

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

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



## RECOGNIZING ACCOMPLISHMENTS STATE OF THE BAND SUMMARY

In her 2022 State of the Band address, Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin reflected on 2021 as a year of great progress for the Mille Lacs Band and for Native Americans at the federal and state level, but also a year of great loss as many Band Elders passed away due to complications from COVID-19 and other health issues.



Honorable Melanie Benjamin, Mandaamin, Chief Executive.

One significant example of progress for Native people with the state and federal government has been the advancement of tribal consultation. In 2021, the Mille Lacs Band was involved in hundreds of consultation sessions with federal and state government agencies. In the first year of the Biden

Administration the Band has had more federal consultations than with all previous presidential administrations combined.

Benjamin also noted the significant impact of American Indians being appointed as cabinet secretaries and other key leadership positions in federal agencies. "American Indian people are now seated at the tables of power throughout Washington D.C.," Benjamin said. "These are people who understand tribal sovereignty, who know the challenges we face, and who do not need a history lesson because they are one of us."

Benjamin also lamented the many Mille Lacs Band Elders who were lost in 2021. "Some were drum-keepers, knowledge-keepers, story-tellers, first-language speakers, or artists. Some served as officials in Band government. And some were all of those things. These losses have been hard to take."

Noting that historical moments come along like this once in

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Honorable Sheldon Boyd, Enimwewidang, Speaker of the Assembly.

## LEGISLATIVE MILESTONES

Secretary Treasurer and Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Boyd opened the 38th annual State of the Band Address and the first session of the 20th Assembly focusing on the framework of the Legislative Branch and said collectively they have done some "incredible things" and crossed milestones.

Speaker Boyd articulated the highlights of accomplishments for the Legislative Branch, including the reformatting of Band assembly bill templates that have created greater efficiency within sessions of Band Assembly to a reorganization and digitizing of historical documents.

Other highlights include, but are not limited to, the addition of a Legislative Order issued that states draft bills now have a public comment period prior to consideration by Band Assembly where just four years ago only Titles 1 through 4 required comment. Speaker Boyd stated the public comment period allows for a more inclusive lawmaking process.

A Tribal Register is now available online as the source record for the official acts of government. The online Tribal Register provides a historical reference of the official acts of tribal government dating back to the 1970s.

Along those same lines is a printed version of the Official Acts of 2020 and 2021 that contain ordinances, bills, executive orders, commissioner orders, judicial orders, and resolutions of Band Assembly for each fiscal year. The intent is to have these publications available for reference for future government officials and historical record, Speaker Boyd said.

He spoke of more initiatives to provide for more transparency of the Legislative Branch that included live-streaming of sessions of Band Assembly where there are, "consistently 100 viewers in attendance and that has impacted protocol, etiquette, and preparation just to name just a few aspects, because people are now watching and are free to form opinions without influence."

Speaker Boyd differentiated between his two roles, one as Speaker of the Assembly and the other as Secretary Treasurer. He said the Secretary Treasurer manages the finances of the Band and "does not spend money. That person has the duty to make sure the money is safe."

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## Justice Sylvia Wise State of the Judiciary Address

2021 was clouded by the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Judicial Branch did experience some rays of sunshine and hope. During the two years of the pandemic, our caseload numbers have dropped, but the District Court presided over by Judge Richard Osburn, remains busy. In 2021: 1,025 new cases were filed ; 1,820 cases were completed; and 1,447 hearings were held remotely, through a combination of teleconferencing and videoconferencing to avoid spreading the virus.

Interestingly, by having remote ways of participating in the hearings, people were able to attend court sessions more easily and we had far fewer failures to appear.

See the full text of the State of the Judiciary on page .3

FULL TEXT OF SPEECHES BEGIN ON PAGE 3



# UNDERSTANDING EXECUTIVE ORDERS

## COVID-19 VACCINE HEALTHCARE MANDATE

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been the Band's priority to keep Band Members safe. As a federally recognized American Indian tribal government, the Band is also responsible for complying with all applicable federal laws related to pandemic response. In January, two Executive Orders were signed by the Chief Executive to make sure the Band is in full compliance with federal law. The first Executive Order, 2022-01, mandated vaccination or weekly testing of all Band employees in response to a federal rule that required the Band to do so. That federal rule came from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The day after this Executive Order was signed by Chief Executive Benjamin, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down that OSHA rule, which is why Chief Executive rescinded Executive Order 2022-01.

