

OJIBWE INAAJIMOWIN

THE
STORY
AS IT'S
TOLD

DECEMBER 2013 | VOLUME 15 | NUMBER 12

YESTERDAY'S TEACHINGS FOR TODAY'S GENERATION

PAGE 4



EXHIBIT ON MLB
HISTORY TAKES
TO THE ROAD

FINDING
PEACEFUL
RESOLUTIONS

LANGUAGE
RECOVERY AT
MILLE LACS

WHAT THE NEW
HEALTH CARE
LAW MEANS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELANIE
BENJAMIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



When a person first serves as an elected official for a tribal government, they quickly realize there are very few opportunities to catch one's breath. Each month is busy, but some months it seems the work is higher profile than others. November was one of those months.

It was a month of multiple meetings on critical policy matters important to the Band, including meetings of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and several other organizations. I met in person with Minnesota congressional representatives and both Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Al Franken, in addition to Band Member meetings and a Cabinet meeting.

It can feel overwhelming to communicate to Band Members all the work that we do as elected tribal leaders, and especially the broad scope of work. I decided to focus my column this month on three meetings which represent that scope from international to national to local/regional issues.

On November 7, I received an unexpected phone call inviting me to join eleven other elected tribal leaders for a

meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House on November 12th, a day before the Tribal Nations Conference of U.S. tribal leaders. The opportunity to have time to speak to the President of the United States about the concerns of the Mille Lacs Band on a one-on-one basis was, quite frankly, astounding to me, especially at the last minute. Of course I didn't hesitate for even a second and assured the person on the other end of the phone that I would definitely be there.

I was told that the focus of the meeting and the focus of our comments should be on job creation and economic development, and that each tribal leader would have about 1-2 minutes to say something to President Obama in this small meeting. If you have just 1-2 minutes to say anything you want to the leader of the free world, what do you say?

I rearranged my schedule and spent time strategizing over the next three days about how to best use my minute or two of time speaking to the President of the United States.

With regard to economic development, the issue I decided to discuss with President Obama was not a hard one. In de-

veloping our tribal economy over the last 15 years, the single biggest barrier for the Band has been refusal by Mille Lacs County and the State of Minnesota to recognize our Reservation boundary. Projects that have been held up due to the county's insistence that our reservation no longer exists include the waste water treatment plant, the Lake Ogechie wild rice project and new housing projects. The Mille Lacs County Attorney has actually gone so far as to instruct county staff to strike the word "reservation" from all county records!

With that in mind, I spent my time telling President Obama that although the federal government says our Reservation exists, local officials have still managed to stop or delay Band projects and hamper economic growth, all because of their frustration over our Treaty hunting and fishing rights case. I discussed the racist attitudes of some that have motivated local officials to try to restrict the Band's ability to develop our reservation economy, create jobs, and provide services to Band Members. I asked for federal support in requiring that the State of Minnesota follow federal law. We are a

government, we have a Reservation, and we have the legal right to create jobs and pursue economic development on our own reservation!

President Obama listened carefully. I left this meeting knowing that he understands how important this issue is to the Band. Other officials in attendance at this meeting who heard me speak about this matter include Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Department of the Interior; Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President; Gene Sperling, Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Director of the National Economic Council; and Cecelia Munoz, Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council.

The next day, I attended the White House Tribal Nations Conference, where we heard from seven Cabinet Secretaries. Chairwoman Karen Diver, of the Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa, had the honor of introducing President Obama, which those of us from Minnesota tribes were very proud about. President Obama talked about economic development and job creation, and shared his plans to travel to Indian country over the next year. We spent the afternoon in breakout sessions. All in all, this was a wonderful opportunity to talk about issues important to Indian tribes. But the small group meeting the day before was one I won't ever forget.

Occasionally, we tribal leaders find ourselves involved not just in local and nation-



Tami Heilemann Department of Interior Photographer

At the White House Tribal Nations Conference, President Obama talked about economic development and job creation, and shared his plans to travel to Indian country over the next year.

al issues but in international matters as well. On this point, another important meeting took place in late October, when I was invited to represent the Band at a United Nations meeting of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (Third Committee) of the sixty-eighth session of the U.N. General Assembly. The meeting took place in New York and the focus was on getting support for the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 2007.

The Declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous people, as well as our rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues. It also "emphasizes the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions, prohibits discrimination against indigenous people, "and it "promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them and their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development."

We heard a report and discussion about the reasons for the Declaration and what needs to happen to make the world recognize the rights of indigenous people. A key issue involved greater understanding of the rights of indigenous peoples to land and resources, focusing on protection of natural resources in the context of mineral extraction. This international issue applies to the Band and other tribes, which are concerned about the threat to wild rice by copper sulfites that could damage wild rice beds if new mining activity is approved in Minnesota. It was humbling to be with other Native leaders from around

the world who have many issues in common with those we battle every day.

Band Members interested in learning more about the Declaration and the work of the United Nations can visit www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf for more information.

The third meeting I want to discuss was about a critical issue that impacts nearly every Mille Lacs Band family. On November 18, I attended the State and Tribal Criminal Justice Learning and Listening Session at Fond du Lac.

This was a meeting facilitated by Vernon LaPlante, Director of Indian Policy at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. In addition to tribal representatives, this meeting included officials from the Departments of Corrections, Public Safety, and Human Rights.

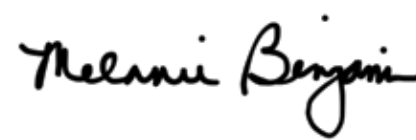
Much of our discussion was about the needs of our people who are incarcerated, many of whom never receive visitors, I was sad to learn. It is heartbreaking that so many of these Band members are very young people. Of the entire population of incarcerated people in Minnesota, Indian men are two years younger than average, and Indian women are four years younger than the average population. Indian men and women who are incarcerated have much higher rates of substance abuse than the rest of the population.

Both Lee Staples and Joe Nayquonabe Sr. were in attendance as well, and I focused my comments on how we need to turn to our spiritual leaders for answers to these issues. We also discussed the process of rehabilitation, which should be

heavily reliant upon our traditions and ceremonies. Unfortunately, there are restrictions on the use of asema in corrections facilities and many staff are unaware of its importance to the healing process. This was a good meeting that expanded the education of state employees, and an important dialogue was opened. We also discussed the importance of connecting Native people to support services when they are released from prison. Felony convictions make it difficult to obtain employment, find homes, or even vote.

