

O J I B W E I N A A J I M O W I N

FEBRUARY 2019 | VOLUME 21 | NUMBER 02

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



KAYANA BEARHEART JOINS THE GUARD

PHOTOS BY GEORGIA BEARHEART

Kayana Bearheart of the District Ila Chiminising Community joined the National Guard last fall — and joined the Mille Lacs Band Color Guard at the State of the Band Address January 9.

BAND YOUTH CHOOSES UNIQUE PATH OF SERVICE

By **Amikogaabawiiikwe (Adrienne Benjamin)**
Mille Lacs Band Member

On July 3, 2018, Kayana Bearheart headed to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for 10 weeks of basic training for the United States Army National Guard. At a fresh 18 years old, this isn't a decision that many young women make, but Kayana wanted to break that mold.

"I wanted to branch off and do something different than everyone else," Kayana shared. "I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone and meet different people from different parts of the world." Through her experiences, Kayana did just that.

During her time in basic training, Kayana faced many challenges, both physical and mental. "The hardest thing about basic training for me was adjusting to life without my family," Kayana recalled. "I went from seeing them every day to being without them for five months, so that made me feel really lonely at times."

The hard physical regimen and strict adherence to schedule and rules make things difficult for anyone going through basic training. "There were days when I wanted to give up for several reasons. I was homesick, and I didn't think that I was strong enough to overcome a lot of the challenges that I was faced with during that time. Receiving letters and pictures from home helped immensely," Kayana lovingly remembered.

In a proud reflection of her time in basic training, Kayana had this to say: "One thing I learned about myself is that I am truly a lot stronger, both physically and mentally, than I ever thought

possible. I did things that I never thought I could."

Kayana says that there is no specific rank that she is working toward in the Army National Guard. She is just looking forward to her time in service and to the adventures and opportunities that it will bring forth into her life.

The end of her stint in basic training wasn't without interesting occurrences, however. Due to Hurricane Florence and the evacuations that took place along the East Coast, her family was unable to physically attend her graduation ceremony.

"I WANTED TO PUSH MYSELF OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND MEET DIFFERENT PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD."

Her mother, Georgia Bearheart, was severely disappointed. "We were all packed up and ready to go," Georgia said. "We even were already on the road when we got the news that her graduation ceremony would be canceled due to the weather evacuation. As a mother, I was absolutely crushed. Not only saddened that I wouldn't get to see her walk across the stage, but worried about her safety. I just kept my faith and knew that she would be okay and be home soon enough."

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GRASSROOTS GROUPS PARTNER WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENT IN FIGHT AGAINST OPIOIDS

CHIEF DELIVERS 2019 STATE OF THE BAND

In her 2019 State of the Band Address, Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin spoke of headway being made in the war against opioid and substance abuse, an epidemic that has had a stranglehold on the Band community since Mille Lacs County revoked the Joint Powers Agreement with the Band in July of 2016.

Going through more than two years without a law enforcement agreement with Mille Lacs County had a devastating impact on the Band, according to Melanie.

"Dealers and gang members from other states thought District I was a police-free zone, and they began moving in," said Melanie. "During that time, many lives were lost to drugs and violence."

She reported that progress is finally being made in the war against addiction, crediting the grassroots group Sober Squad for helping to empower Band members in recovery to help one another. Melanie told the story of founder Colin Cash, a Mille Lacs Band member who started the Sober Squad movement during his own recovery.

"Sober Squad has grown from an idea in one man's mind to become the fastest-growing recovery movement in Minnesota, with almost 3,000 members in its online group," Melanie said. "What began as ride-sharing to Sober Squad meetings has become a statewide network, getting people immediate help when they ask for it."

Melanie noted that the exact moment when somebody reaches rock bottom and decides to ask for help can be fleeting, and if help is not provided at that moment, the opportunity can be lost.

"What is different with these new groups is that, just like Sober Squad, they were started by Band members, not the Band government. The power of individual Band member warriors can never be underestimated. We honor those Band members today," said Melanie.

Melanie said the last year saw a Band community that demonstrated amazing strength in the face of hardship. "We saw a community unite around families who experienced loss, surrounding them with love, compassion, and generosity. We saw grassroots Band members come together, unified by their goal of helping those in need."

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FOR THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE STATE OF THE BAND ADDRESS, SEE PAGES 3-7.



Kayana was named an honor graduate for finishing in the top 3 percent of her class in the Automated Logistical Specialist Course at Army Quartermaster School. In February she was presented a special Army service award and promoted to a Private First Class ranking.

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The formal graduation ceremony was only attended by the graduates and staff. Kayana's family watched the live stream proudly from their computers as Kayana marched ahead, becoming an honor graduate in the top 3 percent of her class at the U.S. Army Quartermaster School. She completed the Automated Logistical Specialist Course, 551-92A10 on November 21, 2018.

In February, Kayana will also be presented with an Army Special Service Award as recognition as an honor graduate and will be promoted to a Private First Class ranking.

Kayana is the daughter of Band Members Georgia Bearheart and the late Jeffrey Potter.

“ONE THING I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF IS THAT I AM TRULY A LOT STRONGER, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY, THAN I EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.”



Kayana completed 10 weeks of basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and 10 weeks of additional training at Fort Lee, Virginia.

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"Whether it is heroin, pills, or weed, selling drugs, threatening others, and making people feel fear — those are no longer signs of power in our community. Those are signs of weakness and cowardice. Today, recovery is what people look up to. Recovery entails actual strength and true courage," Melanie said.

"The heroes are those brave warriors who are fighting addiction — all of you who are taking back control over your lives and trying to help others discover the freedom of life without addiction and how good it feels to be part of life, rather than just watching life go by. To know the beauty of our culture, of who we are, of who we were meant to be."

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Elections: "It has been a great year for American Indians, and especially Native American women. For the first time ever, we have two American Indian women in the United States House of

Representatives," said Melanie. "And most exciting, the second most powerful seat in the executive branch of state government is now held by Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation."

Natural Resources: "Our fish hatchery has been a huge success. Since 2016, we have been harvesting ogaa (walleye) eggs from speared and netted walleye and have been hatching them indoors." Tribal DNR staff redeveloped the old wastewater treatment ponds into a fish hatchery. The project received an award for outstanding site redevelopment from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Health and Human Services: Other achievements include a dramatic reduction since September 2018 in children being removed from homes and placed into the foster care system, and a successful year for the only tribally-owned inpatient treatment center in Minnesota. "Over 170 Band Members have been helped by Four Winds," said Melanie.

2019 INITIATIVES

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin previewed numerous initiatives for the coming year, including:

Food Sovereignty: Melanie directed Commissioner of Natural Resources Bradley Harrington to develop a food sovereignty program for the Mille Lacs Band. "Gaining more control over our food system is an immediate need. Climate change is already disrupting and threatening agriculture in many states — these changes may be permanent. Restoring our Native food systems and Native food trade is an immediate and basic need for the continued survival of all Native people."

Increased Home Ownership: Melanie directed Commissioner Percy Benjamin to launch a rent-to-own program to help increase Band-member home ownership. "For eligible tenants, every dollar a Band member pays each month for their housing will go toward their down payment on purchasing that home." The chief executive also directed Commissioner Benjamin to give some housing a "zero tolerance" designation for Band members and families who wish to live a substance-free lifestyle. The Band will also be providing 50 home loans for private home ownership for Band members, an offering that will greatly assist Band members living in the urban area.

Expansion of Ojibwe Language Education: Melanie directed Commissioner of Education Rick St. Germaine to work with Assistant Commissioner of Administration Baabiitaw Boyd to further expand language programs for children in Districts II and III of the Mille Lacs Band reservation.

Preserving Families, Protecting Children: Melanie directed all commissioners to work together to make it a top priority to protect Band children while reducing out-of-home placements. "We need one program that will collaborate across all areas to keep our children safe, and to help them heal and be healthy," Melanie said. "Family Services needs to be moved to new space, where families working on reunification can spend time together in a supportive, safe environment. I further direct you to involve Band member input in overhauling the program."

Healing Children through Cultural Immersion: The Education Department recently completed a plan to help children and youth who carry around PTSD, or trauma from their past experiences, using a therapy model that focuses on problem-solving in a supportive environment to help children begin to recover. A Winter Camp pilot project was held last year at the Immersion Grounds. Melanie directed Commissioner St. Germaine to work with other commissioners to formally launch this program for 2019.

Workforce Development: Melanie directed Assistant Commissioner Boyd to create an employee development plan that is customized for each worker. These plans will include professional development goals that improve skills and reflect the employee's own goals. "By investing in the future of each employee, we will have happier and healthier employees."

Early Childhood: Melanie directed Administration to work with Education and Aanjibimaadizing (Department of Labor) to develop early childhood programs in the outer districts this year, to provide childcare opportunities to working families.

SHUTDOWN HITS INDIAN COUNTRY HARD; MILLE LACS BAND SERVICES REMAIN IN PLACE

The federal government shutdown, which went into effect on Saturday, December 22, is now the longest in history, and Indian Country has been hit hard.

The Mille Lacs Band is in a better position to weather the storm than many other tribes due to business revenue and cash reserves. Programs and services have not been affected and are still available to Band members.

That does not mean the Band is unconcerned about the shutdown. Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin met with U.S. Representative Pete Stauber last month to discuss the shutdown and its negative impact on many of the nation's 573 federally recognized tribes.

At a U.S. House of Representatives hearing last week, Rep. Betty McCollum of St. Paul said, "Once again we have failed to meet our trust and treaty responsibilities to tribal nations."



Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin spoke with Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Chairwoman Cathy Chavers of the Bois Forte Band and newly-elected 8th District Congressman Pete Stauber at a meeting of MCT leaders in February. Among other topics, the leaders discussed the impact of the federal government shutdown on the six federally recognized reservations. Cathy is the first woman to lead the MCT, and Pete, a Republican, was elected last fall to replace Democrat Rick Nolan as Eighth District Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives.

2019 STATE OF THE BAND ADDRESS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MELANIE MANDAAMIN BENJAMIN – JANUARY 8, 2019

Aaniin, Boozhoo! Mr. Speaker, Honored Members of the Band Assembly, and Madame Chief Justice: Title 4, Section 6, of our Mille Lacs Band Statutes require the Chief Executive to "present to the Band Assembly an annual State of the Band Address on the second Tuesday of January of each calendar year."

It is my duty and privilege to inform you about the current State of the non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians. I especially welcome all Mille Lacs Band members here today, as well as those who may be watching on Facebook.

Many family members, friends, and special guests are also with us. On behalf of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, we welcome you all to the Mille Lacs Reservation!

In our democratic form of government where Band members vote for who they want to serve the people, the peaceful transfer of power is the cornerstone of our system. This past summer, Band members exercised their right to vote, and the transfer of power happened.

We now have three new elected officials on the Band Assembly: Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd; District II Representative Marvin Bruneau; and District III Representative Wally St. John.

It has been a great privilege to work with each of you, and *chi miigwech* for your hard work on our behalf. *Miigwech* as well to District I Representative Sandra Blake, for the knowledge she brings. There are tough decisions ahead of us, and as elected officials, I know we will all continue working together in the spirit of unity.

What Speaker Sheldon Boyd has accomplished in his first five months of holding office has been amazing. His commitment to open government has already brought change, felt in real ways. I encourage any Band member to attend a Band Assembly meeting one of these days, and you will understand better what I mean. The energy in the room is inviting and welcoming of all, with respect shown towards all.

Working together as a Band, we achieved many goals and milestones in 2018 — things we can be proud of, which I will share with you today. 2018 was also a very challenging year for the Band in other ways.

The public safety crisis in District I continued for nine months into 2018, while we went without a law enforcement agreement with Mille Lacs County. During that time, many lives were lost to drugs and violence.

It was not an easy year for the new cabinet in the Executive Branch, with the unplanned departure of three commissioners and the Solicitor General, which was troubling for many Band employees.

And sadly, many dedicated Band members who work very hard each day to bring positive change to the community were targeted by a few people on social media, who were motivated by bitterness and hate.

Someone I admire once said, "Turn your wounds into wisdom," but finding a lesson during hard times is not an easy thing to do, especially when you are in the middle of it. However, as Mille Lacs Band members, we come from some of the strongest people who ever walked this earth, who remained strong even when faced with unthinkable hardship.

What we saw last year was a Band community that demonstrated amazing strength in the face of hardship. We saw a community unite around families who experienced loss, surrounding them with love, compassion, and generosity. We saw



PHOTOS BY BOB PEARL/RED CIRCLE AGENCY

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin addressed Band members at Grand Casino Mille Lacs on January 8.

grassroots Band members come together, unified by their goal of helping those in need.

We saw Band members who live our Anishinaabe values reject the ugliness that tried to infect our community, and instead spread messages of hope, forgiveness, unity, and love.

Being strong in the face of hardship is not easy. When things happen that we cannot anticipate, we have to find reasons to stay strong, to allow the pain to push us from where we are, to where we want to be.

A few years ago, I spoke at an event hosted by our Department of Athletic Regulation. Other tribal boxing commissions were there. I talked about how working for a tribal government is a lot like constantly being in a boxing ring, every single day of your life.

Sometimes your opponent is the county, sometimes it can be the state, and sometimes it is an epidemic, like drugs. But there is always an opponent. And as tribes, we have to be inside that ring, every single day.

“WORKING FOR A TRIBAL GOVERNMENT IS A LOT LIKE CONSTANTLY BEING IN A BOXING RING, EVERY SINGLE DAY OF YOUR LIFE.”

Chief Executive Art Gahbow always said sovereignty is like a muscle — if you don't use it, you lose it. Nothing we have ever achieved was given to us. We had to exercise our sovereignty and fight for our rights.

From our right to gaming, to our 1837 Treaty rights — from our right to run a tribal school, to our right to a tribal police department — nothing we have today came without a fight and exercising our tribal sovereignty. We must never forget that we are all in the ring together.

At every State of the Band Address for the past five years, we have talked about the drug epidemic that has plagued our community, and the devastation this has caused. Last year, I spoke about a "New Warriorism" that has taken hold.