There was a second federal vaccine mandate that came from a different federal agency called the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This federal agency required all health facilities that receive Medicare or Medicaid funding to show their employees are fully vaccinated or risk loss of federal funding. With this mandate, there is no weekly testing option unless the employee qualifies for a medical exemption or can demonstrate that vaccination would conflict with their sincerely held religious beliefs. The U.S. Supreme Court voted to uphold that vaccine mandate, which only applies to healthcare workers working in facilities that receive Medicare or Medicaid funding. This includes the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and most other Indian tribes across the country. This is why a second Executive Order was recently signed by Chief Executive Benjamin that only applies to healthcare workers.

The most recent Executive Order 2022-03 that requires all Mille Lacs Band healthcare staff to be vaccinated was signed on January 21, 2022. This Executive Order has a direct effect on the Health and Human Services (HHS) areas as follows: Ne-la-Shing clinics, Public Health, Dental and the ALUs.

Here is a summary of what happened and what the healthcare mandate currently in effect — Executive Order 2022-03 — is all about.

### SUMMARY

On November 4, 2021 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued an emergency temporary standard (ETS) mandating employers of 100 or more employees to implement a COVID-19 vaccination or testing requirement for all employees in the work force. Employers were given up to January 4, 2022 to have steps in place that would bring them

into compliance with the OSHA mandate. On January 13, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down that OSHA mandate, but it upheld a requirement from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that states all healthcare workers in facilities that receive funding from Medicaid and Medicare must be vaccinated in order for the facilities to continue receiving said funding.

A unique Band law (Title 18, Section 440) requires the Band to adopt all OSHA rules and regulations, including OSHA's emergency temporary standards. Therefore, an Executive Order 2022-01 was signed by Chief Executive Benjamin on January 12 that required all Band employees to either be vaccinated against COVID-19 or consent to weekly testing based on the requirement issued by OSHA. Chief Executive Benjamin discussed this during her State of the Band Address. In October, she conducted a survey of Band Elders which found that nearly over 80% of Band elders supported vaccination of all Executive Branch employees. However, since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down OSHA's mandate, that Executive Order was rescinded on January 13.

While the U.S. Supreme Court did block the OSHA mandate, it upheld a second vaccine mandate that came from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which was specific to healthcare workers in facilities receiving Medicare or Medicaid funding.

In its opinion allowing the CMS vaccine mandate to go into effect, the court noted that CMS has broad powers to require that facilities participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs comply vaccination requirement. The court specifically stated, "requirements as [CMS] finds necessary in the interest of the health and safety of individuals who are furnished services in the institution." The court held that CMS reasonably concluded that a COVID-19 vaccine mandate was necessary to protect patient health and safety because "COVID-19 is a highly contagious, dangerous — and especially for Medicare and Medicaid patients — deadly disease."

In order to continue to receive services and funding from CMS, the Band must also be in compliance with the CMS vaccine requirements. On Friday, January 21, 2022, Executive Order 2022-03 was signed requiring that all healthcare workers employed by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe be vaccinated against COVID-19. The Executive Order and Vaccination Policy are posted on the Band's website.

This Executive Order was issued after federal attorneys advised the Band that as a recipient of Medicare or Medicaid

funding, the Band is required to comply with the vaccine mandate issued by the CMS on November 5th, 2021 or risk loss of federal funding. CMS will begin enforcement soon and the hard deadline for showing good-faith effort to comply with this mandate was January 28, 2022.

This will affect the Mille Lacs Band Health and Human Services areas as follows: Ne-la-Shing clinics, Public Health, Dental and the Assisted Living Units.

The Commissioner of Administration and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services have implemented a vaccination policy to ensure all ne-la-Shing clinics' providers and staff members are vaccinated against COVID-19.

The policy defines to whom the policy applies and states in part:

(a) Regardless of clinical responsibility or patient contact, this policy applies to the following Ne-la-Shing Clinic, Dental, Public Health, and Assisted Living Unit staff who provide any care, treatment, or other services for the clinic and/or its patients:

- (1) Employees;
- (2) Licensed practitioners;
- (3) Students, trainees, and volunteers; and
- (4) Individuals who provide care, treatment, or other services for the clinic and/or its patients, under contract or by other arrangement.

(b) This policy does not apply to the following clinic staff:

(1) Staff who exclusively provide telehealth or telemedicine services outside of the clinic facilities and who do not have any direct contact with patients and other staff specified in subsection (a) of this section; and

(2) Staff who provide support services for the clinic that are performed exclusively outside of the clinic facilities and who do not have any direct contact with patients and other staff specified in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) This policy will become effective when adopted by Executive Order and will remain in effect until rescinded by Executive Order.

(d) This policy may be amended as necessary to ensure the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19.