One issue I've been thinking about, which I encourage Band Members to think about as well, is how do we find volunteers to visit our incarcerated Band Members? We need to address this issue as a community so we can begin preparing the community and families for when our Band Members return home and minimize the chances of the revolving-door syndrome, where the same people end up back in prison. I invite Band Members interested in this topic to contact my office if you would like to participate in working toward solutions.

In closing, November was a busy month, but every month is busy! Not a day goes by when I don't think about how grateful and humbled I am by this opportunity to represent the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians. Chi Mii-gwetch for this opportunity to serve you.



Presidential Proclamation Creates National Native American History Month

In an official announcement this fall, President Barack Obama proclaimed November 2013 as National Native American Heritage Month.

"My Administration remains committed to self-determination, the right of tribal governments to build and strengthen their own communities," the October 31st proclamation reads. "Each year I host the White House Tribal Nations Conference, and our work together has translated into action."

In his remarks, Obama recognized the complicated past the federal government has with Native Americans: "As we observe this month, we must not ignore the painful history Native Americans have endured — a history of violence, marginalization, broken promises, and upended justice."

Obama outlined measures that his administration has taken in order to improve the government's relationship with tribal communities, including emergency assistance for natural disasters and the establishment of the White House Tribal Council on Native American Affairs.

"As we observe Native American Heritage Month, we must build on this work," the proclamation concludes. "Let us shape a future worthy of a bright new generation, and together, let us ensure this country's promise is fully realized for every Native American."

President Obama's official proclamation is reprinted here in full.

For Immediate Release
October 31, 2013

Presidential Proclamation -- National Native American Heritage Month, 2013

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, 2013

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

From Alaskan mountain peaks to the Argentinian pampas to the rocky shores of Newfoundland, Native Americans were the first to carve out cities, domesticate crops, and establish great civilizations. When the Framers gathered to write the United States Constitution, they drew inspiration from the Iroquois Confederacy, and in the centuries since, American Indians and Alaska Natives from hundreds of tribes have shaped our national life. During Native American Heritage Month, we honor their vibrant cultures and strengthen the government-to-government relationship between the United States and each tribal nation.

As we observe this month, we must not ignore the painful history Native Americans have endured -- a history of violence, marginalization, broken promises, and upended justice. There was a time when native languages and religions were banned as part of a forced assimilation policy that attacked the political, social, and cultural identities of Native Americans in the United States. Through generations of struggle, American Indians and Alaska Natives held fast to their traditions, and eventually the United States Government repudiated its destructive policies and began to turn the page on a troubled past.

My Administration remains committed to self-determination, the right of tribal governments to build and strengthen their own communities. Each year I host the White House Tribal Nations Conference, and our work together has translated into action. We have resolved longstanding legal disputes, prioritized placing land into trust on behalf of tribes, stepped up support for Tribal Colleges and Universities, made tribal health care more accessible, and streamlined leasing regulations to put more power in tribal hands. Earlier this year, an amendment to the Stafford Act gave tribes the option to directly request Federal emergency assistance when natural disasters strike their homelands. In March, I signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, which recognizes tribal courts' power to convict and sentence certain perpetrators of domestic violence, regardless of whether they are Indian or non-Indian. And this June, I moved to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationships by establishing the White House Tribal Council on Native American Affairs. The Council is responsible for promoting and sustaining prosperous and resilient Native American communities.

As we observe Native American Heritage Month, we must build on this work. Let us shape a future worthy of a bright new generation, and together, let us ensure this country's promise is fully realized for every Native American.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2013 as National Native American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate November 29, 2013, as Native American Heritage Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-eighth.

BARACK OBAMA



Yesterday's Teachings for Today's Generation

Deborah Locke Staff Writer Tiffany Bolk Photographer

“Our kids don’t know the stories... but if they know the stories, they know they belong some place.”

— Mary Moose

In early 2000, Mille Lacs Band Elder Leonard Moose and his wife Mary started writing books for children to explain the universe.

As teachers of traditional Ojibwe culture and language, they needed materials to work with.

Leonard took notes as Mary recounted stories she heard in her childhood from her Canada Ojibwa Elders. Mary then typed the stories from Leonard’s notes, and he illustrated them with drawings.

Two of those books — *Child of the Evening Star* and *Where the First People Came From* — were published by the Mille Lacs Band and distributed at this year’s State of the Band Address.

A stack of three-ring binders contains more of the books, and Mary Moose is anxious to see them published as soon as possible. The collection is the equivalent of a Bible, except its stories are for the Ojibwe people.

“Our kids don’t know the stories, they don’t know about God,” Mary said. “When kids get lost they join gangs and do

not know who they are. But if they know the stories, they know they belong some place.”

The couple still work together in a large room at their home outside Hinckley. The walls are lined with shelves of materials like art supplies and large jars of beads. The binders with illustrated stories are piled neatly together.

Leonard had no formal training in art and merely watched older kids draw while he was a boarding school student at Pipestone and Flandreau. “I picked it up,” he said.

Mary remembered the Canada Elders who came to visit the band starting in the fall at James Bay, staying until spring. The region was isolated and reachable only by plane or boat. Mary has not revisited the place of her childhood for fear she would find it impossible to return to her newer life in Minnesota.

“I’m afraid neither of us would come back,” piped up Leonard with a laugh.

“Tell them we are making these books to get the language back,” he said. “We are getting old and will leave behind something for them to use. We did our part.”

Winter Is Coming and I'm Not Ready for It

Arne Vainio, M.D. Family Practice Physician Stephan Høglund Photographer



Winter is coming and I'm not ready for it. I don't know how the summer went so fast, but I've got a huge pile of firewood to cut and I have some trees to clear behind the house to make room for my old trucks. My dad collected old trucks and my Finnish grandfather always had old trucks behind the barn. My favorite uncle Punkin always had at least one old truck.

The weather has been steady rain as I try to work outside and it limits what I can do. I rarely have time after work and our weekends have been full. Darkness comes earlier every day. Now any time I can get is spent in a blind panic trying to get all the wood cut and trees cleared. I have several huge brush piles along the edge of the clearing I've been making and I try to keep them in as small a space as possible. I have a Bobcat skidsteer that I use to dig out stumps and rocks, but much of the work still needs to be done by hand. The Bobcat has been getting stuck in the mud constantly.

I take down the bigger trees by using chains to pull them in the direction I want them to go and I hook a four ton winch to the chains. Then I start digging around the base of the tree with the Bobcat and I cut through the roots and the rocks until the tree goes over. As the tree falls, it pulls the stump with it. My grandfather cleared land with a team of horses and I think I can clear more land in a day than his family could in a week.