At an unexpected time, from an unexpected place, a force to be reckoned with stepped forward to protect and defend our community: the New Warriors of the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

MOVEMENT IN THE MAKING

Let me tell a story. It's a true story, and it does not have an end. It is still going on. There was a young Band member who lived with addiction, made mistakes, and spent time in prison. Like too many young people, an idea had been planted in his mind that being locked up meant he was a "real man."

But deep down he knew better. He saw how addiction was destroying everything he loved and made a choice to change his life and begin the long road of recovery.

At first, he did not want to return to Mille Lacs because he knew the pressure he would face back at home, and that the only way he would make it through recovery would be to isolate himself from old friends who were still using.

People say the only thing as lonely as hiding addiction is going through recovery alone. So, this young man would spend hours online, looking for others who were on his same journey, hoping to find just one more person who was going through the same thing. He was also determined to help others while he worked on helping himself.

He tried working in substance abuse recovery but was told "no," due to his record. But the more he was told "no," the more determined he became to help others. He did something very bold — he began documenting his recovery and sharing it online with the public, taking his message of hope to the community.

Everywhere he went — whether the market, sweat lodge, or community events — he would talk with people trying to figure out a way he could help. He describes that first year as a year of failure, but he said that the more people who died, the harder he would try. He said failure helped motivate him.

He decided that leading group recovery meetings could be a way of helping others, and a way of finding others on his same journey. At four meetings each week, he would sit there alone for the entire hour, waiting for someone else to walk through that door, but for the longest time, nobody came.

Months went by of sitting by himself, four times each week.

Most people would have given up after just one week, but this young man never gave up, even though he was openly ridiculed for wanting to change his life. Others laughed at him for the crime of having hope.

During that first year of being sober, Mille Lacs County walked away from our law enforcement agreement. Dealers and gang members from other states thought District I was a police-free zone, and they began moving in.

As the drugs became more plentiful, this young man saw people who were once healthy begin falling into the same hole of addiction he had just crawled out of. He saw the young, the Elders, and the children all hurt by the pain of losing family members to overdoses. He saw the negative feelings of the community poisoning the community. Drug-use seemed to be normalized.

He saw a community ruled more by gangs, drugs, and death than by traditions that affirm and celebrate life. He knew that was backwards.

After sitting alone at so many meetings, waiting for someone else to walk through that door — one day, that door finally opened. In walked another Band member who also wanted a different life. And this Band member kept coming back. After a few more weeks, another person came. Then another, and another. These Band members became deeply connected with each other, by sharing the same goal of living sober.

They decided they wanted t-shirts for their group, but they needed a name. They decided to call themselves the Sober Squad. And the group continued to grow.

The young man was Mille Lacs Band member Colin Cash.

Colin's crusade began just three short years ago. Since then, Sober Squad has grown from an idea in one man's mind, to becoming the fastest growing recovery movement in Minnesota, with almost 3,000 members in its online group. There are over 200 members in the District I group, and there are seven chapters all across the State: Hinckley, Fond du Lac, St. Cloud, Brainerd, Bemidji, Minneapolis, and Grand Rapids.

Just here in District I, at least 25 Band members have become sober and stayed sober through help and support from Sober Squad. That's 25 families in District I that are healing, and nearly 100 children whose lives now have hope because their caregivers had the courage to choose a life of recovery.

A few years ago, one of the biggest problems we had in the war on addiction was getting people help when they actually wanted to be helped. That exact moment when somebody reaches rock bottom and decides to ask for help can be fleeting. It can last just an hour or two. It can happen in the middle of the night or on weekends, when health services are closed.

And if help is not provided at that moment, the opportunity can be lost. What began as ride-sharing to Sober Squad meetings has become a statewide network of getting people immediate help when they ask for it.

Sober Squad members will give rides to the hospital or detox, and sit with that person until a bed is ready, even helping that person through the Rule 25 process — so that often, as soon as they are released, an inpatient program is ready to take them in.

They stay connected during treatment, and when the person is ready to return home, there is something scheduled every night of the week to help that person stay sober.

If you talk to Colin, he is humble about all that has been accomplished. He will tell you that while he might have started something, it is the collective hard work and strength of every Sober Squad member that is making the change. The membership are the leaders.

Sober Squad and other groups began working together to hold smudge walks, host community events and fundraisers, and take back control of our reservation from the drug dealers. But they have done so much more than that.

To all of you on the "Squad" who are members of other groups, or who support these groups, I want you to know this: You are doing something incredible. Working together, you are



Nindaanis Benjamin, center, sang the National Anthem at the State of the Band Address.

changing the social norms on our reservation. You are changing how people think!

No longer does going to prison make anyone a "man" or "woman." No longer is using drugs considered okay. And whether it is heroin, pills, or weed, selling drugs, threatening others, and making people feel fear — those are no longer signs of power in our community. Those are signs of weakness and cowardice.

Today, recovery is what people look up to. Recovery entails actual strength and true courage. The heroes are those brave warriors who are fighting addiction — all of you who are taking back control over your lives and trying to help others discover the freedom of life without addiction — and how good it feels to be part of life, rather than just watching life go by. To know the beauty of our culture, of who we are, of who we were meant to be.

Sober Squad is not part of a Band government program.

These are just Band member warriors, deeply committed to helping our community, out of love for our community. When Band member groups like Sober Squad partner with government, there is nothing we cannot achieve together!

It has been said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." I have just two words to say to all the new warriors in this room: Keep going!

To our Elders who fought addiction decades ago, and came out on the other side, and who are serving as cultural and spiritual mentors to our young people today as they find recovery, *chi miigwech* for sharing your wisdom and supporting these new warriors!

There are many lessons we can take away from this story, but the main one is this: You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have. We are resilient people who get up after being knocked down and continue fighting. If your cause is just, the right people will find you.

A YEAR OF HOPE AND PROMISE

The power of individual Band member warriors can never be underestimated. We honor those Band members today.

We honor our tribal police officers who stuck with us for the past three years, and now have the huge task of cleaning up the reservation.

We honor every Band member who has the courage to stand up against crime, stand up against injustice, and let your voices be heard.

All of you working together provide a light to Band members caught in dark tunnels. You are the light in our community. *Chi miigwech* to all of you for making 2019 a year of hope and promise.

One of the great things about the job of Chief Executive

is that you get to meet and talk with so many Band members about their dreams for our community. From these conversations, one thing I know is true: Band members are tired of negativity in politics, tired of sadness, and tired of the anger.

But I believe we are turning a corner. The future is looking bright for many reasons. First, our public safety crisis with Mille Lacs County is now over. Last summer, after a year of negotiations that appeared to be going nowhere, Mille Lacs County suddenly dropped its demands.

Together we signed a new Joint Powers Agreement in September.

This agreement has restored the authority of our tribal police officers to enforce state criminal law, and to work together with Mille Lacs County deputies. For the Band, this new agreement is actually better than the previous agreement.

With our lawsuit filed in 2017, the matter of our reservation boundary is now in the federal court system and will be decided there. This lawsuit may take several years to resolve, but so far, the first ruling of the federal judge sided with the Band.

"IF YOU TALK TO COLIN, HE IS HUMBLE ABOUT ALL THAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. HE WILL TELL YOU THAT WHILE HE MIGHT HAVE STARTED SOMETHING, IT IS THE COLLECTIVE HARD WORK AND STRENGTH OF EVERY SOBER SQUAD MEMBER THAT IS MAKING THE CHANGE. THE MEMBERSHIP ARE THE LEADERS."

It is too soon to make any assumptions about how this case will end, but we have the best attorney in the nation working on our case: Marc Slonim, who also won our 1837 Treaty rights case in the Supreme Court. We have good reason to feel hopeful.

It has also been a great year for American Indians — and especially Native American women. For the first time, our new President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe is a woman — Chairwoman Cathy Chavers, from Bois Forte. For the first time ever, we have two American Indian women in the United States House of Representatives.

I believe we have also started a bright new chapter with the State of Minnesota. Yesterday, our first Native American Lieutenant Governor was sworn into office!

The second most powerful seat in the Executive Branch of



A full house of Band members, employees, and visiting dignitaries heard speeches from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin, Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd, and Chief Justice Rayna Churchill. For the Secretary-Treasurer's and Chief Justice's addresses, please see pages 8 and 9.

state government is now held by Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation.

Governor Walz understands tribal sovereignty — he will be a wonderful governor for all Minnesotans, including Native Americans.

Our new State Attorney General, former Congressman Keith Ellison, will take the time to get to know us and our issues, and will do a great job.

Finally, one of our former Mille Lacs Band Education commissioners, Dennis Olson, has just been appointed by Governor Walz to the Cabinet-level position of Commissioner of Higher Education for Minnesota. Dennis is a Fond du Lac Band Member and has been serving as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

And there has been a shift of power in the Minnesota State Legislature, as well as in Washington D.C. No longer is the state Legislature or the U.S. Congress controlled by just one political party.

These elections have huge importance for our Band, because it can mean the difference between policies that respect tribes versus policies that can harm us.

The Mille Lacs Band has good friends in both political parties and will continue to support those who support us.

We face the coming year with a new hope for the future of the Band, the state, and our country. But we will continue to stay in the fight until the final bell sounds. Because we always go the distance in our battles.

Our Department of Natural Resources, led by Commissioner Bradley Harrington Jr., had a busy year across all areas.

Our fish hatchery has been a huge success. Since 2016, we have been harvesting eggs from speared and netted ogaa (walleye), and have been hatching them indoors. Our DNR staff redeveloped the old wastewater treatment ponds and turned them into a fish nursery.

Now, after the ogaa are hatched, they are transferred to the ponds, where they grow more, and eventually stock area lakes.

The DNR also obtained a federal grant to study ogaa, which may result in three scientific papers being published in national journals, putting the Band on the forefront nationwide in using technology for fish rehabilitation.

Another exciting development has been the upgrade of our GIS system. Band members can go online and see Band-owned lands, and see what lands are available for residential leasing, and for bow, shotgun, or rifle hunting.

A major focus of 2018 has been on doing everything possible to protect our manoomin, or wild rice. We faced down many threats this year — environmental, industrial, economic, and political.

We worked to convince Governor Dayton to veto a dangerous bill pushed by industry that would have removed a water quality standard designed to protect wild rice from industrial pollution. The new law would have allowed higher levels of sulfates into wild rice waters. It would have exempted Minnesota from having to abide by the federal Clean Water Act.

Instead of signing the bill, Governor Dayton signed an executive order establishing a wild rice task force.

But we were concerned because the task force has heavy representation from the same industries that wanted to lift wild rice protections. Through an exercise of sovereignty, the six bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe formed our own task force, shared our science with one another, and wrote our own Tribal Wild Rice Task Force Report. This report is based on our scientific and cultural expertise and has just been released. There is no entity in Minnesota — including the State — that is better at managing wild rice than the tribes are.

2019 DIRECTIVES

For 2019, I hereby direct Commissioner Bradley Harrington to develop a food sovereignty program for the Band. Gaining more control over our food system is an immediate need.

Climate change is already disrupting and threatening agriculture in many states, and these changes may be permanent. Restoring our Native food systems and Native food trade is an immediate and basic need for the continued survival of all Native people.

To gain control over our food systems, we must launch our own agricultural program. We must also build understanding among Band members, including our youth, so I further direct you to involve Band members in planning this effort — including gardeners, harvesters, and those who fish and hunt. Band members must be involved in launching our food sovereignty effort.

2018 has also been a busy year for Community Development, led by Commissioner Percy Benjamin, with major projects completed and in progress. The Meshakwad Community Center in District III was completed this year.

This is a beautiful multi-purpose building in the Hinckley area for all Band Members. Ceremonial buildings are also being renovated in all three districts, and the new District I Clinic is on target to open in late spring.

Housing in all Districts is always a priority. In our government, we have a Housing Board made up of Band members. They make housing policy for the Band. Over the past year, our Housing Board has become much more visible.

They have been going out to each district to hold meetings that are open to Band members. Right now, all but one person

on the Board is an Elder! Chi Miigwech to these Elders for their hard work to improve housing!

Last year, I announced that Community Development was working on a program to move Band members out of rental housing and into home ownership. This is still the priority. For 2019, I hereby direct Commissioner Percy Benjamin to launch a rent-to-own policy for Band-owned homes this year.

For eligible tenants, every dollar a Band member pays each month for their housing will go toward their down payment on purchasing that home.

I further direct Commissioner Benjamin to work on creating Housing "sectors," which are different categories of homes in certain neighborhoods. One of those sectors will be a Zero Tolerance Zone. This will be a neighborhood for Band members who live a substance-free lifestyle. This is an idea and request that came directly from Band members.

Commissioner Benjamin, please work on legislation to offer the Band Assembly to make this happen this year.

The biggest challenge Housing faces right now involves vandalism of homes. This is one of the symptoms of the drug epidemic.

Time and time again, just when our crew is nearly finished with a home and it is ready for a Band member to move into, the home will get broken into and destroyed by vandals looking for anything they can steal and sell. Vandals go so far as to strip out all the copper wiring. When this happens, and the crews have to start over, it can be another nine months before repairs are finished again, and sometimes the same home is destroyed again.

“WE FACE THE COMING YEAR WITH A NEW HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BAND, THE STATE, AND OUR COUNTRY. BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO STAY IN THE FIGHT UNTIL THE FINAL BELL SOUNDS. BECAUSE WE ALWAYS GO THE DISTANCE IN OUR BATTLES.”

In response, the crews have been boarding up more homes while they are working on them to protect the asset, but that has not been enough.

They are looking at installing video security systems, which will not be cheap, but it is cheaper than the home being destroyed. This is where we need help from Band members.

If you see something, say something.

The Band will also be providing 30 home loans for Band members for private home ownership, which will greatly assist Band members in the urban area.