Employee privacy is of the utmost importance to the Band. The Commissioner of Administration will track and securely store the vaccination status of all staff members, including whether they are fully or partially vaccinated; the booster status of all staff members; and all requests and any documentation related to such requests for an exemption under Section 5 of the policy, including whether such requests have been granted.

### LEGISLATIVE from page 1

Management of Band investments and finances, "falls squarely upon the Secretary Treasurer to understand, evaluate, and recommend changes if needed with each term and with each Secretary Treasurer, to superintend and manage," Boyd said. He added that 30 years of revenue from gaming has made investments possible and directly funds a government that provides a wide range of services and monthly disbursements intended to supplement work income and help families. And he offered thanks to Band government for creating the investment portfolio 20 years ago and saving money over the years.

The formation of the new Finance Committee, Title 17 Chapter 3 Institutional Investment Committee, creates processes for managing the costs of investments and having independent performance reviews of those investments; holds contracted investment professionals accountable by mandating industry standards among other issues.

Speaker Boyd reminded Band members that, "in spite of our successes we must always remember where we came from. Stay humble and be kind."

Read the full State of the Legislative Branch address on page 8.



### SPEAKER OF ASSEMBLY

The Honorable Sheldon Boyd, Enimwewidang.



## 2022 STATE OF THE BAND ADDRESS

# FACING THE FUTURE WITH THE COURAGE OF A SOVEREIGN NATION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MELANIE BENJAMIN

Boozhoo, Aaniin, Anishinabeg-dook. Mino gizhigad noongoom Mandamin indizinakaz, Melanie Benjamin indigoo. Mr. Speaker, members of the Band Assembly and the Judiciary, and most important, fellow Band members of the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. I am honored to speak to you today about the State of the Band.

Miigwech to Obisaan for speaking on our behalf, so we can begin in a good way; miigwech to the Ceremonial Drum and Waabishkibines for setting the dish; miigwech to the Mille Lacs All Veterans for posting the flags, and Miigwech to the singers today.

This is the second year that the annual State of the Band Address, as required by our Band Statutes, is coming to you virtually so as to protect the health and safety of our Band community.

The commissioners have recorded videos to inform you about the goals the Executive Branch met in 2021. We also mailed a detailed Annual Report to Band members which provides even more data about our work on behalf of Band members this past year.

Despite the pandemic, we continue to make progress as a Band. This is due, in part, to the strong leadership team that we have in place. I especially want to say Chi Miigwech to Secretary Treasurer and Speaker of the Band Assembly Sheldon Boyd, who has done an outstanding job serving our community. Also, Miigwech to the Band Assembly members.

There are moments in history that are filled with opportunity. Now is such a time, unlike any other. We now have Ameri-

can Indians serving at the highest Levels of the Biden Administration. This includes the first American Indian Secretary of the Interior. The Solicitor, who leads over 400 attorneys at the Department of Interior, is a member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. Many agencies that serve all Americans are now headed by American Indians.

These appointments make a difference. Just one example is that in the past, the Army Corps of Engineers did not consult with us in a proper way on a government-to-government basis about Army Corps projects. Several months ago, I wrote to the new Assistant Secretary of the agency, who is a Member of the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho.

Within just a few weeks, he flew to Minnesota and we held a government-to-government meeting about protecting our watersheds. In the past, this kind of quick response was unheard of from this agency, but this Assistant Secretary has a cultural understanding of the meaning of water to us that only other indigenous people can fully comprehend.

One of the most important official duties of the Chief Executive is to conduct government-to-government relations with other governments. Our Band has been consulted more times with the Biden Administration in one year than all previous administrations put together.

In 2021, we attended hundreds of consultation sessions held by federal and state Agencies on every topic you can imagine. Even when hundreds of people were present on the Zoom meeting and speaking time was limited to just a handful of tribes, I always made certain that I or a commissioner was provided time to talk about our Mille Lacs Band position on these critical issues.

American Indian people are now seated at the tables of power throughout Washington D.C. These are people who understand tribal sovereignty, who know the challenges we face and who do not need a history lesson, because they are one of us.

In Minnesota, our state government has made big strides as well. We don't have to worry anymore about whether the winner of the next governor's race will treat us as a sovereign government, because Governor Tim Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, and the State Legislature have made consultation with tribes permanent in state law. The new state law also requires that state employees go through training to understand tribal governments.

Like the federal government, American Indian people are rising in State government. There are American Indian people serving as Lieutenant Governor, serving on the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court, and in the State Legislature.