This is solitary work and between running the chainsaw and the Bobcat, it's just me and the outdoors as I work. I cut the trees into 16 inch lengths for our wood stove and I stack them out of the way until I can move them to the woodpile. I stacked wood for my grandmother and for one of her friends whose husband was dying from Parkinson's disease when I was 12 years old.

I take very few breaks when I work and I took off my hearing protectors and sat by the brush pile for a few minutes. I heard a squeaking sound and I followed it. It was a star-nosed mole in the area that I'd cleared and he was working his way to the edge of the forest. I remembered when I was about 10 years old and there was a star-nosed mole running across the top of the snow. My mother was constantly reading and all of us were readers. Our entire family ran out of the house and we followed the mole as he was working his way across the

rough snow. I remembered this as a good day toward the end of a hard winter in the year we ran out of firewood. My brothers and I had go into the woods after school to look for trees that were dry so we could cut them up and bring them into the house.

I went back and two chickadees flew into a tree just next to the brush pile and they were chirping excitedly. My mother used to tie sections of hay bales to trees as places for the chickadees to shelter in the coldest winters and she always fed chickadees.

I feed chickadees and I talk to them in Ojibwe when I feed them and I remind them my mother fed their mothers. Last winter I was going to burn a brush pile and I went out in the evening after dark to start the fire. I had a flashlight and I shined it into the brush pile and deep inside I saw a chickadee.

Then another. And another. I kept shining the light and I realized the entire brush pile was full of chickadees sheltering from the cold. I promised the chickadees next to the brush pile I was building that I would build it carefully and change the direction of it so the wind wouldn't fill it full of snow. They flew away and didn't come back. They just wanted to make sure I remembered and now they had more important things to do.

I looked up and an eagle slowly drifted right above me and continued north.

The brightest colors of fall were gone, the reds and oranges of the maple trees had passed. Only the poplar trees still had leaves and these are not the colors people travel to see. These are small, round and singularly drab yellow leaves. These are common leaves and no one looks to them for beauty.

As I was watching the eagle drift slowly by, the leaves caught my attention. They were fluttering and I could hear them rattling against each other. In the summer these leaves are bright green and they shimmer as the wind moves them. They were still moving like that, but now they were dry and stiff in their movements. There was a break in the clouds and the dry yellow leaves clattered against each other under the backdrop of the cold, bright blue sky.

I was reminded of my Ojibwe grandfather. He moved in with my mother after my grandmother died of cirrhosis and that was the same time I decided to quit the best job I ever had as a paramedic and a professional firefighter and go to medical school. I could no longer make the payments on my mother's house and my grandfather moving in solved that prob-

lem. Every day he would walk to the mailbox to see if the land settlement check he was promised was in the mail. He made that walk every day for years and his plan was to pay off his car, pay off my mother's house and maybe get her a better car.

When the check finally showed up, it was for five dollars and sixty-one cents. I really think that was the day my grandfather started to die. His walk was slower and he no longer had a reason to walk to the mailbox. He continued to dwindle and was finally put into a nursing home. I would visit him on weekends when I was in medical school and he told me stories of when he was younger. He told me when he was 16, his father died in the Agwajjii Tuberculosis Sanitarium. He said his father came to him that night dressed in a light blue shirt and light blue pants and stood at the foot of his bed and asked him to come with him.

"I was afraid and I didn't talk to him. I just shook my head, no. My younger brother died that night."

The poplar leaves reminded me of this. As a physician, I have opportunities my mother and my grandparents never had. I sometimes think of myself as one of the brighter colored leaves.

But I'm not. I collect old trucks because my father did and because my uncle did and because my grandfather did. The chickadees came to me because my mother took care of their ancestors and they wanted me to keep that promise to them.

I will. I promise.

Do the leaves remember those from last year?

In the heat of summer, the bright green shimmers of forever. Then the fall.

The bitter cold.

They show their true colors, these elders.

They remind us of the passage into the next life.

The commonest of them persist

And they speak to me.

They tell me I am one of them.

Arne Vainio, MD (Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Member) is a family practice physician on the Fond du Lac Ojibwe reservation in northern Minnesota. He has been writing health articles for News From Indian Country, and other tribal and non-tribal newspapers, for over three years.

Exhibit on MLB History and Impact Takes to the Road

Deborah Locke Staff Writer

An exhibit of five interconnected banners that showcase the Mille Lacs Band history and people premiered in November at the Brainerd Public Library. The exhibit will visit 13 more public libraries within the East Central Regional Library system before its final showing at the North Branch Public Library in June 2014.

The purpose of the banners is educational: the short lessons on government structure, economic development, history and more give non-Indian library users a quick introduction to the Band. The banners, at seven feet tall and nearly three feet across, also explain the sovereign government structure of the Band, and the economic benefits it brings to East Central Minnesota.

"We are excited to have another way to share the Band's history and culture with our neighbors," said Jamie Edwards, Mille Lacs Band Director of Government Affairs. "While the Band is an important regional employer and community partner, many of our neighbors still don't know that much about us. This exhibit seeks to change that."

The project got its start in the spring of 2013 when MLB staff sought ways to increase understanding of the Band among its non-Indian neighbors. A poll conducted in 2012 showed that respondents knew very little about the Mille Lacs Band. The banners are a way to gently teach the history and culture of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe.

After the exhibit completes its tour of East Central Minnesota libraries, plans are to move it into public schools next fall.



The exhibit will visit 14 public libraries within the East Central Regional Library system before its final showing in June 2014.

Tips to Prepare for Winter Weather

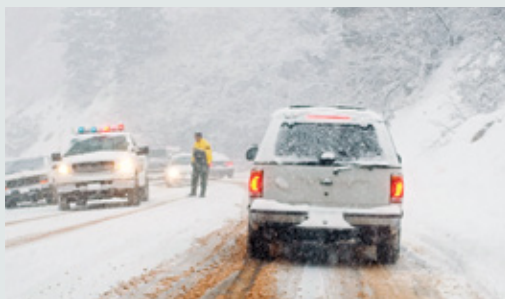
Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer

Winter in Minnesota can bring piles of snow in April or a mere few inches in the middle of the season. This year the Farmers' Almanac predicts it will be a very cold and very snowy winter. Some take stock in that forecast, while others call it "comic-book" science.

Wherever you fall on the spectrum there's no doubt you will have to prepare for the snowstorms, icy roads and bitter cold that are sure to come. Here are a few tips to help you get ready.