There are many exciting developments happening in our Education Department, led by Commissioner Rick St. Germaine. Our language program is growing fast! For the first time this year, we have an immersion class in the lower school, combining Kindergarten and first grade. Our language program now employs 20 people, ranging from language trainees to First Language Speakers, who work at different sites according to the needs of the students. Commissioner St. Germaine, I direct you to work with Assistant Commissioner Boyd to further expand our language programs for children in Districts II and III.

This is also the first year of an all-year school calendar at Pine Grove Leadership Academy. Research has shown that it is hard for young children to retain all they have learned over long summer breaks, so this year at Pine Grove, students will have several shorter breaks throughout the year rather than one long break.

Our Niigaan Program has been doing amazing things with youth programs this year in all districts, including several basketball camps and a leadership camp at Big Sandy Lodge.

There are so many exciting youth opportunities right now, that there is no excuse for any child to ever be bored.

The greatest challenge we face with our children and youth today is supporting our youngest victims of the drug epidemic. This past year, more than 300 Band children were in foster care because their parents were unable to care for them. A special *chi miigwech* to all our foster care families.

The caseload of our social workers is much higher than nearly any county in Minnesota. The hiring of more social workers is being fast-tracked, but that is not the whole answer.

Last year, I conducted an executive inquiry to investigate our current programs involved with out-of-home placement. We hired two attorneys who specialize in Indian child welfare issues, and they confirmed what we all suspected: the current system is not working well.

The good news is that since August, we have seen a dramatic decrease in out-of-home placement. Fewer than ten children were removed over the past five months!

We need our own Mille Lacs Model of family preservation. For 2019, I hereby direct all commissioners to work together to make this a top priority. We need one program that will collaborate across all areas to keep our children safe, and to help them heal and be healthy.

Family Services needs to be moved to new space, where families working on reunification can spend time together in a supportive, safe environment. I further direct you to involve Band member input in overhauling the program.

We also need more help for our children. Children who are exposed to chronic, prolonged traumatic experiences can suffer physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive harm that can last their entire lives.

The Education Department recently completed a plan to help children and youth who carry around PTSD, or trauma from their past experiences.

It will use a therapy model that focuses on problem-solving and will be done in a supportive environment to help children begin to recover. A winter camp pilot project was held last year at the Immersion Grounds which had dramatic results, so we know this can work.

Commissioner St. Germaine, I hereby direct you to make launching this program a priority for 2019 and direct the other commissioners to work with you to make this happen.

In the area of scholarships, we need to examine how we are serving our college-student Band members. At the community college level, per capita payments are disqualifying students from receiving certain kinds of aid.

Young parents who go back to school must choose between using their per cap to pay for college or paying for food for their families. At the graduate level, we have young Band members who are working hard to get their advanced degrees in critical professions who face the same problem, and face debt that can be in six figures.

We need to look at how to better support our students, and what to expect back from them in return. Band member Ben Sam is a prime example of a young man who is getting his Doctorate in physical therapy, but who always finds time for community service. This is a win-win for all. *Chi miigwech* to all our hard-working college students — you are our future!

In the area of Health and Human Services, our new Four Winds Treatment Center — the only tribally-owned treatment center in Minnesota — just completed its first year of offering a cultural recovery program.

This has been a great success. More than 170 Band Members have been helped by Four Winds. *Miigwech* to Nicole Anderson, Bobby Eagle, and all the staff who are running this wonderful recovery program.

Administration has had its hands full this year with vacancies in other areas. In late 2018, Community Development Commissioner Percy Benjamin took over leadership in Administration until a new Commissioner of Administration can be ratified, and he has been doing an outstanding job of leading the commissioners. Melissa Baabitaw Boyd was ratified this

Fall as the Assistant Commissioner of Administration, and she has very quickly proven herself as an excellent administrator. *Miigwech* to both of you for your good work.

Assistant Commissioner Boyd, for 2019, I hereby direct Administration to expand supportive services for our employees by creating an employee development plan that is customized for each worker. These plans will include professional development goals that improve skills and reflect the employee's own goals. By investing in the future of each employee, we will have happier and healthier employees.

Further, the Department of Labor is currently under-utilized by Band members. I direct you to revamp DOL and expand the number of Band members served, across all three districts. DOL is the key to unlocking the potential of Band members who are unemployed or underemployed, and helping them to be successful.

“I ALSO WANT TO HONOR ANOTHER GROUP OF WARRIORS WHO DON'T GET THANKED VERY OFTEN: OUR EVERYDAY EMPLOYEES, THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO WORK EACH DAY OR NIGHT, WHO ARE WORKING HARD TO MAKE A DECENT LIVING AND RAISE THEIR FAMILIES ON A MODEST INCOME.”

I also direct Administration to work with Education and DOL to develop early childhood programs in the outer districts this year, to provide childcare opportunities to working families.

Finally, the Corporate Commission led by Joe Nayquonabe Jr. has had a very good year. Gaming distribution to the Band was seven percent higher last year.

This was due to the success of the Property Improvement Plan, along with new restaurants and new gaming experiences. We envision this performance continuing in the future, and I've been advised that we are already on pace to have a record year.

The hotels had one of their best years yet, increasing revenue at both the DoubleTree in St. Louis Park and in St. Paul.

Even though the market is getting tougher and more competitive, we were able to host large events such as the Super Bowl, which boosted performance.

Our Band member bonus program is working well — this guarantees a \$15 per hour minimum wage to all Band members that work in our businesses. Our Band member front line associates in this program have earned nearly \$700,000 in bonuses.

Finally, to all Commissioners: I direct you to complete the

strategic planning process this year, with Band member participation. This process must include a plan to educate Band members about our budget, so that the community can participate in a meaningful way in setting budget priorities.

HONORING HARD WORK

Many other exciting events happened in 2018, including the honoring of a warrior from the past. On November 20, with the support and involvement of her family, we renamed the government Center after former Chief Executive Marge Anderson.

That building is now officially named the Biidaabinookwe Government Center. *Miigwech* to the Anderson family for allowing us to memorialize Chief Executive Anderson in this special way.

There are new developments with the confederation of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), as well, which we are a member of. All Bands must follow the MCT Constitution. In 2017, the Tribal Executive Committee (TEC) of the MCT voted to hold a Constitutional Convention. This is a process to consider changes to the Constitution.

Last summer, the TEC agreed that each Band would select delegates to represent us at the constitutional convention meetings, but some MCT members demanded that the Band governments have no role in the selection process.

This past fall, we were asked to submit the names of our Mille Lacs Band Delegates — which was a challenging thing to do without having any involvement in the process.

Via Facebook and emails, our Government Affairs team put out a call to interested Band members to come forward as delegates. The only requirement was to fill out a form about why they wanted to be a delegate.

We are very grateful to those Band members who officially came forward to take on this work.

They have a table in the foyer here today, with informational material.

These are smart, involved Band members who are deeply committed to our community. They are also concerned about how they can represent over 4,700 Mille Lacs Band members without more information about what Band members want.

Our delegates have many questions about the pros and cons of making different changes to the Constitution that are being discussed, and the impact it could have on our division-of-powers form of government.

They are not there to push their own agendas; they want to push an agenda that reflects what you, the Band members, want. They are not there to achieve short-term changes; they are thinking one hundred years into the future!

To do this, they need more information about your concerns, and have requested the government's help in getting that feedback.



Onamia High School students were among the attendees at the 2019 State of the Band Address.



If you haven't already filled out the survey on your tables, please do so, because you will need to turn this in before you can receive your gift.

To all who have already filled these out, miigwech. Delegates need your input, because the best government is the government closest to the governed.

There are many new warriors who have come forward this past year. Band members have been organizing in their districts, holding meetings about their local concerns, even doing research and sharing information with other Band members. Many times, in the past, the Band government has tried to get community advisory councils off the ground in each district, but these never took hold for very long.

What is different with these new groups is that, just like Sober Squad, these new groups were started by Band members, not the Band government.

"SOME OF THE STRONGEST WARRIORS AMONG US ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN KNOCKED DOWN, WHO KNOW THE FEELING OF FAILURE, BUT WHO REFUSE TO STAY DOWN. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE ARENA."

First Lady Michelle Obama wrote, "Do we settle for the world as it is, or do we work for the world as it should be?" All over, Band members are getting busy in our community, as activists, working for the world we want and know we should have.

This year, small grants will be available to Band community groups, which they can use to support their work. Look for more information about these grants in the coming months, and chi miigwech to all our community activists!

I also want to honor another group of warriors who don't get thanked very often: our everyday employees, the people who come to work each day or night, who are working hard to make a decent living and raise their families on a modest income.

These are the workers who do the work that many of us cannot do or don't want to do: The people who plow snow and shovel sidewalks. The people who wash dishes and wash windows. Those who are vacuuming floors and cleaning bathrooms at midnight while most of us are sleeping. Those who open the doors in the morning, who make sure the water flows.

Work is an honorable thing. We honor those who work hard, and who go home at the end of their shift to even more responsibility.

We honor the grandmother who cleans hotel rooms during the day, then goes home and cleans the house. We honor the dad who cooks in our restaurants, then comes home to change diapers for his babies and cook some more.

We honor those who do for their families and do for others, who preserve the beadwork, our stories, the language, and the traditions of the Band.

For those of you who work every day, you know the satis-

faction of providing for your family. You know the joy of giving. You know the meaning of hard work — as our ancestors did.

We thank the Band members who work hard, the people with the strong backs. You are the backbone of the community.

We honor those who give to the community rather than take from it.

Those who live the best of our traditions; those who share their manoomin and venison with the Elders; those who foster children; those who served our country and now serve as our ogichidaag and ogichidaakweg. We honor those who don't complain, don't beg for handouts, and don't ask for more than they need. There are Elders in our community who have lived this way their entire lives, and after working hard, have quietly retired without any fanfare — some so quietly that many never knew about it.

They did the work that needed to be done, without expecting anything in return other than the satisfaction of doing a good job for their families and their community.

There is one person I want to acknowledge today who was one of our longest-serving employees, who worked his whole life, and who truly lives our Anishinaabe values and is a role model for others.

Last year, Elmer Nayquonabe had to have some surgery. He had a long recovery and had to stay home longer than he had planned. After almost 40 years of working for the Band, without a retirement party or even a gift card, his working days came to a close. He did not complain about that to me or anyone else, because Elmer is not the kind of person who worked to be thanked — he worked to serve others.

At this time, Elmer, can you please stand or wave your hand? On behalf of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, chi miigwech to you, Elmer, for your lifetime of dedication to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

I also want to briefly acknowledge those Band Members who recently retired this past year:

Barb Benjamin Robertson – 20 years of service to the Band!

Carmen Weous – 30 years! (And by the way, Carmen loves work so much that after retiring, she came back to help part-time in my office.)

Frances Davis – 43 years of service to the Band!

Chi miigwech to all of you, and to all the long-serving employees of the Band, whose names you will see on the screens later.

STAYING IN THE RING

If you walk downstairs to where the Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police have their office, outside their door is a quote from President Theodore Roosevelt. It says:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions;

who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

I find inspiration every time I read that. To me, it's about the meaning of public service, and staying in the ring.

The Tribal Police Department is a great example of those who do their duty with courage every single day.

It has now been 30 years since I first took the Oath of Office as Commissioner of Administration for Chairman Arthur Gahbow in 1989.

He was a man of great vision, and even those who disagreed with him thought he was a man of great courage. He, Roger Jourdain, and Wendell Chino were men in the Arena.

These men laid the foundations for generations to come. Later came Chief Executive Marge Anderson. These leaders were in the arena, fighting the good fight so that we can have better lives. That's what it's all about.

Many fans of boxing will tell you that the reason they love the sport is not because they enjoy seeing a fighter get knocked down.

What they love is the thrill of seeing that fighter get back up — and keep fighting.

What I know is true about the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is that we are a community of fighters who are resilient. We are a community of second-chances.

None of us goes through life alone, and none of us are perfect.

Some of the strongest warriors among us are those who have been knocked down, who know the feeling of failure, but who refuse to stay down. These are the people in the arena.

Soldiers, police officers, and our everyday employees who choose public service — They chose to enter the fight. They are in the arena.

Every parent, grandparent, auntie, or uncle who believes in our youth and refuses to give up on them, they are in the arena.

There is a famous movie about the redemption that comes after a prison sentence, and at the end the narrator says: "Hope is good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies."

As we enter 2019, I hope that you are as optimistic as I am.

I have faith in this community. I have faith in the goodness of our people. I have faith in the spirit and power that is in all Band members. I have faith that the darkest times are over, and I believe we are seeing the dawning of a new day.

We have the power to fight battles and the new warriors to fight them. We have the power to build a brave new community that is safe. We have the power to keep the peace in our homes and on our homelands. We have the power to save each other, and power to save ourselves, to choose the Good Life.

We have the will, the courage, and the hope to envision a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

We choose to face the dawning of a new day, and a new year, with strength, unity, and hope! Miigwech!

STATE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SECRETARY-TREASURER
SHELDON BOYD



PHOTOS BY BOB PEARL/RED CIRCLE AGENCY

Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd called to order the Mille Lacs Band Assembly with an address about the history of the Band.

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 2019 State of the Band Address.

For the newcomers and first time attendees:

What is going on here this morning, and what exactly are we doing? Allow me please to help bring into perspective what this is.

This morning Madame Chief Justice of the Judicial Branch and Madame Chief Executive of the Executive Branch will be complying with Mille Lacs Band law by presenting their reports on the second Tuesday of the calendar year to the Mille Lacs Band Assembly of the Legislative Branch of government. This is similar to the State of the Union Address in United States government.

Please allow me to introduce the members of the Legislative Branch Band Assembly, the Commissioner of Finance, Legislative Staff, and members of the Office of Management and Budget who are in attendance: District I Representative the Honorable Sandi Blake, District II Representative the Honorable Marvin Bruneau, and District III Representative Wally St. John, Parliamentarian and Band Assembly Clerk Darcie Big Bear, Commissioner of Finance the Honorable Adam Valdez, Legislative Affairs Director Wendy Merrill, Chief Legal Counsel Christine Jordan, Chief Communications Officer Valerie Harrington, Legislative Office Coordinator Semira Kimpson, Deputy Registrar Deanna Sam, Legislative Administrative Assistant Brianna Boyd, Billie Jo Boyd, Cheryl Miller, and all staff in attendance from the Office of Management and Budget.