And of course, we have other very strong allies. Governor Tim Walz is, without question, the best Governor in the history of Minnesota when it comes to Tribal-State relations and working with tribes. Senator Amy Klobuchar has been a friend and champion for the Band on many issues over the years. Senator Tina Smith is a ball of fire when it comes to fighting for tribes on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. And last but not least, Congresswoman Betty McCollum from St. Paul is one of the most powerful members of Congress in the nation. Even though we are not in her District, Betty uses her position to go to the mat for our Band, the other Minnesota tribes and all of Indian country — every single day. Chi miigwech to these wonderful allies.

Many changes happened in 2021. One of the most eye-catching changes is that the State of Minnesota put up road signs marking the federal boundary of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. After fighting for state recognition of our boundary for so many decades, I will never forget the moment I saw these signs for the first time. My heart soared. These signs are largely symbolic, but had a deep emotional impact on many of us — especially our Elders — who have fought this battle most of their lives.

Historic moments come along like this once in a generation. Life always comes down to moments. We must recognize what is possible and seize the day! The question comes down to us. Do we have the wisdom and the will to rise to this historic moment?

To make positive change, we need more community leaders. Leaders are those who dream of a brighter future and inspire others to want that future, too. Sadly, we lost many Elders this year to COVID-19 or complications from COVID-19, and some passed from other causes. Each loss was heartbreaking.

Some were drum-keepers, knowledge-keepers, story-tellers, first-language speakers, or artists. Some served as officials in Band government. And some were all of those things, like our former Commissioner of Education Joycelyn Shingobe and former Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, David Sam. These losses have been hard to take. Our condolences go out to the family, friends, and weh-ehs of those who have passed.

With loss comes reflection and concern about the future. I have been thinking a great deal about the future of our Band. Our future depends on a new generation of community leaders to step forward.

We are fortunate, because we have many talented Band members who are leaders, many serving in key positions right now. And we have many emerging leaders who are getting ready for the future. Today, with all these new possibilities, there is no time to waste. I am excited to speak more about that, but first I want to introduce our new leadership team in the Executive Branch.

Our Band commissioners are appointed to four-year terms and they make up the Chief Executive's Cabinet. I want to acknowledge: Commissioner of Administration Peter Nayquonabe; Assistant Commissioner of Administration Maria Costello; Commissioner of Health and Human Services Nicole Anderson; Commissioner of Natural Resources Kelly Applegate; Commissioner of Community Development Timothy Jackson; Commissioner of Corporate Affairs Joseph Nayquonabe Jr., and Executive Director of Education, Byron Ninham as well as Stephanie Dunkley, Deputy Assistant. Solicitor General Caleb Dog-Eagle and Commissioner of Finance Mel Towle are also key members of our leadership team. Commissioner Towle works in the Legislative Branch, but he provides critical advice to me and the Cabinet.

Chi miigwech to the team for their hard work and commitment to our Band.

A lot happened in 2021. The best news is that our economy is coming back. Our government could not provide programs and services at this level without our gaming and other businesses. The assistance that Band members receive is only possible when our casinos are making a profit.



### CHIEF EXECUTIVE

During the 38th Annual State of the Band Address, Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin said many changes happened in 2021. The best news is the economy of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is coming back, she said.

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With smart business decision-making, wise financial oversight by Speaker Sheldon Boyd, a dedicated workforce and much-needed federal help, the Mille Lacs Band is recovering strong. COVID-19 forced us to cut back our workforce at the beginning of the pandemic. The good news is that today, almost all Band-owned businesses are at an all-time high for Band Member employment. Twenty-three percent of Band Member associates are in leadership positions. This includes CEOs, General managers, Vice Presidents, Directors, Managers, and Supervisors. There is great opportunity for more Band members to grow into leadership roles.

Like the rest of the nation, we have a labor shortage. Our casinos and businesses have more jobs open than interested and available workers to fill them. To hire and keep a talented workforce, the Corporate Commission raised many front-line wages and now pays between \$14 and \$20 dollars an hour at Grand Casinos, Wewinabi, Inc., Circle Sage, and Grindstone Laundry.

We are also working with the other tribes in Minnesota to look at sports betting, so stay tuned for more news about that in 2022. Makwa Global, which has expertise in government contracting, continues to grow and gain new contracts.

As the biggest employer in east-central Minnesota, the economy of this whole region and the paychecks of about 3,000 employees depend on the successful recovery of our businesses.

There were developments for the Band government in federal court this year, as well. Even though the United States and the State of Minnesota recognize our Reservation boundary, Mille Lacs County still does not. In 2017 we filed a lawsuit against Mille Lacs County, the County Attorney, and County Sheriff because they interfered with the Band's law enforcement authority on the Reservation.

