gaa-izhi-gikinoo'amawind. Mii gaye gaa-izhi-gikinoo'amawid a'aw nizigosiban, mii imaa niiwing medewid, mii imaa niiwing achigaazonid inow asemaan ani-mooshkinachigaazonid inow odoopwaaganan. Mii dash gaye nising medewid, nising achigaazonid inow asemaan ani-mooshkinachigaazonid dash odoopwaaganan. Mii-go aaniin minik medewid, mii iw minik dasing echigaazonid inow asemaan a'aw Anishinaabe.

My aunt Julie Shingobe had told me that it is not until Anishinaabe became fourth degree Mide that they are allowed to use a black pipe. Many of our Anishinaabe had been taught that same way. My aunt also taught me that that if you are fourth degree Mide your pipe will be filled with the fourth pinch of tobacco. Third degree Mide-person will take three pinches to fill their pipe. Whatever degree Midewiwin you are that is how many pinches it will take to your pipe.

Ayaapii-ko nibi-gagwejimigoo maajaa'iweyaan, "Daa-achigaazowan ina odoopwaaganan da-ni-maajiinaad a'aw eni-aanjikiid?" Ishke dash mii iw mikwendamaan a'aw Nizigozisiban gii-ishkwaa-ayaad gii-nandodamaaged da-ni-maajiinaad inow odoopwaaganan. Ishke gaye a'aw chi-mookomaan owapii gii-moonikaadang iniw anishinaabe-jibegamigoon. Mii imaa gii-mikigaazowaad nebowa ingiw opwaaganag miinawaa wawaaj igo inow omidewayaan. Ishke mii imaa gii-wiindamaagoowiziyang mewinza a'aw Anishinaabe gii-na'inigaazod, mii imaa gii-achigaazonid inow odoopwaaganan miinawaa omidewayaan.

Sometimes when I do funerals I am asked, "Can a pipe be buried with an Anishinaabe?" I remember when my aunt passed away; she had asked that she take her pipe with her. Also when the white man dug up a lot of the Anishinaabe graves, there were a lot of pipes and Mide-hides

found in those graves. It was there that we were told that a lot of our Anishinaabe of the past were buried with their pipes and their Mide-hides.

Ishke gaye babaamaadiziyaan iko ani-naadamaageyaan imaa Anishinaabe anisemaaked, mii-ko imaa wenda-ayaangwaamiziyaan gaanag a'aw indoopwaagan da-baazhiji-dakokaanaasig a'aw ikwe. Geget mashkawaadiziwag ingiw oshkiniigikweg azhigwa wii-ni-ikwewiwaad. Naa-go gaye biinish i'iw a'aw ikwe apii enizhiwebiziwaad ikwewag endaso-giizis. Ishke imaa baazhiji-dakokaanaawaad inow opwaaganan, mii-go imaa da-aatenimawind i'iw ezhi-mashkawaadizid a'aw opwaagan. Noongom nebowa ingiw ikwewag gaawiin ogikendanziinaawaa ezhi-mashkawaadiziwaad ikwewiwaad.

Also in my travels to help Anishinaabe in putting their tobacco, I am extremely careful in hiding my pipe making sure that one of our women does not step over it. Our young girls who are in the process of becoming women are very powerful. Our women are also very powerful at their time of the month. If these women were to step-over a pipe, they would wipeout the power that exists within that pipe. Many of our women do not know how powerful they are as women.



Gikendandaa i'iw Ojibwemowin

Learning Ojibwe Lesson 1: The Alphabet

Aaniin, to begin the learning process of any language, you must learn the alphabet in which it is written. Although the letters are the same and some sounds are similar, overall pronunciation may be completely different.

In Ojibwe Language, there have been many alphabets created to be able to make this unwritten language a written one.

The alphabet that is growing in popularity amongst schools is the Double Vowel System. It takes letters from the English Alphabet and uses them in a manner that can accurately transcribe an Ojibwe Word.

So let's begin:

Double Vowel	Baraga	Phonetic	Syllabics	English
Wiisinin	Wissinnin	Wee-sin-in		Eat!

All the letters in the Double Vowel System will hold the same sound that it is assigned. Check back next month for our next lesson in Ojibwemowin.

This new feature contributed by Bradley Harrington, Melissa Boyd and John Benjamin provides beginner level Ojibwe language instruction to complement the higher-level instruction provided by Lee Staples and Chato Gonzalez each month.