Keep an emergency supply kit in your home and car. The kit should include a three-day supply of food and water, warm clothing and blankets, a battery-powered radio and flashlights. You should also have shovels, along with extra batteries for the radio and flashlights.

Become familiar with the terms that identify a winter storm hazard. Freezing rain can create a slick coating of ice on roads and walkways. Sleet



is rain that turns into ice pellets before it reaches the ground. That can cause roads to freeze and become slippery.

A "winter weather advisory" means it will be cold and that snow and ice are expected. A "winter weather watch" means severe weather such as ice or heavy snow are anticipated. A "winter storm warning" indicates that a wintry mix of weather is developing and will hit the area soon.

It's important to develop and rehearse a communications plan with your family in case you're not together when severe weather hits. Decide how you will contact one another and how you will reconnect when it's safe to do so.

For more detailed information and examples of how to create a preparedness plan visit <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/Pages/winter-weather.aspx>

Monte Fronk, the Band's Emergency Management Coordinator, contributed to this article.

Walking Strong Program

A great start to a new year! Let's improve our posture, balance, flexibility, strength, agility and stamina. Walking Strong is an exercise program for adults and elders to encourage and enable all to begin a healthy and safe lifestyle. The class will be held on Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 a.m. beginning Jan. 7, 2014, in the D1 community center. Everyone is invited to participate. The program will count toward the employee wellness and Wisdom Steps programs. Come and join, it will be a fun time!

Band Member is Passionate About Preserving Ojibwe

Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer

Anyone who knows Melissa "Baabitaw" Boyd knows she is passionate about both learning and teaching Ojibwe. It is, she says, what she was born to do.

"When you're doing your purpose you feel fulfilled all the time," said Melissa, who is beginning work on her teacher certification. "Life works the way it's supposed to."

Her passion and her life's work intersect at the Wewinabi Early Education Center where she is the lead teacher in the Ojibwe language immersion classroom. She also teaches two classes at the school for parents who want to learn the language.

Beginning in January, Melissa will take the next step in sharing what she is learning and teaching by writing a monthly column for the Band's paper, the *Ojibwe Inaajimowin*.

As anyone who has tried to learn a new language knows, it can be a struggle to make it a part of their lives. Melissa hopes the column will be a first step.

"It's important that the people who are learning the language and want to practice have something they can read in Ojibwe," said Melissa, adding that the column won't be translated into English because then the language loses its true meaning.

"When the Hawaiian people wanted to revive their language they played language clips on the radio and then they created Hawaiian television," said Melissa. "We could do that here but we have to have more language exposure so people could learn it."

"I got this idea to have language in our paper from the Hawaiians," she said. We as the MLB of Ojibwe should represent ourselves in the language."

To help her own growth and ability, Melissa participates in a few language tables each week that also include first speaker language participation. She also seeks growth opportunities at Waadookodaading, an Ojibwe language immersion charter school in Hayward, Wisc.



Beginning in January, Melissa will take the next step in sharing what she is learning and teaching by writing a monthly column for the Band's paper, the *Ojibwe Inaajimowin*.

"Being there helps me create a partnership and get best practices because they know their stuff," she said. "I'm trying to know what they know."

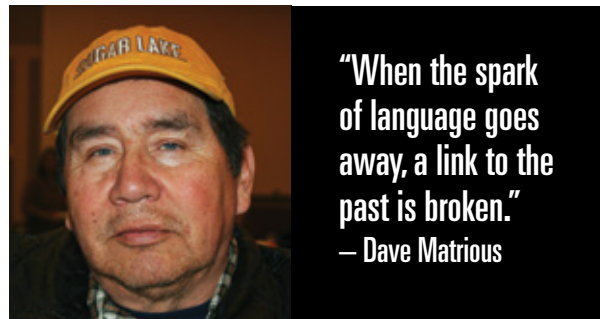
In her own home the walls are covered with huge sheets of paper that have Ojibwe words, phrases and conjugations — modifications of the verbs — on them. Melissa says the posters help her learn and practice what she is teaching. Though, she admits, it's not easy "making your house language friendly."

"It's a complex task, especially when we are taking care of our babies and our lives. But we have to do it, because when people hear us speak Ojibwe with ease, it helps inspire," said Melissa, referring to the first speakers and others who are preserving the native tongue of the Anishinabe.

"We want to be better examples for the next generation of people," she said. "This is all I know how to do, and it's what I'm supposed to do. I'm fulfilled."

Language Recovery at Mille Lacs Band

Deborah Locke Staff Writer



A concern for Natives throughout Minnesota and the U.S. is the loss of ancestral language. To reverse the trend, free informal classes that instruct Mille Lacs Band members in the Ojibwe language began this fall in all three Districts. Classes will continue as long as people keep attending them.

Ojibwe language instructors are John P. Benjamin in District I, Vince Merrill in District II, and Dave Matrious in District III.

It's important to retain and use the Ojibwe language because our ancestors told us to do that, said Dave Matrious. He added that the best way to learn Ojibwe is through hearing and repeating sounds, rather than using only a textbook, because the language was always an oral language.

The classes are tailored to different age groups, from teens with little background in the language to Elders who recall hearing it spoken by their parents. He uses a variety of teaching tools.

It's sad to have ancestors that you can't talk with because you don't know their language, which is also your language, Dave said.

On Wednesdays he takes his community language instruction to the Mille Lacs Teen Center, where the kids hear Ojibwe and stories.

Dave asks the young people to imagine that they themselves are suddenly Elders who have grandchildren. As an Elder, what would you want to tell your grandchild? The students have warmed up to the language and culture class because Dave does his best to challenge them each week to "think outside of the box."

At a Tuesday night class in Hinckley, five adult students sounded out words in the Ojibwe language.

Laughter accompanied the words and phrases as the women practiced sounds. "Aneen," they said, greeting each other with a "hello." From a list of 159 phrases they practiced how to say "sit down" (na ma da bin), "at the store" (adah way wig a mi gong), and "my home" (ayn dah yahn). With each word practiced, Dave said, the language is revitalized and recovered.

A class also takes place on Thursdays at Aazhoomog.

"This little spark has power and hope," Dave said. "When the spark of language goes away, a link to the past is broken."

To participate in the language program, call 320-384-6236.

Finding Peaceful Resolutions Through Culture

Toya Stewart Downey Staff Writer

For more than three decades Richard “Geegwegigaboo” Morrison has worked to help others see their way through challenging times using a practice known as mediation. But what makes Richard’s work more relevant to many, including the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, is that Richard, a peacemaker, relies on the culture and traditions of the Anishinabe.