First I want to take a moment to recognize a ground level fact. Let's not stick our chests out too far or our chins too high.

The wealth of the Mille Lacs Band is the direct result of the two economic jet engines called Grand Casino Mille Lacs and Grand Casino Hinckley and the wonderful customers who for the last 20 years nonstop, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, have come through these doors and spent their hard-earned money.

The bottom line is the money comes from this side of the street.

Ok, now as popularly elected Secretary-Treasurer and Speaker of the Assembly, I will shortly call to order the 3rd Session of the 18th Band Assembly. This Legislature is in its 36th year. Think about that for a moment.

But how did things get to this point and what is the history? Let me give you some background in today's proceeding, then provide you a bridge to the present.

BEFORE

The Mille Lacs Band is part of a huge linguistic group from across the interior of this continent and the chain of Great Lakes, the Anishinaabe. Tribes today along the Great Lakes chain are a living tree of the Anishinaabe People with Mille Lacs as one of the farthest-reaching branches.

There are immense layers of history within the Anishinaabe people as a group. Let me provide some perspective, collective terms for those in attendance today.

Since before the pyramids of Egypt, in written memory

when humankind developed farming and writing systems, the ancestors of the Anishinaabe were here on these very waterways and forests of these lands.

The Anishinaabe People continue to live in historic villages among the forests and waterways from this location and back east, back through time moving from place to place.

We wear many cloaks that time and history have provided us. The New World, Treaty Tribes, IRA Tribe or Indian Reorganization Act, Self-Governance Tribe, and now Indian Gaming Tribe.

We also go by many names: Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Chippewa, Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians, Reservation Business Committee, Mille Lacs Band Government, Chairman, Chief Executive, Chief Justice.

“MANY NATIVE NATIONS TODAY MENTION THE MILLE LACS BAND AS AN EXAMPLE OF PROGRESS, AND COURAGE, AND A FORM OF GOVERNMENT MEANT TO DECENTRALIZE POWER AND GUARD AGAINST THE TENDENCIES OF PEOPLE WHEN POLITICAL POWER IS BESTOWED UPON THEM.”

Assembling and reassembling in response to events, natural and created, to survive and eventually thrive again.

That brings us to today.

BRIDGE IN TIME

This morning the current elected and appointed leaders of our government perform their duties mandated under Mille Lacs Band Law.

These State of the Judiciary and State of the Band reports demonstrate our leaders are being called to be accountable to the Band Assembly under Mille Lacs Band law.

The Band Assembly of the Legislative Branch is similar in function to the United States Congress and is comprised of the popularly elected leaders of their respective communities.

These are functions of this three-branch government. A division of power. A conscious recognition of power that is a constant tug of war. We cannot have power unchecked.

The Mille Lacs Band and native peoples know firsthand the brute force of power in the physical form and government policy.

In spite of an era of termination where we were scattered across the lands and sent to other places to live to make room for civilization, some our Mille Lacs grandparents simply refused to leave this place. They continued to live right here, raise families, in survival mode.

As a young boy I always remember my Mother saying after returning from a ceremony, "Don't tell them at school about this. They will throw us in jail."

My Mother, who only spoke the Anishinaabe language to her friends in the woods because the boarding school forbid it. My Mother and Father, only speaking Anishinaabe to each other and their friends. I now look back and believe they were forevermore those children in boarding school who were forced to hide part of themselves.

In spite of these atrocities, be warned: We cannot be a revenge generation or we will go backwards.

Not being a first speaker of the language may be on your parents, but not being a speaker as an adult is on you. You can learn.

Our history is too great for anything less than for all of us to live in kindness and enjoy life.

TODAY

Brother and sister Native nations all around us throughout history have adapted as well.

Over 100 years ago there were Native schools, Native newspapers, and the achievement of alphabets and symbols, in particular the Cherokee language, which today is an option on Apple iPhones.

Human achievement.

Now, today, the Mille Lacs Band in particular:

From a time of signing agreements over jurisdiction of thousands of square miles of the interior of this continent, to a time when barely five acres of land was left and friends came to our rescue, our grandparents began to reassemble.

Reassembling for survival and continuing the journey again to live and enjoy life.

The Mille Lacs Band made a leap 36 years ago and divided the powers of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution. This constitution was authorized by the United States Congress under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

As a side note, my Uncle James Clark mentioned as a young boy, because he went to school, he translated the purpose of that Act to the Elders in the Aazhoomog community east of Hinckley.

The Mille Lacs Band today is an example of the division of power and authority.

Many Native nations today mention the Mille Lacs Band as an example of progress, and courage, and a form of government meant to decentralize power and guard against the tendencies of people when political power is bestowed upon them.

This morning we come together to talk about things every year in the middle of winter, to listen to the experiences of our leaders and plans for the coming year.

This what you are seeing this morning: The State of the Band Address.

I call to Order the 3rd Session of the 18th Band Assembly on Tuesday January 8, 2019.

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY

CHIEF JUSTICE RAYNA CHURCHILL



PHOTO BY BOB PEARL/RED CIRCLE AGENCY

Chief Justice Rayna Churchill delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address.

Aaniin, Madame Chief Executive Benjamin, distinguished members of the Band Assembly, my fellow Mille Lacs Band Members, employees, and guests. Welcome to the 2019 State of the Band Address. It is a pleasure to provide you with the State of the Judiciary Address as prescribed by the Band Statutes.

On behalf of the Judicial Branch, it is a pleasure to see you all after the festivities of the holidays. I hope you all have started the new year in a good way with family, friends, laughter, and love.

I, Rayna Churchill, have the privilege of being reappointed to serve as the District III Appellate Justice as well as the Chief Justice of the Judicial Branch for another six-year term. Clarence Boyd serves as the District I Appellate Justice, and Ramona Applegate serves as the District II Appellate Justice. Please stand and be recognized.

As prescribed by the Band Statutes, the Appellate Justices hear cases appealed from the District Court, in addition to Unlawful Detainer cases and Mille Lacs Band Election Disputes.

Honorable David Christensen, please stand to be recognized. Judge Christensen serves as the District Court Judge, presiding over family matters, truancy, child support, civil, criminal, domestic violence, and harassment matters.

Based on the Mille Lacs Band Justice System's Strategic Plan, and the mutual agreement signed by the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches, one of the primary goals was to coordinate an application for a United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Program grant application in early 2018. This grant was a three-branch collaborative effort to hire a team of statute revisors in the amount of \$737,000. The Mille Lacs Band was successful in obtaining the grant award due to the coordinated efforts of the three branches.

As Judge Christensen recently said, "It is hard to capture what really is going on with the families in our family law cases due to the complex issues of addiction and co-dependency, especially with the heroin and meth affecting the community." He is correct as agreed by the special magistrates. The opioid epidemic is a complex problem with many layers affecting the Band. Though the Band has made some strides to address this issue, we truly have no one single solution to resolve it. It will take many different avenues to address this rampant, dangerous drug.

One such avenue is the proposed development of a Mille Lacs Band Tribal Healing to Wellness Court. A Healing to Wellness Court is similar to what is known as a Drug Court, but with an additional critical inclusion of traditional and cultural elements. The Healing to Wellness Court will use a team approach, which will allow our departments and other service providers to collaborate and coordinate our healing efforts in a holistic manner to better assist addicted individuals. Instead of operating in isolation from each other, the team will meet together to discuss each case and braid together services. As we know, a braid is stronger than each of the individual strands alone. This will be a voluntary, confidential program to help those in the throes of addiction by providing long-term treatment but still holding the individual

accountable through close monitoring, keeping them close to their family, and helping them become law-abiding, contributing community members again.

The Healing to Wellness Court will start with a pilot project, which will focus initially on Band members who are struggling with addiction and charged with criminal offenses, and are also the parents of Band member children who are the subjects of Child in Need of Protection or Services. Tribal Healing to Wellness courts have proven to have success in addressing the opioid epidemic. With the support of the Band Assembly and the Chief Executive, this Healing to Wellness Court will help advance the goals of the Mille Lacs Band Justice System Strategic Plan.

I want to stress that those who are addicted to mood-altering chemicals are not bad people. They are not weak because they cannot kick the habit. Rather, they are suffering from a disease, substance use disorder, which may be worsened by other issues such as mental illness or the effects of childhood trauma. We understand that people need help in treating the addiction and being supported in their journey of recovery. So, with that said, I would like to request a moment of silence in remembrance of those who have passed away due to addiction.

The Band has begun doing their part in holding individuals accountable for their actions on the reservation by filing criminal cases. These criminal cases are treated as civil misdemeanors and include violations such as theft, trespass, assault and battery, obstructing justice, resisting arrest, and traffic violations, to name a few. In total, 37 criminal cases were filed in 2018.

One area the courts see as a major problem in the community is the lack of services. Many departments are stretched too thin, resulting in inadequate services for our Band members. Staff shortages and overwhelming workloads in departments that provide direct services are apparent in many of our court hearings. The importance of adequate effective services is essential in helping our Band members. The departments who regularly appear in our court include the Department of Behavioral Health, Chemical Dependency, Mental Health, Family Services, Nay Ah Shing Schools, Guardians Ad Litem, Foster Care Licensors, Housing, Wraparound Program, Tribal Police, as well as the county social services.

In 2018, 11 truancy cases were closed due to improvement in school attendance. This was almost a repeat of 2017 in which 10 truancy cases were closed. The good news is that a majority of the cases were a result of the parents making more of an effort to get the children to school or improved communication between the families and the school. The assistance of Family Services transporting the children to school when they missed the bus helped to improved attendance as well.

In 2018, there were 25 cases filed for Children in need of Protective Services, which is two fewer than the year before. Over the past two years, guardianship has been granted for seven children, and 19 children were reunited with a parent or parents.

At the end of this month, the Tribal Court, Solicitor General's office, and Family Services plan to attend a Title IV-E training to strengthen cooperation with the county regarding funding for out-of-home services for families and children. This training will enhance the understanding of all eligibility requirements to be in compliance and meet the Title IV-E funding.

The Judicial Branch would like to acknowledge the foster parents and guardians — grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, and others — who have stepped up to provide our children with a safe place to live and grow. We believe that all children need and deserve someone to take care of them. They need shelter, food, and clothes to wear, but they also need to know that they are loved and important as well. Miigwech for taking on this responsibility.

Unlawful detainer cases are primarily those individuals that fail to recertify with the Housing Department, non-payment of rent or work orders, or police raid due to drugs, guns, or crime. The Band usually makes many attempts to reconcile the matter before filing with the court.

The Mille Lacs Band Tribal Court recently underwent a court assessment, which was mandated by the Office of Justice Services, U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs. The court assessment was conducted December 17-19, and recommendations are forthcoming. This assessment will allow the court a one-time funding request based on the results of the assessment. The recommendations will be shared with the stakeholders in the near future.

Several years ago, the Band developed a master plan to explore the needs of a tribal justice center, and this has been an ongoing discussion for numerous years. In 2018 it was determined that the existing District I Community Center will be renovated for a new Tribal Court building. Though it is not a Tribal Justice Center, the Tribal Court is in need of a new building to increase the number of courtrooms to two or three, which will better fit the needs of the community. The additional space will also make it possible to operate the Healing to Wellness Court program in a confidential manner. To assist in the renovation project, a renovation committee was established, and they will meet later this month with the architect and engineers. The committee will discuss programming the spatial needs of the building, visioning the layout of the courtrooms, technology, etc.

A site visit to Leech Lake Tribal Court later this month will serve a two-fold purpose: 1.) View their Tribal Court Justice Center building, which was built in 2016; 2.) Discuss their Healing to Wellness program.

In closing, if all three branches of the Band continue to move forward with the major improvements by advancing and expanding our infrastructure, we will reduce or eliminate the addiction crisis we are now facing. As strong Anishinaabe people and with the aid of our community members, we can win this battle.

Thank you for attending the State of the Band and listening to the State of the Judiciary.

STATE AND LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS

Sober Squad member speaks at Red Lake:

Randell Sam, a Mille Lacs Band Sober Squad member, spoke at the Red Lake Nation's Community Wellness Gathering in January. Randell was quoted in the Bemidji Pioneer, saying, "Everybody, friends and family, they were dying, they were OD'ing and everything, and I wanted to be one of them. I did OD once, and when I came out of it I was alone, and that's the most alone I ever felt in my life. About three weeks after that was when I made a motion to get sober." Randell concluded, "The Creator put me here for a gift, and my gift is to make other people happy and proud to be sober."

Source: *bemidjipioneer.com*.

Feast marks end of homeless camp, beginning of "something great":

On Friday, January 11, a feast was held at the American Indian Center in Minneapolis to mark the end of the "Wall of Forgotten Natives" homeless encampment and the beginning of a new chapter. The feast was called "WiiDooKoDaaDiiWag," which means "They Help Each Other" in Ojibwemowin. Red Lake Tribal Secretary Sam Strong, who was a leader in the effort to help people in the encampment, said, "To me this is the beginning of something great. The beginning of a renaissance in how we think about our own people. How we think about people as assets, not liabilities." Source: *mprnews.org*.

Prairie Island tribe buys land near Pine Island:

The Prairie Island Indian Community has purchased about two-thirds of a 1,904-acre parcel north of Rochester as part of an ongoing effort to find land located a safe distance from Xcel Energy's Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Station, which sits about 600 yards from tribal homes near Red Wing. The sale marks the end of a planned biosciences park that was planned for the parcel. The tribe has been asking for the removal of nuclear waste stored at Prairie Island since 1994, when the state agreed to allow Xcel Energy to store waste at the site.

Source: *startribune.com*.

Wild rice task force fails to reach consensus:

A task force appointed by Governor Mark Dayton aimed at finding ways to protect wild rice has ended with several recommendations but no consensus on regulations. The recommendation is to create a new Wild Rice Stewardship Council with representation from all 11 tribes. The six members bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, including Mille Lacs, chose not to participate in the task force because of an imbalance in favor of industry groups seeking to weaken environmental standards.