Consonants

	Ojibwe Word	English
B	Bakade = S/he is hungry	Bail
Ch	Jaachaamo = S/he is sneezing	Cherry
D	Daga = Please	Dog
G	Gego = Don't	Good
H	Howah = Wow, Cool	Hail
J	Jiibaakwe = S/he is cooking	Jail
K	Ikwe = Woman	Kale
M	Manoomin = Wild Rice	Mail
N	Naanan = 5	Nail
P	Baapi = S/he is laughing	Pail
S	Asab = a net	Snail
Sh	Waashkobaagamig	Soda Pop
T	Tayaa = #%@%!!	Tail
W	Waasa = far away	Whale
Y	Gwayak = Right	Yale
Z	Zagime = Mosquito	Zoo
Zh	Zhiishiib = Duck	The "s" in Measure

Vowels

	Ojibwe Word	English
a	Bakade = S/he is hungry	"uh" in What
aa	Ataage = S/he is gambling	"aah" in Gone
e	Minikwe = S/he is drinking	"ay" in Way
i	Gisinaa = The weather is cold	"ih" in Hit
ii	Wiidookaw = You help him.	"ee" in Bee
o	Odaabaan = Car	"oh" in Toe
oo	Biidoon = You bring it.	"oo" in Moon



Nay Ah Shing schools held their second quarter powwow on Friday, Jan. 15, at the Upper School. Students from the Pine Grove campus in Aazhoomog were also included.

Fifth Annual Mille Lacs Polar Bear Plunge

On Saturday, March 12, Grand Casino Mille Lacs will sponsor the fifth annual Mille Lacs Polar Bear Plunge on the shores near Eddy's Resort to raise money for Special Olympics Minnesota. So far, 82 individuals have registered to participate, as of January 11, 2016.

Our goal this year is to exceed the number of plungers from last year — that's more than 300 brave individuals! Are you ready for the challenge? Grab a friend, family member, or co-worker and register today.

At the plunge, Grand Casino Mille Lacs will provide changing facilities and warming tents for plungers as well as concessions and other entertainment for spectators.

Area law enforcement, fire departments, search and rescue teams, the Mille Lacs Band DNR and Grand Casino Mille Lacs staff will oversee the event.

If you would like to participate or donate to a team or individual, visit plungemn.org and choose the Mille Lacs plunge location. Participants need to raise a minimum of \$75 to plunge. Donations will be accepted on the day of the plunge, and anyone interested in participating can register on the day of the event at the registration table. Registration opens at 11 a.m. with the plunge following at 1 p.m.



TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

Happy February Birthday to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Laura Ann Ashcroft
Maurice Wayne Benjamin
Melanie Ann Benjamin
Debra Jean Blake
Sandra Lee Blake
Judy Ann Carlson
Ellen Marie Dakota
Harry Richard Davis
William Carl Erickson
Eileen Frances Farah
Nicole Anne Froemming
Beverly Ann Graves
Mary Louise Hoffer
Donald Ray Houle
Sharon Louise Howard
Maggie Kegg
Kurt Drew Keller
Carolyn Dawn Lewis
Wesley Dean Merrill
Victoria Gina Mitchell
Gilbert Wayne Moose
Debra Lee Northrup
Patricia Ann O'Brien
William John O'Brien
Robin Lou Oswaldson
Rhonda Lynn Peet
Alan Pindegayosh
Lawrence Virgil Reynolds
Ellen Marie Roth
Bette Sam

Darlene Frances Sam
Darrell Duane Sam
Gladys Diane Sam
James Allan Sam
Pauline Marie Sam
Kenneth Wayne [Mitchell]
Shingobe
Alvera Marie Smith
Bennie David St. John
Edward Louis St. John
Elizabeth Ann St. John
Stanley Conrad St. John
Richard Jay Staples
Robert Lee Staples
Berniece Sutton
Emma Edna Thomas
Gary Marshall Thomas
Michael Leo Towle
Valetta Irene Towle
Ramona Joyce Washington
Patrick Weyaus
Marilyn Jean Whitney
Clyde Manuel Wind
Rose Marie Wind
Dorothy May Wistrom

Happy February Birthdays:

Happy birthday **Chris Jr.** on 2/7, love, the Harrington family. • Happy birthday **Dede** on 2/10, love Dad! • Happy 5th birthday to my baby girl **Cayleigh Marie**

on 2/12, love you lots from Mommy, Hayd, & RiaButts. • Happy 7th birthday to **TANK Wagner** on 2/13, with love from Mommy, Elias, Sissy, Rico, Gramma Tammy, Uncle Brandon, Auntie Chantel, Jazmin and Ahrianna. • Happy birthday, **Adrian** on 2/13! Love mom. • Happy birthday **Jacob** on 2/16, love the Harrington family. • Happy birthday **Braelyn** on 2/22! Love, Dad, Melissa, Grannie Kim, Papa Kyle, Papa Brad, Payton, Eric, Wesley, Waase, Brynley, Bianca, Val, Pie, Kev, Jay, Taylor, Adam, Bruce, Jayla, Lileah, Randi, and Rachel. • Happy birthday, **Julia Barrett** on 2/22! Love, your kids. • Happy birthday **Jacob** on 2/23, love the Harrington family. • Happy birthday to **Gregory Aaron aka Uncle Weez** on 2/24, love ur niece and nephews, Tha Bugg Babies and Brother Darkness and Sis Jess. • Happy birthday **Kelly Miller** on 2/27, love Ella Marie, Terrence, mom, sisters, nieces, nephews and grandma Joyce. • Happy 28th birthday to the most beautiful mom, **Kelly Miller**

on 2/27. Love, Terrence and Ella Marie. • Happy 28th birthday to auntie **Kelly Belly** on 2/27. Love your we ehs cici Poose and Donny Bugg Love and miss you. • Happy 28th birthday to **Kelly** on 2/27. Love, Marcus and Jess. • Happy birthday to **Ow Pitch** on 2/29. Love your wa ehs the Bugg Babies, Brother Marc and Sister Jess.

Happy Belated Birthdays:

Happy belated birthday **Franki** on 1/2 from Auntie Sam, Sonny Bono, Chilah, Jayden & Jordan & Bunny. • Happy belated 16th birthday wishes to **William Sayers III (aka little/big Will)** on 1/25, with love from Grandma, Sami, Dad, Auntie Chilah, Xaviar, Jayden, Dezy & Jordan & Bunny. • I would like to wish a happy belated Golden birthday to **D. Leigh Thomas** on 1/31, from your family in D2A — Momma, we'eh's Jayden & Jordan, Paul Bunny, brother William, & sister, Chilah.

Other Announcements:

Amber Benjamin, who graduated from Brainerd High School last June 5, made the President's List for the Fall Semester from Central Lakes College. We, the entire family, are very proud of Amber and her accomplishment so far. We hope you continue to strive to do your best in whatever field you choose to go into. We love you!!!! Amber is the daughter of LeAnn Benjamin and the late James C. Dorr Sr. & Granddaughter of Joycelyn Shingobe and Perry Benjamin.

Submit Birthday Announcements

Send name, birthday and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS** to Myles Gorham at myles.gorham@redcircleagency.com or call 612-465-0653.

The deadline for the March issue is February 15.

Mille Lacs Indian Museum February Events

Kids Crafts: Story Book Time and Decorate a Shoulderbag

Saturday, February 6

Time: Noon to 3 p.m.

Fee: \$7 per bag (museum admission not included).

Enjoy stories and light snacks from noon to 1 p.m., then from 1 to 3 p.m. children can decorate a shoulderbag. This activity provides a hands-on introduction to the arts and culture of the Ojibwe, a woodland people of the Great Lakes region. Please allow an hour to decorate the bag. This project is recommended for children ages 5 and up. For more information please call 320-532-3632 or send an e-mail to millelacs@mnhs.org

Ojibwe Moccasin Workshop

Saturday, February 27 & Sunday, February 28

Time: Noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday

Fee: \$60/\$55 for MNHS members; Additional supply fee of \$25

Reservations: required, call 320-532-3632

Learn techniques of working with leather in this 2-day workshop to make a pair of Ojibwe-style moccasins to take home. Registration is required three days prior to workshop. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided both days. A minimum of five participants required to host workshop. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Discounted hotel rooms are available for workshop participants on Saturday night at Grand Casino Mille Lacs. To register or for more information please call 320-532-3632 or send an e-mail to millelacs@mnhs.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Valentine's Dance/Party

February 12, 2016, 6–9 p.m.