As part of that lawsuit, legal briefs were filed about whether our Reservation, as established in the 1855 Treaty, continues to exist. The United States and the State of Minnesota filed what are called "friend of the court briefs" agreeing with us. They stated that our Reservation still exists.

Mille Lacs County now stands alone. It is the only government arguing that our Reservation was disestablished. Millions and millions of taxpayer dollars have been wasted over the last 30 years fighting this battle.

This past March, attorneys for both sides delivered oral arguments before a federal judge on the existence of the Reservation. It is possible that a ruling could come in 2022.

In the meantime, our partnerships with other counties are only getting stronger. We hold monthly meetings with Pine County and work together on many issues. We have a solid relationship with Aitkin County and Crow Wing. Most recently, we began working closely with County.

In December, Sherburn County invited Commissioner Kelly Applegate to join the County on a trip to Washington D.C., seeking funding to protect public lands in Sherburn County. There are also burial sites on these lands. For one day, the Mille Lacs Band and Sherburn County walked the halls of Congress together, in support of the same goal. This was history-making, and hopefully the beginning of more projects with county governments.

Collaborations like this are the kind of relationships we want with surrounding counties and which might be possible,

**"IN 2022, ELIGIBLE BAND MEMBERS LIVING IN BAND HOUSING WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR 100 PERCENT OF THEIR RENTAL PAYMENTS TO GO TOWARD PURCHASING THEIR HOME. OUT OF 580 TRIBES IN THE UNITED STATES, WE ARE ONE OF THE FEW THAT ARE NOW ABLE TO OFFER THIS ASSISTANCE TO OUR MEMBERS."**

## MELANIE BENJAMIN

someday, with Mille Lacs County — if only their leadership would ever decide to stop fighting every single thing that we do.

Miigwech to Pine, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Sherburn, Ramsey, and Hennepin counties for respecting tribal sovereignty and working for the benefit of all our citizens. Also, miigwech to the cities of Brainerd, Garrison, Onamia, Hinckley, McGregor, and Aitkin. We value our government relationships with each of you.

In Health and Human Services, our new clinic fully opened this year. More Band members can now be seen with shorter waiting time. Our mental health department has continued to grow with the addition of more therapists. Feedback from all communities has been positive.

Our Emergency Services Coordinator was acknowledged for his excellent work in food security this year. Congratulations to Dean Reynolds.

Our primary focus in in HHS during 2021 has been on serving Band members during the pandemic and vaccinating as many Band members and employees as possible. Recent data shows that unvaccinated people are six times more likely to test positive than vaccinated people; nine times more likely to land in the hospital; and 14 times more likely to pass away from COVID-19 complications.

According to experts, unvaccinated people who get COVID-19 are more contagious and dangerous to others than are vaccinated people who get breakthrough infections. Unvaccinated people spread more of the virus over a longer period of time.

Last October, after the State of Minnesota, the federal government, and many Indian tribes issued vaccine mandates, I sent a survey to Elders to get their advice about whether they wanted a vaccine mandate for employees. A majority — over 80 percent of our Elders — said that all Executive Branch employees should be vaccinated.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and almost every vaccine expert in the world, there is no evidence that vaccines cause harm. There is plenty of evidence, however, that vaccines can save lives.

American Indians, by far, have the highest COVID-19 mortality rate of any population in the United States. And the majority of loss has been among Elders. The bottom line is that vaccinated people are safer around our Elders.

So today I am announcing a vaccine mandate that will go into effect for Executive Branch employees. Beginning on February 1, employees will need to show that they are fully vaccinated. Most of our employees and Band members will celebrate this mandate. Others might have a different view. I ask everyone to keep in mind that in our culture, protecting the tribe has

always been more important than protecting individual preference. This is how we survived the last 500 years and are still here today as Anishinaabe.

As Chief Executive, I took an oath to protect the welfare of our Band. It is my duty to issue this mandate for the Executive Branch. More details will come from the Commissioner of Administration.

In Natural Resources, we experienced both loss and victory. In August, the Minnesota Supreme Court quickly ended our litigation efforts to stop the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline. This was a tough loss, but both the federal and state governments learned that tribes are a force to be reckoned with. The Band is closely watching other projects that could impact the Band. And we will continue engaging in all battles necessary to protect our waters, land, air, and wildlife.

We also had an environmental victory in 2021. Every year, the federal EPA requires states to submit a list of polluted waters that need help. For years, the State of Minnesota refused to include polluted wild rice waters on this list. This was about politics — not health, safety or science.

Last year, for the first time, the EPA conducted meaningful government-to-government consultation with our tribe and others. This means that EPA did not just listen to our opinion. Instead, it actually studied the tribal research submitted by our scientists, heard the perspectives of tribal leaders, and made a decision based on health and science — not politics.