Source: *Duluth News Tribune*.

Walz, Flanagan inaugurated; Governor appoints former commissioner:

Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan took the oath of office January 7 at the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul. Flanagan, the first Native American to hold a statewide post, attended the ceremony in a ribbon skirt and took the oath on an Ojibwe Bible. Walz announced in December his choice of former Mille Lacs Commissioner of Education Dennis Olson to head the state office of higher education. Dennis had been serving as executive director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and is also a former director of Indian Education at the education department.

Source: *startribune.com, mprnews.org*.



Representing Mille Lacs at the Constitutional Convention are (back) Curt Kalk, Danielle Smith, Al Olson, Tom Benjamin, Michael Davis, (front) Maria Costello, Birdie Roberts, Michele Palomaki, Todd Sam, and Dawn Stewart.

DELEGATES ATTEND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer

Ten Mille Lacs Band members participated in the first Constitutional Convention meeting at Meshakwad Community Center in Hinckley on Friday, January 18. The meeting is expected to be the first in a long series to determine possible changes to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) Constitution.

The delegation met with Band Assembly on January 10 to ask questions and receive advice from the district representatives and secretary-treasurer.

They have made it clear to Band Assembly that they want to represent Band members' interests at the Constitutional Convention, so they are actively seeking input.

If you want to share your opinions on changing the Constitution — or leaving it as is — please contact one of the delegates from your district:

District I: Curt Kalk and Danielle Smith

District II: Tom Benjamin and Michael Davis

District IIIa: Michele Palomaki and Todd Sam

District IIIb: Maria Costello and Birdie Roberts

Urban area: Al Olson and Dawn Stewart

BACKGROUND

The Tribal Executive Committee (or TEC, which is composed of the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer of the six MCT bands) started discussing the need for a Constitutional Convention in 2016, in part due to ongoing discussions about how the Constitution should be interpreted, who has the authority to do so, and whether existing interpretations are legally binding.

The TEC in recent years has also considered changes to enrollment rules and even scheduled a Secretarial Election in 2015, but the election never occurred.

The Constitutional Conventions were approved by the TEC at a special meeting on March 15, 2017, at Grand Casino Hinckley. That meeting was scheduled after the TEC was asked by a Band member to force Mille Lacs to return to a "reservation business committee" government as outlined in the Constitution.

The Mille Lacs Band believes that its division-of-powers government is allowed under Article VI of the Bylaws of the MCT Constitution.

Preliminary meetings were held in 2017 and early 2018 on all six MCT reservations and in the Twin Cities. The first was held in August 2017 at Grand Casino Mille Lacs.

Six of the seven meetings were facilitated by the Native

Nations Institute (NNI) of the University of Arizona with support from the Native Governance Center (NGC).

A total of 398 individuals attended the six sessions facilitated by NNI. Reports on the meetings and a final summary were prepared by NNI and NGC and are available on the MCT website.

To learn more about the Constitutional Conventions, see page 11 and https://www.mnchippewatribe.org/constitution_convention.html.

HISTORY

The Constitution was adopted in 1934 and approved in 1936. (See page 11 for more on the history of the Constitution.)

The MCT was formed under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) for the purpose of distributing funds promised by the Nelson Act of 1889.

Because distribution of money was central to the creation of the MCT, the governing bodies of the six bands, or Reservation Business Committees, resembled corporate boards more than true governments.

The RBCs were included in the 1963 Revised MCT Constitution during the Termination Era.

In 1980, the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided funding for tribes to redesign their constitutions. Mille Lacs leaders Art Gahbow and Doug Sam were the only TEC members to submit a proposal, which was rejected by the TEC.

Undaunted, Art, Doug, and other leaders continued their quest to create a government that better met the needs of members by adopting a division of powers form of government that modified the RBC into Executive and Legislative branches. The chair of the RBC became the Chief Executive, who is responsible for government operations and relationships with other governments. The RBC Secretary/Treasurer became the Secretary-Treasurer and Speaker of the Band Assembly, who presided over the Legislative Branch, which was made up of the Speaker and three district representatives.

In reality, the MCT's authority is limited mainly to three areas: elections, enrollments, and land. Most day-to-day operations are conducted by the member bands with little input from MCT or its Tribal Executive Committee, causing some to question whether the MCT should be disbanded.

NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

U.S. Supreme Court to decide Crow hunting

case: The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments last month in *Herrera v. Wyoming*. The case concerns the citation of Clayvin Herrera of the Crow Nation, who followed a herd of elk into the Big Horn National Forest, shot three elk, and returned home. Herrera said the hunt was legal under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which allowed hunting on "unoccupied lands of the United States so long as game may be found thereon, and as long as peace subsists among the whites and Indians on the borders of the hunting districts." *Source: Indian Country Today.*

Education department to investigate discrimination against Indian students in

Montana: The U.S. Education Department plans to investigate accusations that the Wolf Point School District in Montana discriminates against American Indian students. The decision to investigate came a year and a half after the Department received a complaint from tribal leaders of the Fort Peck Reservation. The investigation will focus on whether Wolf Point schools discipline Indian students more harshly than white students, assign them to remedial programs without cause, and deny them special education evaluations and services. The department will also examine whether the district failed to respond to a parent's accusations that an Indian student was racially harassed. *Source: startribune.com.*

Federal shutdown may affect Indian Health

Service: During the federal government shutdown, direct clinical services provided by the Indian Health Service are funded, but federal funding for tribal clinics isn't. Samuel Moose, director of the Department of Human Services at the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, said the tribe is using other funding sources to cover shortfalls. "I think for us, we're able to cover those expenses probably a couple of months out," said Sam, former Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the Mille Lacs Band. "When you call up to Indian Health Services right now, I think they have four or five people that are still in the office of the 30 people. The rest of the people are furloughed." *Source: Duluth News Tribune.*

Distillery opens on Red Cliff Reservation:

Red Cliff Band members Linda and Curt Basina are hoping to bring jobs to the reservation and take part in the booming craft spirits industry by opening Copper Crow, the first Native-owned distillery in the U.S. The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation in Washington planned a brewpub restaurant in 2018, but during the permit process, they learned from the Bureau of Indian Affairs that federal law prevented them from moving forward. Late in 2018, Congress lifted the outdated 1834 law prohibiting distilleries on tribal lands and banning the sale of alcohol to Native Americans on reservations. *Source: Duluth News Tribune.*

Zinke era ends at Interior Department:

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, who faced federal investigations into his travel and conflicts of interest, left the Trump administration at the end of 2018. Zinke, 57, played a leading part in Trump's efforts to roll back federal environmental regulations and promote domestic energy development. He visited Mille Lacs in 2017 to offer federal law enforcement assistance after Mille Lacs County rescinded its law enforcement agreement with the Band. *Source: startribune.com.*



FLUENT IN LEGALESE

Attorneys who work for the Band held their first "Law Day" on January 7. Sponsored by the Legislative Branch, lawyers from the Chief Executive's Office, Legislative Branch, Judicial Branch, the Office of the Solicitor General, and Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures were present, along with acting Solicitor General Marc Slonim and Beth Baldwin, who works with Marc in his Seattle office. The legal team discussed everything from business and family law to the Band's current lawsuit against Mille Lacs County. Back: Syngen Kanassataga, Charles Dolson, Jill Tompkins, Christine Jordan, Amy Weisgram, Adam Candler, Marc Slonim. Front: Mike Hogan, Kaitrin Vohs, Michael Beattie, Liz Murphy, Beth Baldwin, Angel Daher.

A PRIMER ON THE MCT CONSTITUTION

Minnesota Chippewa Tribe

The information here was prepared to give Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) members an understanding of the history of the MCT Constitution and the process for changing the Constitution.

An important aspect of any Constitution is to outline the rule of law for the nation and to create a system of governmental powers that outlines the rights of members and responsibilities of elected officials. The articles are like chapter headings, describing the purpose of each portion. Each article is then separated into sections, like paragraphs. One Article grants each Reservation Business Committees the authority to make decisions on their own reservations.

Many constitutions have a three-branch government that check and balance each other, typically a legislative branch that makes laws, an executive branch that executes the laws, and a judicial branch that interprets the laws. Our MCT Constitution does not have a three-branch system. Instead, our elected officials serve as lawmakers, executors, and ultimate decision makers; in fact, in 1980 the TEC issued an official interpretation that they (the TEC) were the only ones who could interpret the MCT Constitution.

Constitutions also outline who their citizens are and the boundaries of their jurisdiction. Over time our MCT Constitution has changed. The original MCT Constitution was adopted on June 18, 1934, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on July 24, 1936, pursuant to the authority granted in the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. A Corporate Charter accompanied the MCT Constitution, ratified on November 13, 1937; it was ultimately revoked by an act of Congress on February 12, 1996. This Constitution has up to two delegates from each community within each reservation; there were about 65 elected officials. The delegates then selected two people from each reservation to serve as the Tribal Executive Committee (TEC). TEC members then selected who was going to be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Citizenship within the MCT was debated for a long time. Our leaders at that time wanted all descendants included in membership, but were forced to agree to use the ¼-degree blood quantum that we still have in effect today.

The Constitution has changed a little over time with referen-

dums approved by voters and the Secretary of the Interior. The first change happened by a referendum of voters in 1963. The Assistant Secretary of the Interior approved the Revised Constitution on March 3, 1964. This change created the "Revised" Constitution, removed the local charters, created the Reservation Business Committee structure, implemented ¼-degree blood quantum, and changed term limits from one year to four years.

More changes were approved by voters and the Secretary of the Interior in 1972. Footnotes on the MCT Constitution, 1972 version, highlight changes: 1.) Voting age was changed to 18; 2.) Candidates for office must be at least 21 years of age as well as enrolled in and reside on the reservation of their enrollment. Before the 1972 constitutional amendment, the MCT acted more like one. People were eligible for services on any of the six reservations and could even run for office on any reservation as long as they were enrolled in the MCT.

More changes to the MCT Constitution were approved by voters and the Secretary of the Interior in 2005/2006. Almost 83 percent of the members who voted on November 22, 2005, approved two measures:

Proposed Amendment A: A candidate for Chairman, Secretary-Treasurer and Committeeman must be an enrolled member of the Tribe and reside on the reservation of his or her enrollment for one year before the date of election. No member of the Tribe shall be eligible to hold office either as a Committeeman or Officer until he or she has reached his or her twenty-first birthday on or before the date of election (4,127 to 846) and

Proposed Amendment B: No member of the Tribe shall be eligible to hold office either as a Committeeman or Officer if he or she has ever been convicted of a felony of any kind; or a lesser crime involving theft, misappropriation, or embezzlement of money, funds, assets, or property of an Indian tribe or a tribal organization.

The current MCT Constitution can be changed by a vote of the people. Twenty percent of the resident voters or eight members of the TEC can ask the Secretary of the Interior to call for a referendum where all MCT members are then allowed to vote on a proposed change. The Constitution requires that 30 percent of those entitled to vote must vote, and if a majority of the voters agree, the change is implemented.

BRANDON WORKS FOR SUCCESS — ON AND OFF THE COURT

BY MAKADGWANEBIKWE MIKAYLA SCHAAF



PHOTOS BY MAKADGWANEBIKWE AND BOB STATZ/MILLE LACS MESSENGER

Brandon Nickaboine is a three-sport athlete who maintains a 3.0 grade point average at Onamia High School.

Mille Lacs Band member Brandon Nickaboine, a 17-year-old 11th grader, is shining on and off the court at Onamia High School. It is obvious that Panther Pride runs through and through this young man, who has earned a starting position on the varsity team at Onamia High School averaging 12 points per game. He also holds a 3.0 grade point average.

"A lot of my success at Onamia comes from the support of my friends and teachers," said Brandon. "Every day before class, I put my phone away and just concentrate on my work. I don't even look at the clock. I use my study halls and downtime to get my homework done. My hardest class this year is chemistry but I have a B in that class, which makes me feel real good."

Brandon is proud to be tobacco, drug, and alcohol free. He is a member of the tobacco-free basketball league and the Native Thrive youth events, which strive to keep youth substance free through sports.

"Sports has saved my life. It keeps me motivated and out of trouble," Brandon said. "Instead of choosing to use, I would

rather go to the DI Community Center or find a place I can go to play basketball."

Basketball is Brandon's favorite sport, but he also played varsity baseball and football in 2018.

Pete Braith, Onamia's JV and varsity assistant basketball coach, is impressed with Brandon's work ethic: "Brandon is a great team player who has a high motor for the system that we run for basketball. He's willing to work very hard and is always



"INSTEAD OF CHOOSING TO USE, I WOULD RATHER FIND A PLACE I CAN GO TO PLAY BASKETBALL."

willing to be held accountable."

Brandon was also named Senior Brave for Onamia High School at the royalty powwow in April of 2018. He dances grass dance style, represents Onamia High School at powwows, and proudly danced with other Mille Lacs Band royalty and color guard at the 2019 State of the Band.

Next on his list of goals is to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College when he graduates from high school. He intends to play basketball and major in physical training. "Weight lifting is my favorite class," said Brandon. "I love everything that has to do with sports." Brandon's favorite team is the Minnesota Timberwolves, and he enjoys watching Native WNBA star Shoni Schimmel and Derek Rose of the NBA.

Brandon invites anyone to come to one of his basketball games as he is still in season. "You gotta come support the Panthers! We have a lot of up and coming Native youth who are playing on both JV and Varsity. I feel real proud to be a part of all of this! I definitely wear my school colors — yellow and black — wherever I go."

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

RETURNING TO MY CULTURAL ROOTS

By Dave Matrious



This article by the late Dave Matrious was first published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted here to help preserve his teachings for the next generation.

I grew up in the Aazhoomog community in District III of the Mille Lacs Reservation. We lived off of the trail that gave the area the name "Aazhoomog," which means "crossroads" in Ojibwe. My father, Scottie Matrious, came from the St. Croix Band, and my mother, Grace Sutton, was from the Mille Lacs Band.