Minneapolis American Indian Center

For all urban area Elders. Entertainment, door prizes, games, etc.

Chiminising Ziigwan Powwow

March 12, 2016

Chiminising Community Center

CANDIDATE FORUMS

Candidate Forums will be held in March in each district. Please watch for upcoming candidate forum notification via the Band's website and Facebook. A notice will also be shared in the March edition of the *Inaajimowin*.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Band Assembly meeting times and dates subject to change.	1 Sweat: Women DI Minobimaadziwin Hotel Tabata Workout EVERY MONDAY 6–7 p.m. Chiminising Community Center Pipe and Dish Ceremony Nay Ah Shing High School	2 Moccasin Game Teaching 6 p.m. DI Minobimaadziwin Hotel Language Table 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center Band Assembly Meeting Minisinaakwaang WIC Clinic 9 a.m.–12 p.m. 1–4 p.m. Mille Lacs	3 Women’s Recovery Group SNAP 1 p.m. DI Minobimaadziwin Hotel Tabata Workout EVERY WEDNESDAY 6–7 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	4 Men of Tradition 6:30 p.m. DI Minobimaadziwin Hotel Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Chi Minising WIC Clinic 10 a.m.–12 p.m. 1–3 p.m. East Lake ALU	5 Pipe Ceremony/Talking SNAP 10:30 a.m. DI Minobimaadziwin Hotel	6 Beading Class 4 p.m. Minobimaadziwin Hotel Wellbriety Meeting 6:30 p.m. Minobimaadziwin Hotel Metro Snowmobile Safety Class 9 a.m. Joe Nayquonabe’s Drum
	7	8	9 Language Table 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Black Bear Casino in Cloquet, MN WIC Clinic 9 a.m.–12 p.m. 1–4 p.m. Mille Lacs	10 DI Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center Health Fair 12–4 p.m. Wewinabi Early Ed Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Black Bear Casino in Cloquet, MN WIC Clinic 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. 1–3:30 p.m. The Lodge-HK	11 Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Eddy’s Resort	12 Valentine’s Party 6–9 p.m. Minneapolis American Indian Center DI Valentine’s Party 5:30–8 p.m. DI Community Center
14	15 Government Offices Closed – Chief’s Day	16 Language Table 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Nayahshing Band Assembly Chambers Pipe Ceremony Nay Ah Shing High School WIC Clinic Mille Lacs	17 DIII Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Construct Tomorrow 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Event Center Breathe Free Support Group 12–1 p.m. MLB Public Health Building	18 Band Assembly Meeting 10 a.m. Nayahshing Band Assembly Chambers	19	20
21	22 PAC – Parent Meeting Nay Ah Shing High School Sobriety Feast 5 p.m. East Lake Community Center	23 Language Table 6:30 p.m. DI Community Center Healthy Heart Class 12–1 p.m. DI Community Center Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. DI Community Center Band Assembly Meeting WIC Clinic Mille Lacs	24 DIIa Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. High School Conferences Nay Ah Shing High School WIC Clinic 10 a.m.–12 p.m. 1–3 p.m. Aazhoomog	25 DII Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Urban Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Band Assembly Meeting	26	27
28 Moccasin Workshop See pg.14 “The Jingle Dress Tradition” See pg.16	29	Want your event here? Email myles.gorham@redcircleagency.com or call 612-465-0653. Visit millelacsband.com/calendar for additional Mille Lacs Band events				

Child Support Enforcement Update

Updated addresses and phone numbers

The Child Support office would like to remind all Child Support clients the importance of updating your address and phone numbers with our office. At any given time we could possibly need to contact our clients regarding payments, updates or concerns with their case. When a client updates OMB or Enrollments with a new address we do not get that update so please update the Child Support office as well.

The Child Support office would like any Custodial Parents (CP's) and Non-Custodial Parents (NCP's) whom would like an in depth account statement from 2015 to contact our office requesting one to be mailed to them or picked up at our office.

If you have any questions or concerns with your case, please contact your Case Manager below:

- Shannon Nayquonabe, District 1 Case Manager, 320-532-7453
- Tammy Smith, District II, II-A, III and Urban Case Manager, 320-532-7752

The Child Support office will be closed all day on February 15, 2016 for Chief's Day.

If you have any questions or concerns contact our office directly at 320-532-7755.