In this historic move, the EPA ordered the State of Minnesota to include wild rice waters that are polluted on the state's list of impaired waters.

Miigwech to Secretary/Treasurer April McCormick, of the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, for leading this inter-tribal effort in Minnesota.

Our Education Department has the huge responsibility of providing programming to Band members from birth through a person's life. In 2021, the Band started a 9th to 12th grade Alternative Learning Program at Nay Ah Shing Schools.

Oshki Maajitaadaa is a year-round program held during and after school that was designed to meet the individual needs of students. This was a major project started by former Commissioner of Education Joycelyn Shingobe. She would be so proud of it being launched.

Congratulations to the 68 adult Band members who finished their degrees, from the GEDs to PhDs, and received awards from the Band. Also, we are very proud of our 84 Band members who are receiving college scholarships from the Band to



Singers Arlyn Sam and Chris Gahbow offer songs prior to the beginning of the State of the Band event.



support their tuition, fees and books. These are wonderful benefits that most tribes cannot provide to their students.

In Administration, our Aanjibimaadizing Program, which means "Changing Lives," continued to grow in 2021. Despite the complications of the pandemic, more than 300 Band members received training and education opportunities. This included Adult Basic Education, GED assistance, resume writing, drivers license assistance and many other services.

One hundred twelve different courses were attended by Band Member clients and 241 Band members gained on-the-job training through the Work Experience Program. Aanji also did an outstanding job helping Band members with rental assistance during 2021.

Our numbers tell a story of success, but the real-life stories matter the most. Just 20 months ago, a mom and a dad were in treatment facing charges of child endangerment. All of the children were placed in foster care. At that point, the parents decided to change their lives. They both signed up for help with Aanji, developed a plan, and today they are both employed. They both earned a driver's license and have been clean and sober for 20 months. Most important, they have a new home and have all of their children back!

This is just one example of the many successes Band members have achieved through the Aanji program. And this kind of success is available to any Band Member who wants to turn their lives around and needs help. As a Band government, we can provide assistance, but the Band Member must provide the willpower and the commitment to change their lives.

Community Development had a busy year. Housing that was completed or begun in 2021 includes: 35 home renovations for Elders and disabled Band members; 24 other home renovations; and 128 Band members received transitional housing through Mino Bimaadiziwin.

Our Home Loan Program continues to succeed. Currently, 324 Band members are taking advantage of this program. Qualified Band members receive up to \$220,000 dollars at zero percent interest for 35 years. More than 152 Band members took out home renovation loans.

A big achievement is that 38 housing units have been transferred to the Aanji program to support Band members who are working hard to move from poverty to employment. Band members must be Aanji clients and working their programs in order to be eligible for this housing.

A few years ago, Governor Walz appointed me to the Board of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. All of the data proves that the biggest step any person can take to get out of



## SINGING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Breya Sawyer, Mille Lacs Band Descendant, proudly and beautifully sings the National Anthem prior to the program.



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE MELANIE BENJAMIN

Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin said she and her administration will continue to serve Band members in a way that will honor ancestors and face the future with the courage of a sovereign nation of many leaders that will continue to endure.

poverty is to own their own home. For the past several years, I have said we needed a Rent-to-Own program in housing. This was not a project that Community Development could do alone, because all of our Housing Policies must go through our Housing Board.

I am happy to announce that our Executive Branch proposal for a Rent-to-Own program has been approved by the Housing Board, and it has been ratified by the Band Assembly.

In 2022, eligible Band members living in Band housing will have the opportunity for 100 percent of their rental payments to go toward purchasing their home. Out of 580 tribes in the United States, we are one of the few that are now able to offer this assistance to our members.

Each year, I deliver directives for the commissioners to carry out in the upcoming year. This year I have two directives for all Commissioners, which the Commissioner of Administration will lead.

During our strategic planning process, a careful review was done of several areas in Band government and changes were recommended for improvement. Those changes are being made. Now, it is time to carefully examine all of our Band policies and procedures to determine whether these policies are actually empowering Band members to advance, or empowering employees to say "no" without justification.

In some areas, we have so many forms, red tape and policies that are on the website but are hard to find. It can be difficult for Band members to get help that is available. I am directing the Administrative Policy Board to conduct a review of all Band policies and procedures in every department and recommend changes where change is needed.

Second, I am directing the Commissioner of Administration to review the way Band members are served by our workforce and examine best practices for improving how employees interact with Band members. Every interaction should be a respectful experience. All of our employees should view themselves as solution-focused. This means that instead of making a Band Member justify why the employee should help them, the employee should be working to find solutions for the Band Member.