“I use the pipe, tobacco, smudging, sweat lodges, sharing circles and the language to help people work through their issues,” said Richard, who began working as a peacemaker for the Band in August.

“Using the language releases tensions and stress and helps people release their feelings because it’s a spiritual language,” he explained. “I break down the Ojibwe language and share with them what it really means.”

Richard says he was “spirit trained by the elders of my community of Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation Ontario, Canada.” He is also a Mide-win.

The peacemaker or Gda Dwendaaganik helps mediate with families, either by their own request or as ordered by the Tribal Court. In his role, Richard will work to resolve the pain and hostility that can develop between families who are struggling with legal issues such as unpaid child support or visitation rights with children. The peacemaker’s role will focus primarily on family matters, harassment issues and civil complaints.

Gilda Burr, an administrator for the Tribal Courts, said it became apparent that the courts needed a person like Richard to help families and community members navigate the system in a peaceful way. The court looked at other means of restorative justice and liked the Peacemaking concept.

“Judge Osburn wanted people to come together to be a part

of the resolution, rather than make all the decision based on law,” Gilda said.

Families involved with the Tribal Court can request to work with the peacemaker before going through the legal processes, Gilda said.

“People can walk away with better feelings about the outcome and it helps heal the community,” said Gilda, who wrote a grant to fund the peacemaker position.

In November Richard held two training sessions on peacemaking. The three-hour trainings focused on Ojibwe concepts and teachings, such as the seven gifts, to help people resolve life’s circumstances. The end result is to bring about respect, healing and peace.

The seven gifts or principles are truth, kindness, courage, wisdom, respect, love and being humble.

“Everything I do is based on the culture. I talk about the teaching of the Mede wewin, how to use their own heartbeat and how to be accountable for their actions,” he said. “The universe of our heart is how we learn to live life and to walk the walk.

“For nine months we all heard our heartbeats and no matter what happened since we all have our heartbeats and that can center us,” he added. “Every one of us has something in common and that is our heartbeat.”

Before coming to work for the Band, Richard worked with inmates who had left the prison system and were reentering society. He has worked with inmates and former inmates for over 30 years in both Minnesota and Canada.

He still travels to St. Cloud and Moose Lake to work with sex offenders on weekends and volunteers in the evenings to

“Every one of us has something in common and that is our heartbeat.”

– Richard Morrison



For more than a decade, Richard “Geegwegigaboo” Morrison has worked to help others see their way through challenging times using a practice known as mediation.

work with families who can’t make it to see him during normal business hours.

Richard works in each of the Band’s Districts and is currently building a sweat lodge at the Immersion Grounds, with assistance from the Immersion Grounds staff. His office is located within the Family Services Department.

Richard can be reached through the Tribal Courts or by calling him at 320-630-1132.

Ten Ways to Enjoy Meals on Special Days

IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention

Before you go to a holiday meal or feast day, make a plan to stay on a healthy eating track. Choose the ways you can stay on track.



If you eat too much, don’t feel bad. You have not failed because of one meal.

- 1. Earlier in the day, eat breakfast or healthy snacks.** Try not to delay eating so you can eat more at the feast. If you skip meals, it may be harder to manage your blood sugar. It will make you hungry. You will be more likely to overeat at the special meal.
- 2. At the special gathering, limit before-meal chips and crackers.** Try putting a small portion on a small plate or napkin and eat only that. Avoid creamy dips and cheese. Choose salsa as a dip if it is served.
- 3. Limit the number of starchy foods (potatoes, macaroni, bread) you choose.** Have a serving of just your favorite one. Or eat 1/2 slice bread and a few tablespoons of other starches.
- 4. Choose vegetables that are raw, grilled or steamed.** Avoid vegetables in cream sauce, gravy, butter or cheese sauce.
- 5. Drink calorie-free drinks like water, unsweetened tea, seltzer or diet sodas.** Avoid regular sodas and juice.
- 6. Avoid drinks with alcohol or limit them.**
- 7. If you choose to eat dessert, have a small piece.** Ask for a half of a piece of cake or pie. Try not to eat the frosting on cake. Don’t add whipped cream.
- 8. After the meal, take a walk with family members.** Walking will lower your blood sugar level. You will have more energy.
- 9. If you eat too much, don’t feel bad.** You have not failed because of one meal. Think about the days you did not overeat.
- 10. Plan to get back on track the next day.** Make a plan for what you will eat for breakfast — maybe a boiled egg and piece of whole wheat toast with non-fat milk (or soy milk). You are back on track!

2013 Fall Feast

Sarah C. Barten Corporate Commission
Public Relations Specialist

On Thursday, November 21, Mille Lacs Band members came together for the 14th annual Fall Feast. Hosted by the Corporate Commission, the dinner took place at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs Events & Convention Center. This year's feast was all about celebrating the successes over the past year, the support the Mille Lacs Band community has shown, and recognizing those individuals who worked hard for the Corporate Commission and the Mille Lacs Band each and every day. Commissioner Joe Nayquonabe thanked the elected officials, board members, his advisory committee and the Corporate Commission staff. He also revealed two recognition art pieces, that will hang in the halls of the Corporate Commission. Nayquonabe said this collection of framed art will only continue to grow as the Corporate Commission makes smart investments for the Mille Lacs Band. Attendees also enjoyed great food, awesome door prizes, and a comedy set by Ryan McMahon.



Sweetgrass Media and the purchase of the Hotels in St. Paul were among the biggest successes of the past year for the Corporate Commission. These two recognition pieces will hang in the halls of the Corporate Commission.



Comedian Ryan McMahon performs on stage.



Assistant Commissioner of Administration Michele Palomaki visits with Band members.

“There is a remarkable amount of opportunity that lies ahead for the Mille Lacs Band. On behalf of all of us who work for the Corporate Commission and its businesses, we are committed to excellence and focusing on what counts to deliver the best value for the Mille Lacs Band. Thank you — Mille Lacs Band members — for your continued support.”

— Joe Nayquonabe



This year, the Corporate Commission conducted a coloring contest for kids ages 1 – 10. Congratulations to Kevin Harrington and Mariyah Pawaush! They each won a movie ticket a week for a year to the Grand Makwa Cinema!

Band Launches New Website

Dear Band Members,
As you may have noticed, the official website for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe — www.millelacsband.com — has undergone a redesign recently. The result is a more appealing, user-friendly interface that should greatly enhance the online experience for everyone.