“The Jingle Dress Tradition”

Sunday, February 28

7:00 pm

The Minnesota Channel (tptMN)

This program was created by TPT with the MLBO Historic Preservation Office to introduce the story of the Jingle Dress, and its musical and dance traditions, to all Minnesotans. Dancers, drummers, singers and dressmakers from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe worked with elder Larry “Amik” Smallwood and the producer, Rick Anderson, to capture the spirit, meaning, significance and history of the Jingle Dress Dance.

In addition to this special premiere presentation, TPT will also be airing on that same evening 3 other programs that celebrate the Ojibwe peoples and cultures of Minnesota. All four of these productions were created in partnerships between TPT and Native bands or filmmakers.

Please check local listings for “The Minnesota Channel.”

Sobriety Powwow – A Fun New Tradition

By Bradley Harrington Writer/Photographer

The drums were loud, the dancers were smooth, and the atmosphere radiated fun — sober fun. Seventy-eight dancers, four drum groups and 285 spectators showed up at the New Year's Eve Sobriety Powwow in District I.

Joe Nayquonabe Sr. spoke for the food to begin the feast before Host Drum “Ain Dah Yung,” from Minneapolis, welcomed in the dancers at the 7 p.m. Grand Entry, which was right on time.

Everyone was on their feet as the Eagle Staff and Flags were danced into the arena.

With quick wit, deep knowledge and Indian humor, Herb Sam called forth the activities of the evening as the MC with his Arena Director, Duck White.

Among the royalty in attendance were Sierra Edwards, Mille Lacs Band Senior Princess, Mandaamin Grapp, Mille Lacs Junior Princess, Ameliyah Joseph, Wewinabi Tiny Tot Princess, and Jathan Joseph, Wewinabi Headstart Brave.

As Naamijig (the Dancers) showed off their moves and Negamojig (the Singers) provided the beat, the goodness and hope flowed from Maawadishiwejig (the visitors). Spot Dances, a Potato Dance, Team Dances and Drawings were a part of the festivities all evening.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a local non-profit, provided concessions and “Walking Tacos.” A Round Dance ended the night as the countdown took place with a release of balloons from the ceiling. They partied the night away with funds distributed to Behavioral Health from the Drink Tax Resolution.

Mille Lacs Band Behavioral Health and the District I Legislative Office have been sponsoring this event since 2007 to provide a place to celebrate the coming of a New Year in a sober environment.

The Sobriety Powwow Committee consisted of Sandy Blake, Crystal Weckert, Billie Jo Sarcia, Chandelle Boyd, Semira Kimpson, Megan Ballinger and Kim Sam.

“This is my second year working the powwow,” said Chandelle Boyd. “I used to be a party animal at the bars for New Year's! I'm done with that mess now and enjoyed helping with a sober, safe community event instead.”

Billie Jo exclaimed, “I loved how many youth were there and dancing. It was so fun to see everyone laugh at the balloon drop and potato dance.”

They expect to see more drummers, dancers and visitors next year since the numbers have been growing every year.

This developing tradition offers the opportunity for those struggling with addiction to have a place to celebrate sobriety during a time where there would have been chemical usage.

Some participants had been sober for 30 days, others for 30-plus years; some came from down the road, others from Aazhoomog, Minisinaakwaang or Grand Portage.

Although their stories differed, they all came together to celebrate an ancient principle and a new tradition of sobriety.



The Sobriety Powwow committee consisted of (back) Semira Kimpson, Billie Jo Sarcia, Kim Sam, Crystal Weckert, Chandelle Boyd, (front) Sandi Blake and Megan Ballinger. For more photos, see millelacsband.com. At the bottom left of the home page, search for “sobriety powwow.”

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Heating, Water, and Maintenance Problems?

During normal business hours: tenants in Band rentals and Elders living within the service area should call 800-709-6445, ext. 7433, for work orders. **After business hours:** tenants with maintenance emergencies should call 866-822-8538 and press 1, 2, or 3 for their respective district.

Free Hearing Evaluations

Evaluations take place on the second Friday of each month at Ne-la-Shing Clinic. Call 320-532-4163 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome — we will do our best to serve you. Ask us about the \$1,000 in hearing aid benefits you can receive from the Circle of Health.

Hearmore Hearing has offices in Saint Paul and Osseo. To schedule an appointment Monday through Friday, call the Saint Paul office at 651-771-4019 or the Osseo office at 763-391-7433.