This is what servant leadership means: Those with power are there to serve others, not to wield power over others. Servant leadership is a phrase invented by a man named Alan Greenleaf, but the concept is actually based on our Anishinaabe values. Servant-leaders treat others with respect, humility, wisdom, love, truth, courage and compassion. We need a workforce of servant-leaders and I direct all commissioners to work together to make that happen.

During 2021, we reached two milestones in language revitalization. First, we published five new books that are written

in Ojibwe. This is the first time in modern history that this has been done. We hope this book project helps Band members expand their knowledge of our practices and what it means to be an Anishinaabe family.

Second, I am happy to announce that the first level of Rosetta Stone Ojibwe Language software will be released this month. It will be free to Mille Lacs Band members and descendants.

Chi miigwech to all the Band Elders who worked on these projects along with our younger language-learners. These Band members have been called "Language Warriors." They have gifted us with their knowledge through story-telling and speaking. And this is a gift that many future generations will be grateful for.

This project can never replace the knowledge of our first-language speakers, but we are taking another giant step in making sure our language lives on forever. Miigwech to our Elders and language experts for their work on this important project!

I spoke earlier about a new generation of leadership. An interesting thing about leadership is, that oftentimes, people who lead do not even know they are leaders. Most leaders are simply people who have vision and take responsibility. Like our Band Delegates who volunteered to work on the Constitutional Reform project with the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

These are regular Band members who saw the Band had a need, so they stepped forward to help. These leaders have just finished a report about our Band's historic relationship with the MCT, and will be sharing information with Band members.

When leaders see a problem, they find a solution.

While filming for the Ojibwe language project, one of our youth, Bella Nayquonabe, happened to be in the room where filming was taking place. The person who was supposed to speak Ojibwe in that portion of the video was unable to attend, so Bella was recruited on the spot to take her place.

Bella immediately said "yes." She jumped right into the part, speaking Ojibwe. Instead of worrying about whether she could do this, Bella had the courage to seize the opportunity and help solve the problem.

These are great examples of leadership. I invite others to think about this question: Who are you? Are you the one who will say "No, I can't do it," or are you the one who has the courage to help lead?

Leaders are people who say, "It's not about me. It's about everyone else." Every Band Member has leadership potential, including our children and youth. We have focused a lot of effort this year on developing our youth leaders.



One example is our Youth Ambassador program that is a partnership between Aanji and Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures. Forty youth participated in the program as interns. These kids learned business strategy, leadership skills, and made connections that will help them succeed.

Also, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan appointed me to her Young Women's Leadership Committee. The Committee focuses on what we can do as community leaders to empower young women. The Committee had to take an oath that we would commit to these things.

I felt it would be fun to get a Young Women's Leadership Initiative going here. And so, a group of young ladies came together and are now working to hold a conference for young women on the Reservation. We are empowering these girls to become leaders by giving them the experience of organizing a conference for 150 young ladies.

They are learning planning, organizing and budgeting skills, teamwork, and they are learning about their own potential to lead. They are also learning that leaders accept responsibility for their community. And that they, alone, are responsible for their choices and everything they want to become. They are learning to seize opportunities.

Sometimes people get trapped into thinking that obstacles prevent them from taking responsibility for their lives. They might blame history, their environment, negative people or even the Band government. We have all been knocked down in life at some point. But what matters is not how many times we are knocked down, but how many times we get up again. We are not products of our environment. We are products of how much we allow the environment to influence us, for good or for bad.

This year, the Band worked with an expert that specializes in planning for tribal governments. Something this expert said may come as a surprise to many: Of all the tribes they have ever worked with, no other tribe in the United States provides as many programs and services for tribal members as the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. They were blown away by the level of services we provide.

All of us can think of a family member or a friend who has come to expect that the government is supposed to take care of all their needs. This is not why the government exists. The government is here to protect our tribe's rights, to make decisions based on what is best for the majority — not the few — and to help people lift themselves out of poverty. Government does not actually do the lifting.

Band members of my generation always get a chuckle when younger Band members complain of being poor. Many of us older people grew up with real poverty. Our clothes were third-hand or home-made. We only had one new pair of shoes each year. Most of our food came from gardens and harvesting, and most of us even had outhouses, instead of running water. Many of our grand-parents never received a social security check when they retired — because they worked their whole lives for cash.



Master of Ceremonies Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources.

Yet you would never hear these older people call themselves poor. They didn't think of themselves that way. They took responsibility for making sure their families had everything they needed and never expected help from any government.