The website's design now allows for easier distribution of news and information that is important to Band members. For example, the site's new calendar displays upcoming events by district. The district pages have also been revamped and now feature stories from the monthly Inaajimowin newsletter.

Sharing content from the new website — through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube — is also easier, thanks to new social media icons found throughout the site. On the homepage, the Band's social media

profiles are now only a click away. The site's responsive design enables easy viewing on a variety of mobile devices, including tablets and smart phones.

The new website will also serve as a valuable resource for visitors looking for information on the Mille Lacs Band. The site has been optimized for search engines, making it simple to find stories and important Band department contacts. The easy-to-complete form in the Contact Us section ensures that interested parties are able to reach the correct Band employees.

These improvements to our website were made with our Band members in mind. We would love to hear what you think: 612-372-4612 or andy@redcircleagency.com.

Miigwech.



The new website will also serve as a valuable resource for visitors looking for information on the Mille Lacs Band.



There's A Lot of Talk About the New Health Care Law — What Does it Mean?

Circle of Health Department



How the U.S. Health Care Law Will Affect American Indians

The U.S. health care law — known as the Affordable Care Act — is changing the way many people will get health care coverage. The law expands access to health care coverage. The law expands health insurance to more people and aims to make it more affordable for many. The law also works to make sure American Indians get the care they need for their diverse health care needs.

Personal Responsibility

If you are a member of a federally recognized tribe or an active Indian Health Service patient, you do not have to buy insurance. However, there are many benefits to health insurance coverage and the option might be less expensive than you think.

Contract Health Services

American Indian and Alaskan Natives requesting the Ne-la-Shing Health Center Contract Health Services (CHS) program to pay for their referred or self-referred care must meet the requirements in 42 CFR 136.

Basic CHS Eligibility Requirements:

- You received health services provided at the expense of the Tribe by other public or private providers
- Provide proof of enrollment in a federally recognized tribe OR proof that you descend from an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe, and;
- Permanently reside on a reservation OR may reside outside of a reservation, but within the CHS Delivery Area (Pine, Aitkin, Mille Lacs or Kanabec counties) of Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and;
- Obtain prior approval: OR for self-referred care, notify your CHS program within 72 hours of receiving care (30 days prior for elderly and disabled), and;
- Services must be medically necessary. CHS is limited to services that are within the Tribal Health facility's established CHS Medical Priorities and/or funds available. CHS funds may not be expended for services that are reasonably accessible and available at a Tribal Health facility, and;
- CHS will not be responsible for, or authorize payment of, services if the patient is eligible for Alternate Resources (e.g. Medicaid). As "Payor of Last Resort" CHS will only pay for authorized/approved care after all other Alternate Resources (e.g. Medicare, private insurance) have paid.

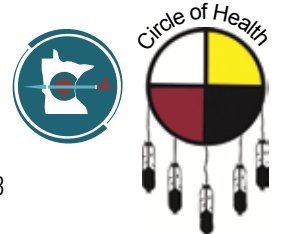
These are the basic CHS requirements; see 42 CFR (Code of Federal Regulation) Part 136 to view the entire CHS eligibility requirements.

For more information visit the IHS website at <https://www.ihs.gov/NonMedicalPrograms/chs/>, or contact your local CHS Program at the Ne-la-Shing Health Center.

This is the first part in a series of articles that we will be featuring in the Inaajimowin.

Ne-la-Shing Health Center

43500 Migizi Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
320-532-4163 or 1-888-622-4163



Ginger Weyaus, Health Benefits Administrator — ext. 7723
Frances Davis, CHS Specialist — ext. 2515
Mary Thompson-Young, Referral/Notification Nurse — ext. 2502

Contract Health Services Referral and Notification Hotline

1-855-502-6247

Please notify your CHS program within 72 hours of receiving care (30 days for Elders and disabled).

Cut out the card above and keep it handy for any questions you may have regarding health services.

Four Things You Can Do to Get Ready Now

1

Learn about the different types of health insurance. Through the Marketplace, you'll be able to choose a health plan that gives you the right balance of costs and coverage.

2

Make a list of questions you have before it's time to choose your health plan. For example, "Can I stay with my current doctor?" or "Will this plan cover my health costs when I'm traveling?"

3

Make sure you understand how insurance works, including deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, co-payments, etc. You'll want to consider these details while you're shopping around. Visit www.HealthCare.gov to learn more about how insurance works.

4

Start gathering basic information about your household income. Most people will qualify to get a break on costs, and you'll need income information to find out how much you're eligible for.

TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

Happy December Birthday to Mille Lacs Band Elders!

Judith Louise Beaulieu
 Gayle Marie Bender
 Pamela Jean Bixby
 Henry Benjamin Bonga
 Loann Dana Boyd
 Phyllis Ann Boyd
 Vicki Marie Burton
 Kyle Matthew Cash
 Lawrence Churchill
 Frances Davis
 Marilyn Ann Davis
 Winifred Marie Davis
 Delsie Louise Day
 June Louise Day
 Randy James Dorr
 Rodney John Dorr
 Timothy Craig Foreman
 Bernadine Louise Garbow
 Ruth Elaine Garbow
 Diane Marie Gibbs
 Rosalie Marie Gopher
 David Darryl Granger
 Dale Herbert Greene, Sr.
 Angeline Hawk
 Viola Mary Hendren
 Carole Anne Higgins
 Frank Hill, Jr.
 Esther Marie Johnson
 Peggy Lou Klapel
 Larry Allen Koeppel
 Renda Lynn Leslie
 Daniel Rae Matrious
 Gordon Wayne Matrious
 Kim Alane Modaff
 Debra Jean Morrison
 Richard Raymond Mortenson
 Linda Lou Moxness
 Clifford Wayne Pawaush
 Dale John Pindegayosh
 William Richard Premo, Jr.
 Herbert Sam
 Susan M. Shingobe
 Laura Ruth Shingobe-Garbow

Louis Franklin St. John, Jr.
 Anita Louise Upegui
 Kenneth Laverne Wade, Sr.
 Yvonne Cecelia Winiecki
 Douglas Alan Wistrom
 Lucille Mabel Woyak

Happy December Birthdays:

Happy Birthday to the beautiful **Deb Morrison** on 12/3! With love from all your kids and grandkids. • Happy Birthday to our grandma **Corrina Cash** on 12/5, love, CJ, Jordan, and Michaela. • Happy Birthday **Russell St. John** on 12/5 from Baysheina, Daynai, Cat, Arianna, Buss, and Mom. • Happy Birthday **Delsie** on 12/6 with love from your sister Joanne and family. • Happy Birthday **Victoria Villebrun** on 12/6 from Mama Lesley, Tre', Quince, Mia, Gramma, Grampa, Aunties, Uncles, and Cousins. • Happy Birthday **Danni Jo** on 12/7 with love from Mom, Dad, Elliott, and Blazer. • Happy Birthday **Shalen Nelson** on 12/7 with love from Grandma and Grandpa. • Happy Birthday **Colleen Garcia** on 12/8 from Donny and Briggie. • Happy 19th Birthday **Jordan Anderson** on 12/8 with love from, Mom, Destanie, Shyla, Bella, Hannah Montana, Dillybar, Papa, and Gramma Gina. • Happy Birthday **Clayton** on 12/10 from Deanna, Waylon, Rachel, Cilla, Stace, and Lisa. • Happy Birthday **Matt Mitchell** on 12/10 from the Mitchell family. • Happy Birthday **Delaney** on 12/11 from Waylon, Rachel, Cilla,

Stace, Lisa, and Clay. • Happy Birthday **Baby Gabe** on 12/12 from Rachel and Waylon. • Happy 8th Birthday **Gabe aka Buzz** on 12/12, love Mom, Wes, Jerron, Roman, Grandma, and Papa. • Happy 16th Birthday to the cool guy **Damian Smith** on 12/13! With love from your even cooler family. • Happy Birthday **Anthony, Jr.** on 12/14 from Dad, Shante, Rachel, Waylon, Craig & boys, Arielle, and family. • Happy Birthday **Amanda** on 12/15 from Rachel, Waylon, Bee, Mills, Dev, Tammy, Janie, Kelly, Granny, Cici, and Poose. • Happy Birthday **Wes** on 12/16 from Antie/Weh-eh Rachel, Waylon, Daddy, Melissa, Payton, Eric, Brynley, Braelyn, Jay and kids, Bruce and girls, Val and kids, and Papa Brad. • Happy Birthday **Raenelle** on 12/17 from the Weyaus/Boyd family. • Happy Birthday **Anthony Jones Lagarde** on 12/19, much love from Mom and Erikah. • Happy Birthday **Airiana Williams** on 12/20, much love from Mom and Erikah. • Happy Birthday **Shawna Mitchell** on 12/21 from the Mitchell family. • Happy Birthday **Nicholas** on 12/24 from Rachel, Waylon, Mick, Phil, Chicky, Char, Nade, Whit, Leo, Tyler, and Dad. • Happy Birthday **Taliyah Williams** on 12/27, much love from Mom and Erikah. • Happy Birthday **Kevin White** on 12/30 from Mom, Nick, Brandon, Jenny, and baby Kevin in Iowa. • Happy Birthday **Norma Diver** on 12/31 from Russ,

Buss, and all of the grandkids. • Happy Birthday **Mark Swist** (December 15), **Adam Swist** (December 29) and **Alan Swist** (December 29). I love you, Ariel. • Happy Birthday to my Big Brother **Clayton Boyd** on 12/10 and my **Baby Brother** on 12/11. I love you guys. Love your sister, Cilla.

Happy Belated Birthdays:

Happy Belated Birthday to the following Elders: **Diana Marie Anderson, Sheldon Ray Boyd, Mary Ann Bedausky, Harold William Davis, Steven Blane Hensley, Terrance Steven Leyk, Beverly Marie Nayquonabe, Nancy Jean Spittell, Russell Ernest Towle, Jill Marie Valentino, and Earl Ellsworth Whitney.** • Happy Belated Birthday **Samuel Eugene Benjamin** on 10/13, love from your Dad Lonnie and the family. • Happy Belated Birthday to Band Elder **Mary Meyer** on 11/6! • Happy Belated Birthday **Precious Williams** on 11/19, much love from Mom. • Happy Belated Birthday **Thomas Jones** on 11/22, much love from sister Sandi and Erikah. • Happy Belated Birthday **Karen Jones** on 11/25, much love from niece Sandi and Erikah. • Happy Belated Birthday to Band Elder **John Thomas** on 11/27.

Other

Announcements:

Memorial: 12/7/12 Its already been a year since you passed

Gram A.A., but we never stop thinking of you. We miss you all the time and every day. We love you gram...just wish you were here to see your beautiful smile. Brad, Sr., Val and kids, Rachel and Waylon, Brad, Jr., and family, Randi, JayJay and kids, Bruce and girls, Karen, Sharon, Tracy, Nicole and boys, Raven and Melodie, Shelby and boys, Jake and kids, Jarv, Phil, and family. • On Saturday, November 9, 2013, we attended David Matrious and Skip Churchill's Ceremonial Drum in Lake Lena. We were part of a "Washing Ceremony." As a part of our continued growth after the loss of a loved one it was very helpful. We would like to thank David, Skip, and all the very kind and generous people that attended. Your show of support was amazing as always. Once again we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. Sincerely, Doreen, Debbie, Robert, Amy, and Beth Mitchell. • Danielle and Dan Smith would like to announce the birth of their daughter **Ainsley Jo Smith** born September 1, 2013: 7lbs, 4.9 oz. and 20.5 inches long. Welcomed home by big brothers Ashton and Leeland.

Submit Birthday Announcements

Send name, birthday and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS** to Andy McPartland at andy@redcircleagency.com or call 612-372-4612.

The deadline for the January issue is December 15.



Come by the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and listen to museum staff read storybooks.

Mille Lacs Indian Museum December Events

Kids Crafts: Story Book Time and Cornhusk Dolls

Saturday, December 7

Time: Noon–3 p.m.

Fee: \$6 per kit (does not include museum admission)

Come by the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and listen to museum staff read storybooks while we serve a light snack and refreshments. We will teach kids how to put together a corn husk doll to take home. Corn husk dolls are made out of the outer covering of an ear of corn. These dolls were typically made during the fall after the corn was dried. Please allow an hour to make the craft. This project is recommended for children ages 10 and up. For more information please call 320-532-3632 or send an e-mail to millelacs@mnhs.org.

Birch Bark Ornament Workshop

Saturday, December 14

Time: Noon–4 p.m.