My parents were very cultural people and spoke Ojibwe fluently. My mother stayed home with the kids and my dad was a logger in the spring and summer.

He was a good hunter and liked to gather wild rice. I remember going to ceremonial events like the big drum with my dad and family. My father was a drum keeper. I learned a lot by watching him.

I quit high school in the tenth grade in 1969 and moved to St. Paul to work. Although I quit school early, I later got my G.E.D. and my A.A. degree in liberal arts. In St. Paul, I got my first job making \$1.50 an hour as a set designer at the local PBS television station. When I went to work in television, I was very excited and fascinated with the programs and their production. There wasn't electricity in Aazhoomog until the early 1970s, so I didn't have television growing up.

I started out constructing and painting sets before moving to the production side. At that time, there were very few American Indians in television broadcasting. When I was 20,

I moved to Maryland to work at another PBS station. It was scary, because I didn't know when I was going to return home. Working hard took my mind off of being homesick.

After four years in Maryland, I moved back to Minnesota. Coming home from Maryland changed my focus in life. The move brought me back to traditional tribal ways, which I had turned away from during my adolescence. I felt like I was starving for something more and turned to my heritage. I learned my Ojibwe name and that my family clan was Sturgeon. I also learned the Ojibwe language, although I can understand it more than I can speak it.

After about a year in Wisconsin, my family moved back to the Mille Lacs Reservation. Since my father was sick, I began helping him and my mother with the drum ceremonies. Before I went to Maryland, I was placed on my father's drum, so I had some experience with the ceremonies.

In the mid-1980s, there was a special election for the District III Representative position and I decided to run. I lost the election, but still got involved in the community. I started attending community meetings and sat on the housing committee after being asked to do so by one of the Band Representatives.

Then in June of 1986, I ran again for District III Representative and this time was elected. I held that position for six years, at which time I was appointed to Secretary/Treasurer of the Band Assembly. I also held that position for six years.

Today, I continue to be involved with the Band. I now work at the Band's Ojibwe Language and Culture Center as a resource specialist and help teach others about the Ojibwe culture. I don't pretend to know everything about the Ojibwe culture and drum ceremonies, but what I do know, I want to pass down. It's important to share these traditions, otherwise we'll lose our culture.



Casey Dorr

LONG ROAD BACK TO SCHOOL

Bradley Roache Jr. Mille Lacs Band Member

Whatever your age, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to be a successful student. Band member Dr. Casey Dorr is a prime example of how perseverance pays off. At only 38, he is a man of many titles: Investigator at Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute in downtown Minneapolis, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota, and beginning this semester: student.

"I'm back in school, working on a Master's degree in Biostatistics as part of my career development plan," said Casey. "It's odd becoming a professor of medicine and a student at the same time."

"FIND A DREAM OR GOAL, AND WORK TOWARDS IT. AND USE YOUR COMMUNITY TO HELP YOU. COUNT ON YOUR PEOPLE, BECAUSE I WOULDN'T BE ANYWHERE WITHOUT MY OJIBWE PEOPLE."

Casey grew up in Bemidji. A high-school trip, where he spent a week in a Mayan village in the rainforests of Belize, sent him on both his academic and professional journeys. "Your whole perspective on life changes in the rainforest," he said.

Back then, as it is with so many high school students today, sports occupied a lot of his time. Casey was a starting fullback, linebacker, and kicker — as well as the punter. Basically, he

was on the field for the whole game. But a broken hand in his junior year and numerous concussions helped put things in perspective. The summer before his senior year he made the decision to give up football. "I was like, 'I don't want to play football,'" he recalled. "I just want to be a scientist!"

Casey began his academic career at the University of Minnesota Duluth, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Cell Biology and Chemistry in 2004. While at UMD, he met Rick Smith, Director of the American Indian Learning Resource Center, who took Casey under his wing. "Rick Smith has been paramount to me in my life, helping me, and getting me where I need to go," Casey said.

He earned his Ph.D. in Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology and Genetics at the University of Minnesota in 2011, and has since either authored or co-authored around 12 peer-reviewed articles and papers that have been published in scholarly journals.

Dr. Dorr is a lifetime member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans (S.A.C.N.A.S), where he's on the Native American Affairs Committee. While he was an undergraduate, he joined the American Indian Science and Engineering Society in 1999, and is also a lifetime member. "Those societies have been huge in helping me find direction, find the next step... and just support."

He currently works as an Investigator at the Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute, studying the genetics of drug metabolism and collecting data on why different people break down/metabolize drugs differently. "I'm investigating health disparities and personalized medicine," Casey said. "There's really not much known about how to treat a lot of

minority populations, because almost all the research is done on white folks, so physicians don't even really know how to treat Natives, Africans, Asians, or Hispanics. It's a whole new world of personalized medicine. Treat the person, not necessarily the disease."

Most of the time, he's the only Native voice in the room. "I'll go to meetings and they'll ask me what it means to be Native, and — no one knows anything. It's so foreign to everyone, but it's indigenous to where we are, and all these people don't know anything about it."

CHASING THE DREAM

But it's not all lab experiments, meetings with colleagues, and collecting data. At times, it can be a lot like running a small business. There is a constant need for funding to pay for things like a lab assistant, various experiments, and analysis, so Casey writes and applies for grants. "I mean, I write a lot of grants, and most of them fail, but I've been having good success here, the last couple of years. You just gotta keep working at it. Keep chasing that dream. They don't teach you that in chemistry. It's a big learning experience."

For Casey, chasing dreams and setting goals are major keys to success. "'Find a dream or goal, and work towards it,'" he said. "And use your community to help you. Count on your people, because I wouldn't be anywhere without my Ojibwe people. The main thing is community. That's what my dad (Ron Dorr) told me. He said, 'Stick with our native people. We look out for each other. You're gonna be okay. Stick to that goal, that dream'."



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT NAY AH SHING

It was a busy month as usual at Nay Ah Shing Schools in District I. Many students got the chance to try darkhouse spearing, thanks to community volunteers who helped out. Elementary students were honored for building outstanding literacy growth, and the Upper School students had a blast at the school dance. The winter powwow will be held on January 1 from 10 until 11:45 a.m. at the Abinoojiiyag.



EDUCATION MEETS COMMUNITY SERVICE

On Thursday, December 20, 2018, the third grade students from Nay Ah Shing School donated goods to the Band food shelf that they had collected over two weeks as part of their community service project. After learning about what it means to be in a community and how to work together to help others, the students decided that they wanted to help others in their community by donating to their local food shelf. The students collected boxes, decorated them, and placed them in different locations in the community. They were able to collect 160 pounds of a variety of foods. The kids learned that the local Band food shelf distributes to three districts, and they also helped over 300 families during the holidays. They hope to make this an annual event for the future and want to thank everyone who donated and helped make this possible.

OUR NEW LOOK!

This month's Ojibwe Inaajimowin has a new design, thanks to Band member Chad Germann's team at Red Circle Agency in Minneapolis.

While the content is similar to what you've grown accustomed to, the new design adds color, readability, and variety.

Miigwech to Chad and to all our contributors.

If you have questions about the newsletter or would like to submit photos or stories, please contact Brett Larson at brett.larson@millelacsband.com or 320-237-6851.

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Summary of Expenditures and Financing Uses:	Approved Budget for FY 2019	Expenditures through 12/31/18	% of Budget Expended
Administration (1)	19,561,346	4,171,626	21%
Department of Labor	20,707,828	1,024,178	5%
Judicial	2,392,725	259,638	11%
Department of Justice	7,143,474	1,287,816	18%
Education	15,236,830	3,458,262	23%
Health and Human Services	32,481,667	6,475,013	20%
Circle of Health Insurance	5,720,000	1,069,337	19%
Natural Resources	8,615,774	3,192,016	37%
Community Development	23,635,307	7,541,702	32%
Gaming Authority	5,332,641	1,101,853	21%
Bonus Distribution	16,156,163	9,148,502	57%
Economic Stimulus Distribution	3,299,000	3,294,000	100%
Total	160,282,765	42,023,943	26%

- (1) Administration includes chief executive, administration, finance, legislative, government affairs, and district operations.
- (2) Casino operations are not reported above; however, they do include government operations funded by casino operations.
- (3) The financial statements of the Band are audited every year by an independent public accounting firm. Audit reports from previous years are available for review at the government center upon written request.
- (4) Economic Development appropriations have been excluded as of October 31, 1997.

ALL BAND MEMBERS: PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM

The Enrollments Department is asking all Band members to submit the form below to ensure that the Band has current information and that all mailings reach Band members at their current address. Please fill out the form, cut along the dotted lines, and send it to the address at the bottom. Miigwech! If you have any questions, please call Enrollments at 320-532-7730.



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Enrollment Department
2019 Household Survey



I am an enrolled member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

****PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY****

Print Full Legal Name: _____
(Your full legal name must appear as on the MLBO enrollment list)

Date of Birth: _____ Enrollment Number: 410B0 _____

****Please indicate Physical Address when different than Mailing Address****

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
(Your phone numbers will be held with the same confidentiality as your address.)

Head of Household: YES NO

Please List all MLB enrolled household members, and their relation to the Head of Household.

NAME	DOB	MLB Enrolled Y/N	Permanent Resident - Y/N	RELATION TO H.O.H.
				SELF

Signature _____

Date: _____

District 1
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
Enrollments Department

RECEIVED

SPECIAL ELECTION IN DISTRICT III FEBRUARY 5

Brett Larson Inaajimowin Staff Writer



District III Band members will participate in a special election February 5 to vote for a replacement for State Senator Tony Lourey, who was appointed by Governor Tim Walz to serve as Commissioner of Human Services.

A special primary on Jan. 22 narrowed the DFL candidates from two to one. Stu Lourey was chosen by voters to represent the DFL in the special election February 5, facing Republican Jason Rarick and John "Sparky" Birrenbach of the Legalize Marijuana Now party.

Stu Lourey campaigned hard among Mille Lacs Band voters, attending the State of the Band address January 8 at Grand Casino Mille Lacs and the District III community meeting January 16 at Grand Casino Hinckley, where he shook the hands of everyone in the room.

He was introduced by Katie Draper, Director of the Band's Government Affairs Department. "With the State Legislature currently in session, the need to fill this seat is critical," said Katie.

Stu talked about growing up in Kerrick, Minnesota, where he learned about the disparities between rural and urban Minnesota when it comes to affordable housing, health care, and

education. Stu would be the third generation of Loureys to represent the region and District III community members.

Polling locations are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Election Day luncheons will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Aazhoomog and Meshakwad Community Centers. Rides to the polls will be available. Call 320-495-5006 or 320-515-0846 with questions.



Stu Lourey spoke with Band members and guests at the State of the Band address on January 8.

DISTRICT I MEMBERS LEARN ABOUT MEDICATION-ASSISTED RECOVERY, WEWIN AT COMMUNITY MEETING

By Makadegwanebiikwe Mikayla Schaaf Mille Lacs Band Descendant



At the District I Community Meeting on January 9, Ne-la-Shing Clinic Chief Medical Officer Dr. Donald Gunderson and Clinical Pharmacist Dr. Greg Braaten informed community members about the Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) program, which has been active since August 2018.

The clinical team has worked for several months to develop a program aimed at assisting individuals who struggle with opioid addiction through the use of the medication known as Suboxone. Suboxone is used to help eliminate or reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings. "So far it has gone well," explained Dr. Gunderson. "We are not just treating the substance abuse disorder, but also some of the underlying issues that develop along with it. The great thing about this program is that we treat the addiction as a medical condition, therefore allowing us to provide immediate care."

The MAR program can be accessed by anyone who is a patient at Ne-la-Shing clinic. Once admitted, the patient will be provided with a program designed and developed specifically for his or her needs.

Dr. Braaten closed the presentation with a Q&A Session and emphasized, "We are a changing and growing program.

We look to the community for support and suggestions to ensure MAR fits the needs of our community."

For more information or questions about MAR, please call the nurse line at 320-532-4163 ext. 2511 or cell 320-362-0892.

WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN

Valerie Harrington and LeAnn "Biidaana" Benjamin presented information about Women Empowering Women for Indigenous Nations (WEWIN). WEWIN is looking for more female participation in the group.

Group members support each other through honoring other women and attending support meetings. A WEWIN youth group also participates on a regular basis.

Fundraising opportunities are available to attend the 2019 annual conference (dates and location to be announced).

LeAnn has been a part of WEWIN for almost seven years and has been involved in fundraising for three years. "WEWIN for me has been awesome," said LeAnn. "It has helped me grow both professionally and personally!"

If you would like to join WEWIN, please contact Valerie Harrington at Valerie.Harrington@millelacsband.com or LeAnn Benjamin at LBenjamin@nas.k12.mn.us.



District I Band members heard from Dr. Donald Gunderson and Dr. Greg Braaten (left) and read information about use of medicine in treatment of addiction at the community meeting January 9.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRESENTS CRAFTING TO HEAL:

These are free classes for women with materials provided. Space is limited. For the baby moccasin class, call Mikayla at 320-532-7776 ext. 2413 to reserve your spot. For the ribbon skirt class, contact Carol Hernandez at carol.hernandez@hhs.millelacsband-nsn.gov or 320-515-1594 to reserve your spot. For all other classes, please call Kitty Johnson at 612-516-8647 to reserve your spot. No daycare is available. Date and time of all classes subject to change in the event of a wake or funeral.

Writing and Healing taught by Li Boyd:

February 2 at 9 a.m. at the District I Community Center. Attendees will go home with a copy of New Poets of Native Nations and a personally customized book bag.

Women's jelly roll quilt class taught by Sharon Raisch and Vanessa Benjamin:

February 4, 3-7 p.m. at Meshakwad Community Center. Attendees will go home with the quilt they made.

Women's beaded earring class taught by Amber Buckanaga:

February 4, 3-7 p.m. at Meshakwad Community Center. Attendees will go home with the earrings they made.