Fee: \$25/\$20 MHS members; additional supply fee of \$15

Reservations: Required by December 11, call 320-532-3632

Create miniature ornaments from birch bark during this one day workshop. Creations can be used to decorate for the holidays or given as gifts. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided. A minimum of five participants required. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Please call the museum for reservations or more information at 320-532-3632 or send an e-mail to millelacs@mnhs.org.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Chiminising Bingo 6 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	5 Nay Ah Shing Seniors Fundraiser 11 a.m.–4 p.m. District I Community Center	6	7 Urban Holiday Party 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Minneapolis American Indian Center Contact 612-872-1424 with questions Friend to Friend Food Distribution 11 a.m.–2 p.m. District I Community Center Kids Crafts: Storybook Time & Cornhusk Dolls Noon–3 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum
8	9	10	11 District I Christmas Party 5 p.m. Grand Casino Mille Lacs Convention Center	12	13 All District Elder Christmas Party 5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Contact 320-532- 7532 (or 7854) with questions	14 Urban Area Holiday Party 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Minneapolis Indian Center or E. Phillips Center Birch Bark Ornament Workshop Noon–4 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum
15	16	17 East Lake Christmas Party 5 p.m.–7 p.m. District II Community Center Dinner and prize drawing for the Boys and Girls Club District II-A Meeting and Holiday Party 5 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	18 Chiminising Bingo 6 p.m. Chiminising Community Center	19 District III Holiday Party 6 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley Ballroom Contact 320-384-6240 with questions	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Sobriety Feast 4 p.m.–9 p.m. District I Community Center				

Public Health Update

Kathy Beaulieu-Sanders RN, MCH Coordinator

Early Childhood Caries (ECC) is any tooth decay in a child under six years of age; it is important to understand that tooth decay in childhood is not normal and can be prevented. ECC is an infectious disease that can start as soon as an infant's teeth erupt and can progress rapidly with lasting detrimental impact on a child's health and well-being. ECC is a serious health problem that is common among child in the U.S., but occurs at higher rates in Native American children.

Early childhood caries (tooth decay) is a devastating problem in young children. Not only can it cause pain and loss of teeth, it also has the ability to affect the child's self-esteem, speech development, nutritional status, and school attendance. Unfortunately, it has been estimated that almost 80% of American Indian children experience dental caries before they reach kindergarten.

As a preventive dental service program, MLB Public Health Department is offering the application of a protective coating called fluoride varnish to your child's teeth to help protect against cavities/early tooth decay.

Fluoride varnish is a protective medication that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help stop cavities/tooth decay that have already started. Fluoride varnishing is a very safe procedure that is supported by the American Dental Association. The procedure is quick and easy with no pain involved during the application of the medication.

Fluoride varnish provides a reduction in caries/tooth decay up to 38% in children who are at moderate to high risk for caries. The best time to start to apply varnish is as soon as the first teeth erupt (as early as six months).

Public Health offers varnishing: If you are interested in having a licensed health professional apply fluoride varnish to your child's/grandchild's teeth as a means of preventing tooth decay (cavities), please contact Kari DiGiovanni, RN, at 320-532-7457 or Kathy Beaulieu-Sanders, RN, at 320-532-7511 to schedule an office or home visit. We provide this service for all children through the age of 18.

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.

Social Security Announces 1.5 Percent Benefit Increase for 2014

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 63 million Americans will increase 1.5 percent in 2014.

The 1.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that more than 57 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2014. Increase payments to more than eight million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2013.

Other changes that take effect in January each year are based on the increase in average wages. The maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$117,000 from \$113,000. Of the estimated 165 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2014, about 10 million will pay higher taxes as a result of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2014 is available at medicare.gov

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit socialsecurity.gov/cola

Wildfire Prevention Program Assessment Results

Aaniin, recently the Wildfire Prevention Program assessed houses in each District on the probability of surviving a "Wildfire." Using guidelines and worksheets from the National Firewise Communities Program, we were able to identify certain hazards and risks that can be modified to achieve a better "Hazard Rating." We assessed the area within 30 feet of the house call the "Defensible Space." Our communities mainly stayed within the "Moderate" rating area meaning "The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are FAIR. Minor improvements will make it even more Firewise." We are working on designating the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Districts as "Firewise Communities." With this title come a framework for action, wildfire education, peace of mind, community building, citizen pride, publicity and access to funding/assistance.

Here are the most common suggestions:

- Mow the area within 30 feet of the house
- Put 911 address signs at the end of the driveway
- Cut the tall grass and weeds around propane tanks
- Replace missing/broken street signs
- Move fire pits out of the Defensible Space area and put rock/metal rings around them

These are suggestions rather than requirements which, if followed, would greatly improve the rating of our area.

Miigwech for all of the hard work that has been put into maintaining the communities and congratulations on having such a great "Hazard Rating."

If you have any questions and/or concerns please call Bradley E. Harrington, MLB DNR/E Fire Prevention Coordinator, at 612-803-2969. Miigwech.

Snow Removal

Community Development

Winter is right around the corner. As we prepare for snow (we know it's coming), the staff from Community Development would like to share with you the breakdown for plowing in each district. Four departments in Community Development plow in the winter: Roads, Earthworks, Housing, and Facilities. The severity of the snowfall will determine when the staff will start plowing, and at what time. It could be at any time day or night.

- **Roads:** They plow the public roads on the Reservation in District One and District Two. Roads also plow private Elder homes in District One and District Two. If you have questions about snow removal service and are a private Elder in District One or Two, please call Brian Scheinost, 320-630-2624 or Tony Pike, 320-980-5367.
- **Earthworks:** They plow the public roads on the Reservation in District Three. Earthworks also plow the private Elder homes in District Three. If you have questions about snow removal service and are a private Elder in District Three, please call Mike Moilanen, 320-630-2623 or Chad Dunkley, 320-630-4763.
- **Housing:** They plow all Elder rental units, four-plexes in all districts, Ookwemin Loop and Trailers (District One). If you have questions about snow removal service and are living in an Elder rental unit, please call Arlene Weous, 320-630-2124 or Richard Hill, 320-630-4765.
- **Facilities:** They plow the Government Center, Community Centers, Ceremonial Buildings, DNR, Band Member Legal Aide, and Wewinabe. If you have questions about snow removal at our main government offices, please call Rhonda Sam, 320-630-2447.

Winter months keep us very busy in Community Development, and we want to ensure our roadways are as safe as possible for our communities. We appreciate your patience and understanding while we plow our main roads before plowing driveways. If you are a private owner or renter and you live within our service area (near our districts), someone will come and plow for you for a minimal cost of \$25.00. We kindly ask that you prepay for this service.

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.

Interested in submitting to the *Inaajimowin*?

Send submissions and birthday announcements to Andy McPartland at andy@redcircleagency.com or call 612-372-4612.

The January issue deadline is December 15.

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