Women's baby moccasin class taught by Carol Hernandez and Mikayla Schaaf:

February 4 and 5, Chiminising Community Center from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. both nights.

February 12 and 13, District II ALU, 5:30-8:30 p.m. both nights.

Women's ribbon skirt class taught by Carol Hernandez and Gilda Burr:

February 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Meshakwad Community Center. Attendees will go home with the skirt they made.

Adult moccasin (round toe and pucker toe) class taught by Joyce Shingobe and Cheryl Minnema:

February 23-24, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Meshakwad Community Center. Attendees will go home with the moccasins they made. Assistants: LeAnn Benjamin and Amanda Roache.

Dreamcatcher crafting event taught by Catherine Colsrud and Georgette DiCosmo:

February 28, 1:30-5:30 p.m. at Meshakwad Community Center. Attendees will go home with the dreamcatcher they made.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRESENTS CIRCLE OF SECURITY PARENTING PROGRAM:

Behavioral Health's Children's Mental Health Department's Circle of Security Parenting Program (COS-P) is an inspiring and practical course for caregivers based on decades of research. Our trained COS-P facilitator and community caregivers have spent the last couple weeks focusing on how parent/child relationships can be strengthened with this unique approach. Be on the lookout for our next cycle. Contact Alexandra Clitso for more information at Alexandra.Clitso@hhs.millelacsband-nsn.gov or call Nay Ah Shing Schools at 320-532-4695 ext. 2147 or Behavioral Health at 320-532-7776.

MCT FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER CLASS

First-time homebuyer education is coming Saturday, March 9, and Saturday, April 20, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Building, 15542 State 371 NW, Cass Lake, Minnesota. First-time Homebuyer Education is a requirement of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Finance Corporation for qualified buyers. Please reserve your spot in this free class with Cyndi Cwikla at 218-335-8582, extension 150 or ccwikla@mnchippewatribe.org. No childcare is provided, so please make other arrangements.

ARTISTIC CURATION OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS



Shelly Foster (Naawagiizisookwe) uses her artistic vision to create a feeling of well-being at the Mille Lacs Trading Post in District I.

Story and photo by Amikogaabawiiwke (Adrienne Benjamin) Mille Lacs Band Member

Shelly Foster (Naawagiizisookwe) is the daughter of Mille Lacs Band Elder Nancy Foster. Shelly moved back to Mille Lacs soon after a successful and fulfilling college career because she wanted to work for the community that had given her so much. "The tribe paid for my college, and I felt that it would only be right to give back to them through community work and the utilization of my talents," said Shelly.

She has done just that. "I worked for the SHIP program for a year (a Health and Human Services state grant program), and I asked myself, "What do I want to do now?" I knew that I wanted to be working in some capacity with native art someday, and I told my mom that. Lo and behold, the very next day my mom brought me a job posting and said the buyer position at the trading post was open!"

Shelly's intent was to only stay for a few years and move on, as she considers herself a free spirit in the world, but the museum job has kept her here for eight years now. "I get to be around art. People put their spirit and love into the things that they make, and it's so beautiful and satisfying to be around it constantly and to see what people come up with. For me, you can see the artistic spirit of the person who creates art. They all have a definitive style, and it comes out through their designs and work."

Shelly's favorite part of buying and selling is a successful sale or trade, but not for the reasons that one may think. "I have a high appreciation for art and especially things that are handmade by Indigenous people, and connecting a maker with someone who really appreciates what they do is so rewarding for me."

She quickly realized that not looking like a "typical Anishinaabe person" would make her job a whole lot more interesting and sometimes even trying. "A lot of people don't think I'm Anishinaabe from here or that I know what I'm talking about. It's interesting to work at the museum because non-Native

people will have biased conversations about Natives and think it's safe in front of me, and I will pipe up and say things in defense and to educate them to the best of my ability. At the same time, I also receive a hard time from people about the way I look in my own community. That hurts, and I have dealt with moments of not feeling good enough or Native enough, not just in this job but personally. It's such a funny thing that we make each other feel like that."

WELL ROUNDED

While art has been Shelly's passion, she pursued other interests in academics that have fit well with her current position. "My degree is in urban studies because I knew nothing about being urban growing up on a reservation, so I wanted to learn about it," she chuckled. "I have a dance minor and have an elementary teaching credential as well. I was a teacher for five years, and it's connected to what I do here because we teach to youth and adults about history and traditional crafts. It's exciting to expand adults' experiences and their perspectives on the world and get them to think deeper about the world and

how they treat other," Shelly added.

Shelly credits the trading post's flawless curation to her own self-professed OCD. "I'm a perfectionist, and it can be a problem when I curate the store, because I want it to be immaculate." One is quick to notice the vast offerings of books, beadwork, delicacies, crafts, jewelry, and supplies that neatly flood the trading post atmosphere.

"I like to focus on Minnesota art, but I also include other artists that I find at art shows, regionally and nationally. The bottom line is that I'm looking for things that are finely made. I want the highest quality work that we can find in here."

In an effort to promote and welcome more work from Band members, Shelly has pushed for trading to be the true norm here. The museum allows full dollar-for-dollar value match on original work for beads, leather, or other supplies. One can even trade for a Pendleton blanket that they may have been eyeing, or a piece of beautiful ledger art. "Some people might not understand why they're not getting full value on a direct cash buy because we have to mark up to make money and keep our organization going, but with trade, I can give dollar-for-dollar match, and that makes me feel better about helping artists in that way," Shelly shared.

The trading post has been a part of the Mille Lacs area for a long time, and the preservation and impression of it is important to Shelly. "When someone walks into the store, I want them to feel welcome, bimaadiziwin as the vibe," she said.

Customers can smell sweetgrass and sage when they walk in. They hear traditional music. Shelly hopes to create a feeling of well-being inside the shop — a space that feels good to the senses. "People often share their stories that are inspired by walking through the store as a kid seeing, smelling, and even tasting the offerings, and being inspired by the art," Shelly said. "To me, that's what it's all about."

"I LIKE TO FOCUS ON MINNESOTA ART, BUT I ALSO INCLUDE OTHER ARTISTS THAT I FIND AT ART SHOWS, REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT I'M LOOKING FOR THINGS THAT ARE FINELY MADE. I WANT THE HIGHEST QUALITY WORK THAT WE CAN FIND IN HERE."



FACES IN THE CROWD — 2019 STATE OF THE BAND

The energy is electric and the mood is celebratory at the State of the Band each year — and 2019 was no different! Band members came early to chat with old friends, to find information about programs, services, and organizations — and to fill bags with goodies. The Legislative Branch handed out t-shirts, and the Chief Executive gave books and sweatshirts to Band members who filled out a survey. The festivities ended with a delicious meal provided by the Grand Casino staff.

GIKENDANDAA I'IW OJIBWEMOWIN — LEARN THE OJIBWE LANGUAGE

By the late Miskwaanakwad (Melvin Eagle). Reprinted from *Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales & Oral Histories*, A Bilingual Anthology Edited by Anton Treuer.

GIMISHOOMISANAAN

Ahaaw-sh iwidi mewinza go daa-gii-pi-agaashiinyiyaan iko gii-pabizindawagwaa akiwenziyag gii-pizindawagwaa ko waawiindamawiwaad gegoo iwidi ko mewinza o'ow indazhindaan. Owidi mewinza ko gii-kichi-naaniimi'idiwaad Gaa-waababiganikaag gii-izhaa gii-pi-onjibaad gaa-onji-ondaa-diziyaan gaye niin. Wa'aw akiwenzi iwidi Gaa-waababiganikaag gii-onjibaa. Owidi gii-pi-niimi'idiid omaa, omaa o'ow ikwe-dewe'igan omaa gii-tibendaagozi omaa nookomis. Miish imaa nimishoomis gaye gii-pi-wiindigemaad gii-pi-niimi'idiwaad ko. Mii imaa gaa-izhi-ondaadizid nimaamaa.

Miinawaa-sh gegoo nisiwag ingiw gwiwizensag imaa, iwidi Gaa-waababiganikaag. Ma'iingaansag gii-izhinikaazowag. Miinawaa aya'aa iwidi bezhig a'aw wiijikiwending. Gaawin ingikenimaasiin ezhinikaazod a'aw akiwenzi gii-wiindigending Gaa-miskwaawaakokaag. Mii gaye wiidiged imaa-sh gaye wiin akiwenzi imaa-sh besho iwidi Gaa-waababiganikaag. Mii iwidi gaa-onjibaawaad ingiw Ma'iingaansag gaa-izhinikaazojig.

O'ow dash akiwenzi imaa ingii-waawiindamaag ko-gii-pi-naaniimi'idiwaad iko biboong gii-paa'igoowaad iko miinawaa go sa ingoji aabita gii-tazhi-daawag ko gii-pi-azhegiwewaad imaa gii-pi-niimi'idiwaad. Mii eta ko gii-pi-anokiwaapan gii-niimi'idiwaad miinawaa go mawadishiwewaad gaye wii-ishkwaa-niimi'idiwaad gigizhebaawagak. Miinawaa aangodinong ko niyogon ko gii-niimi'idiwaad omaa. Mii omaa Neyaashiing akeyaa gii-kichi-naaniimi'idiwaad iko ogow dewe'iganag.

Mii iwidi akeyaa dewe'iganag gaa-pi-onjibaawaad bwaanakiing. Niibowa eyaajig omaa o'ow dash dagoshinowaad omaa ingiw dewe'iganag. Mewinza ko ongow anishinaabeg gii-miigaanaawaad iniw bwaan. Gaawin igo sa gikendanziiwag. Gii-maanendiwag apane ingiw bwaanag miinawaa go anishinaabeg, gii-miigaanaawaad iniw bwaan. Gaawin ogow anishinaabeg, gii-miigaanaasiwaawaan iniw bwaan. Ayl'iin dash iniw baashkiziganan ogii-ayaa-naawaan wiinawaa go anishinaabeg iwidi gii-pi-onjibaawaad akeyaa wendaabang. Omaa gii-pi-dagoshinowaad gii-minwendamowaad o'ow aki. Mii gaa-onji-miigaanaawaad iniw bwaan. Gayesh imaa gii-izhaawaad ingiw bwaanag akeyaa bangishimog gii-kiizhikawaawaad. Gayesh ingiw bwaanag gaa-shawenimaawaad iniw dibishkoo gii-maanendiwag sa go. Miish ingiw bwaanag gaa-izhi-inendamowaad i'iw wii-miinaawaad iniw dewe'iganan, dibishkoo go akeyaa o'ow apane gii-miigaadiwaad dibishkoo go gii-shawendiwaad; gii-shawen-

imaawaad iniw anishinaaben i'iw gii-niimiwenigoowaad. Mii gaa-pi-onji-maajii-izhaawaad ingiw dewe'iganag imaa gii-pi-dagoshinowaad ingiw dewe'iganag.

OUR GRANDFATHER

All right then, a long time ago when I was a child I used to listen to the elderly men, listening to them in what they told me about different things over there a long time ago, this [is] what I'm talking about. A long time ago they used [to] have huge Big Drum ceremonies over there at White Earth; the people went there where they came from just as I originate from there myself. This one old man was from over there at White Earth. My grandmother was a member of the Ladies Drum here [at Mille Lacs] when they were having a Big Drum Ceremony over here. And then my grandfather married her while they were having [a] Drum Ceremony. That's where my mother was born.

And there were three boys there too, over there at White Earth. They were called the Littlewolves. And with that one guy over there, they were all brothers. I don't know that one old man's name who got married at Cass Lake. And that one old man got married there, but that's close over there to White Earth. That's where they were from, those Littlewolves as they were called.

That old man there told me this here about how they used to have Drum Ceremony in the winter and they would go along until somewhere about halfway there where they would stay and then return there when it came to be time for the Dance to be held. They only used to work when they had Drum ceremonies and then they visited after they had the dance in the morning. And sometimes they used to hold a dance for four days here. Right here by Neyaashiing they used to have really big Drum ceremonies with these Drums.

The Drums originated over there in the Sioux lands. There were a lot of them here when those Drums came here. A long time ago these Indians used to fight those Dakotas. They don't know why. The [Ojibwe] Indians and the Dakotas hated each other, and they fought those Dakotas. These Indians shouldn't have fought the Dakotas. But the Indians had acquired guns for themselves from the east where they came from. When they arrived here they liked this land. That's why they fought those Dakotas. And those Dakotas went out there towards the west where the [Ojibwe] chased them. And then the Dakotas loved them just like they used to hate one another. Then it occurred to the Dakota to give them the Drums, and they loved one another the same way they used to hate one another; they really blessed those Indians in making such a gift as that. That's how those Drums came there, how those Drums arrived.



HERE'S TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

In her State of the Band address January 8 (see pages 3-7), Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin praised those Band members who get up and go to work every day or night to support themselves, their families, and their communities. Miigwech to you all!

ROUND DANCE IN THE SWAMP
FEB 1ST 2019
EAST LAKE COMMUNITY CENTER, MCGREGOR MN
START AT 6PM

MCS MIKE SULLIVAN AND DAVE NORTHBROOK SR

Invited Singers	Invited Drums
Jer Churchill	Red Willow
Frankie Graves	Little Otter
Scotty Matthews	Red Creek
Marques Crawford	PipeStone
Joe Fourclain	Black Bear Crossing
Nizhoo Sullivan	
Jerrite Caldwell Sr	
Jerrite Caldwell Jr	
Tom Benjamin Sr	
Wesley Cloud Jr	
Gabe "Buzz" Gahbow	

HAND DRUM CONTEST

2-5 man
1st \$500
2nd \$300
3rd \$200

Silent Auction
Spot Dances
Door Prizes
Ribbon Skirt and Shirt Contest

Vendor space Available contact Vito Buckanga 612-417-2929



TRAINED AND CERTIFIED

The Department of Athletic Regulation held their Athletic Inspector Training and Certification at the state-of-the-art Meshakwad Community Center on Saturday, January 11. Miigwech to the dedicated staff who spent part of their weekend to help others expand their knowledge and hone their craft!

TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS TO MILLE LACS BAND ELDERS!

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

Ellen Marie Roth
 Bette Sam
 Gladys Diane Sam
 James Allan Sam
 Darrell Duane Sam
 Pauline Marie Sam
 Kenneth Wayne [Mitchell]
 Shingobe
 Alvera Marie Smith
 Bennie David St. John
 Edward Louis St. John
 Stanley Conrad St. John
 Robert Lee Staples
 Richard Jay Staples
 Gary Marshall Thomas
 Emma Edna Thomas
 Valetta Irene Towle
 Michael Leo Towle
 Ramona Joyce Washington
 Patrick Weyaus
 Marilyn Jean Whitney
 Clyde Manuel Wind
 Rose Marie Wind
 Dorothy May Wistrom
 Bruce Alan Anderson
 Colleen Michele Johnson
 Scott Armond Meyer
 Kelvin Ray Shingobe
 Kenny Jack Towle

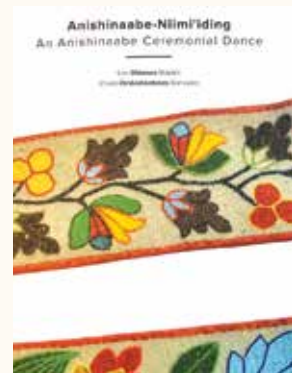
HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

February 7th
Chris Jr. love the Harrington family

February 13th
Baby Jacob love the Harrington family
 February 16th
Jacob love the Harrington family
 February 22nd
Princess love Auntie Val
 February 22nd
Braelyn love Dad, Payton, Eric, Wes, Waase, Bryn, Gally, Bam, Papa Brad, Grannie Kim, Papa Kyle, Stranger, Auntie Val, Dan, Kev, Pie, Montana, Auntie Randi, Bruce, Jayla, Lileah, Rachel, Rory, Jay, Taylor and Guy
 February 23rd
Cordell love the Harrington family

HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAYS:

January 9th
Avery Pendegayosh
 January 9th
Austin Pendegayosh
 January 20th
Arielle Pendegayosh
 January 29th
Abriana Pendegayosh



MIIGWECH, OBIZAAAN!

Band members who attended the State of the Band address received the newest book by Lee Obizaan Staples and Chato Ombishkebines Gonzalez, *Anishinaabe-Niimi'iding: An Anishinaabe Ceremonial Dance*. "These Anishinaabe ceremonial drums were given to all Anishinaabe people," said Obizaan. "There is a lot within these ceremonies that will help the Anishinaabe."

Noteboard guidelines: birthdays, congratulations, memorial tributes

The Tribal Noteboard welcomes Band member submissions, including birthdays, congratulatory messages, and memorial tributes. For birthday messages, send name, birthday and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS**. To congratulate a friend or family member on a milestone or accomplishment, send a message that is **50 WORDS OR LESS**. For a memorial tribute to a Band member who has passed on, send a message that is **100 WORDS OR LESS** to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or **320-237-6851**. The deadline for the March issue is February 15. Photos may be included if space allows.

MILLE LACS BAND RECOVERY GROUPS

District I Mille Lacs

Wellbriety Mothers of Tradition

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

Wellbriety Migizi Meeting

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

Wellbriety Celebrating Families

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

NA/AA Welcome

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

Wellbriety Sons of Tradition

Sundays, 1–3 p.m., 42293 Twilight Road, Onamia
 Contact Kim Sam at 320-532-4768

District II East Lake

AA Group

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

District III Hinckley & Aazhoomog

Wellbriety Talking Circle

Mondays, 6 p.m., Aazhoomog Community Center

Wellbriety 12 Step Group

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

Wellbriety 12 Step Group

Thursdays, 6 p.m., Meshakwad Community Center

Please send changes and additions to brett.larson@millelacsband.com.

RECURRING EVENTS

Co-ed Volleyball: Tuesdays, Meshakwad Community Center.

Co-ed Basketball: Wednesdays, Meshakwad CC.

Zumba: Wednesdays, noon, District I CC.

To add your event to the calendar, email brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851.

ANONYMOUS DRUG TIP HOTLINE

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



UPCOMING EVENTS

All District Elder Meeting: March 21, 11:30 a.m. Hinckley ALU.

20th Anniversary Treaty Day Celebration: March 22.

Central Lakes Powwow: April 18.

Nay Ah Shing Quiz Bowl: April 25.

Art Gahbow Day: April 26.

Nay Ah Shing/Pine Grove Royalty Powwow: May 17.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Want your event here? Email brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. Visit millelacsband.com/calendar for additional MLB events.</p> <p>Band Assembly meetings Band Assembly meetings are held at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at rotating locations throughout the districts. Meeting dates, times, and locations are subject to change. For additional information, call the Legislative office or visit millelacsbandlegislativebranch.com.</p>					<p>1 Nay Ah Shing Powwow 10–11:45 a.m. Lower School Round Dance in the Swamp 6 p.m. East Lake Community Center <i>See page 17</i></p>	<p>2 Writing and Healing 9 a.m. District I Community Center <i>See page 15</i></p>
<p>3 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I. <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>4 Baby Moccasin Class 5:30–8:30 p.m. Chiminising CC <i>See page 15</i> Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i> Jelly Roll Quilt Class and Beaded Earring Class 3–7 p.m. Meshakwad CC <i>See page 15</i></p>	<p>5 Baby Moccasin Class 5:30–8:30 p.m. Chiminising Community Center <i>See page 15</i> Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i> Band Assembly District I Government Center</p>	<p>6 Inaajimowin Meeting 11 a.m. Government Affairs building, Wahkon <i>See below</i> NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>7 Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i> Band Assembly District I Government Center</p>	<p>8 Storytelling Event 6:30–9:30 p.m. Mille Lacs Indian Museum <i>See below</i></p>	<p>9 Thomas X concert and presentation 2 p.m. Meshakwad CC <i>See below</i> Elder Luncheon and Bingo 11 a.m.–2 p.m. All Nations Church</p>
<p>10 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>11 Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>12 Baby Moccasin Class 5:30–8:30 p.m. DII ALU <i>See page 15</i> Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>13 District I Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Community Center Baby Moccasin Class 5:30–8:30 p.m. DII ALU <i>See page 15</i> NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>14 Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>17 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I <i>See page 18</i> Ribbon Skirt Class 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 15</i></p>	<p>18 Chiefs Day Government Offices Closed Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>19 Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i> Band Assembly Chiminising Community Center</p>	<p>20 District III Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley District IIa Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. Chiminising CC NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>21 Wellbriety 12-Step 6 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 18</i> Band Assembly East Lake ALU</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 Adult Moccasin Class 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 15</i></p>
<p>24 Wellbriety Sons of Tradition 1–3 p.m. District I <i>See page 18</i> Adult Moccasin Class 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Meshakwad Community Center <i>See page 15</i></p>	<p>25 District III Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Hinckley Corporate Building District II Sobriety Feast 6 p.m. DII Community Center Wellbriety, AA, NA District I, II, III <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>26 District I Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Community Center Wellbriety District I, III <i>See page 18</i> Band Assembly Meshakwad Community Center</p>	<p>27 District II Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. East Lake Community Center NA/AA Welcome District I <i>See page 18</i></p>	<p>28 District IIa Sobriety Feast 5:30 p.m. Chiminising CC Urban Community Meeting 5:30 p.m. All Nations Church Dreamcatcher Crafting Event <i>See page 15</i> Band Assembly Aazhoomog CC</p>	<p>WEWENI ANAABAJI'AW ASEMAA WINTER STORYTELLING For the second straight year, a winter storytelling event will be held in collaboration with Onamia Schools and the Minnesota Historical Society. On Friday, February 8, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, come to hear stories in Ojibwemowin by Billy Blackwell and Alex Kmett and enjoy a meal provided by the Sioux Chef. Participants will receive a sweatshirt and a ticket for a door prize raffle. The meal will be provided by the Minnesota Historical Society. Native Skywatchers will have a telescope set up outside for viewing Ojibwe constellations and other astronomical sights from 7:15–9:15 p.m. (weather permitting).</p>	

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

Join the Inaajimowin team at 11 a.m. on February 6 at the Government Affairs building in Wahkon to share your thoughts and ideas. If you have an interest in writing for the newsletter, please come and introduce yourself!

THOMAS X COMING TO MESHAKWAD

At Meshakwad Community Center on February 9 at 2 p.m., Anishinaabe hip hop artist Thomas X presents "Rise With Culture," a combination of stories, spoken word poetry, rap music, and short films. Thomas uses modern day storytelling methods to show us how connecting with culture can help people rise above addiction and life obstacles.



MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359
millelacsband.com

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PERMIT NO 30308

UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

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

ABOUT US

Ojibwe Inaajimowin is produced monthly by the Government Affairs Department of the Mille Lacs Band's Executive Branch. Please send questions, comments, corrections, or submissions to brett.larson@millelacsband.com or call 320-237-6851. The March issue deadline is February 15.

NEED HELP?

If you or someone you know is injured or in immediate danger, call 911 first.

Tribal Police Department dispatch:
888-609-5006; 320-532-3430.

Emergency Management Services:
24-hour fire, disaster, and emergency management response: Monte Fronk, Emergency Management Coordinator: 320-362-0435.

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

Community Support Services: For emergencies related to food and nutrition, Elder services, Elder abuse, sexual assault, or emergency loans, call 320-532-7539 or 320-630-2687.

Domestic violence: (c) 320-630-2499.

Women's Shelter: 866-867-4006.

Batterers' Intervention: 320-532-8909.

Heating, water, or other home-related maintenance problems: If you live in a Mille Lacs Band Housing-maintained home, call our Customer Service Representative during regular business hours at 800-709-6445, ext. 7799. If you live in a home not maintained by the Mille Lacs Band and need assistance after hours with utilities or heating, please contact: 866-822-8538 (Press 1, 2, or 3 for respective districts).

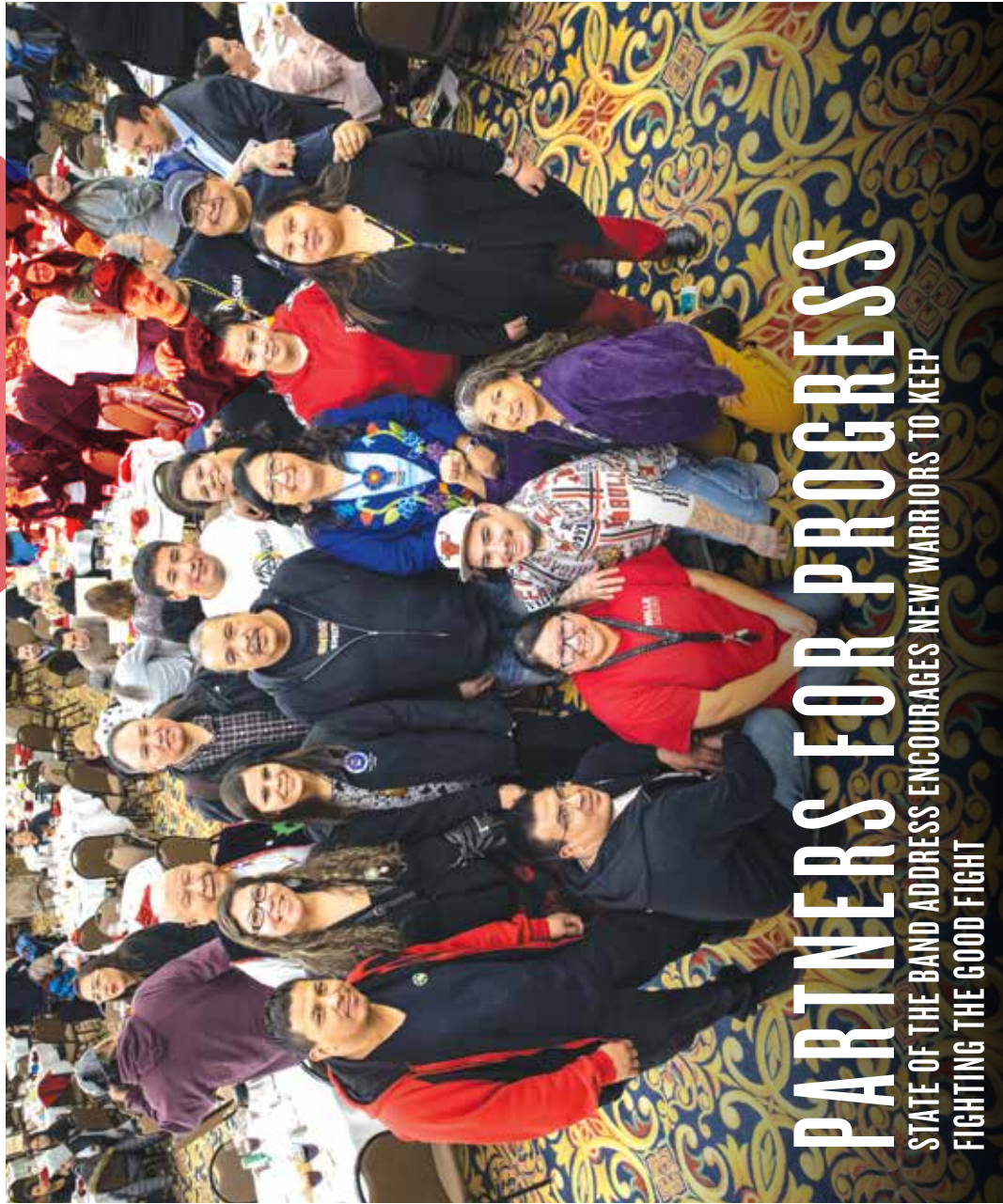
Mille Lacs Band Family Services: Foster Care: 320-630-2663; Social Worker: 320-630-2444; 800-709-6445, ext. 7588. Family Violence Prevention: District I 320-532-4780; East Lake 218-768-4412; Aazhoomog 320-384-0149; Hinckley 320-384-4613; Toll-free 24-hour crisis line 866-867-4006.



O J I B W E I N A A J I M O W I N

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