I want Band members to know this. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is considered a force to be reckoned with in both the state and nationally. We are not people to be pitied. We are not poor or down-trodden. For those who need help, we have all the programs and services anyone could ever need to lift themselves out of poverty.

As Anishinaabe — as a sovereign, self-determined, self-governing tribe — we have the power, ability and creativity to succeed. We have to get out of that poverty mindset as individuals because the poverty mindset is the killer of all dreams.

All around us, we see Band members achieving their dreams and advancing their education. We see people leading healthy lives and gaining new employment, and we see a resurgence of pride in our culture. Young people today proudly introduce themselves in Ojibwe, even in non-Indian settings.

Their Facebook pages include their Anishinaabe names. These days, ribbon skirts and ribbon shirts are the norm at national meetings. This is a small representation of our cultural identity, but it was not as common twenty years ago.

At tribal meetings with state leaders and even at the White House, state and federal officials are careful to make certain the meetings begin with an invocation.

Last October, the White House invited Mille Lacs to provide the invocation for a national meeting. I was so proud to listen to Baabiiitaw speak for us at this White House meeting.

We can have the world our Elders wanted where culture, language and tradition blend with modern ways of life. This is the new leadership. Speaker Boyd is a shining example of that. Speaker Boyd was raised by traditional people and he lives his life following our traditional values, teachings, and old ways. Yet he has done an amazing job of modernizing the way the Band Assembly functions.

It used to be that Band Assembly would meet in tiny rooms in one of the three districts. Even though these were public meetings, Band members felt unwelcome. Today any Band Member can tune into the Band Assembly online or sit in the meetings in person, and all are welcome. Speaker Boyd often turns his attention to Band members during these sessions to describe for everyone what is happening. We have never had this much transparency.

The Band Assembly and I sometimes have different ideas about the best approach to fixing a problem. But in thirty years, I have never seen a Band Assembly accomplish this much work and be this productive. Miigwech, Speaker Boyd.

Our leaders have always made policy based on what is best for the tribe to survive. Our Anishinaabe values require that we fight for the collective. While we gain new expertise, we value old wisdom. When traditional Anishinaabe values and thinking are the basis for decisions, we succeed. This is called seventh-generation thinking. It means making sure we stress the importance of "we," not "me."

Our new leaders must know that Culture matters. Wisdom matters. And that above all, we must make certain that our tribe survives another 500 years.

In our museum and in our facilities, there are photos of Band members from several decades ago. In our history books and our family photos, we see our grandparents when they were young. Their faces and their lives remind us all that we are here for a short moment in time. Their faces also remind us



## GRAND ENTRY — AM VETS POST 53

Quintin Sam, Anthony Pike, Zhaawanose, Renee Pawaush, Miskwaagikwe, Jamie Short, Ebaamwewidang.

that they are not forgotten. They made sure that we are here today.

In their time, they rose to the moment. Whatever challenges they faced, they were stubborn and they were strong. They were non-removable.

Since the tragic discovery of mass graves at boarding schools in Canada, both the federal government and the Catholic Church have begun a dialogue with tribes about the boarding schools in the United States. In December, tribal leaders met with the Archbishop. I told him about a recent news article that quoted a letter from a Boarding School Superintendent in the late 1890s. This man was trying to recruit students from Mille Lacs 130 years ago.

But things did not go his way. In his report to officials in Washington D.C., the recruiter talked about trying to convince Mille Lacs parents to allow their children to go with him — to boarding school. The recruiter said, "My requests were all met with 'no.'"

The recruiter also said that Mille Lacs parents made what he called — "trivial arguments" about why their children should remain home with their parents. The recruiter said that the reasons given by Mille Lacs parents amounted "to nothing."

He gave examples of what our ancestors said, such as, "We can take care of our children," and "our children might get sick and die," and "we can't get along without" our children.

These were the kinds of concerns that this recruiter had called "trivial." The recruiter finally gave up and ended his report by writing this sentence: "I have never — anywhere — met with the stubborn resistance I had to face with [these] Mille Lacs Indians."

This recruiter learned a lesson the hard way about our ancestors. One hundred thirty years later, we are still as stubborn as ever! We come from strong ancestors who could not be removed. Their lives of leadership must be honored and new community leaders — of all ages — need to step forward.

This is our time. We are facing new threats, but we have new opportunities. Never forget, we are the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. It is our moment to take on the tough problems.

To fight for our way of life.

To fight for our lands.

To fight any disease that comes along.

Now the next generation must rise to the occasion and seize the day.

My administration and I are your public servants. We will always seek to rise to the occasion and serve you in a way that honors our ancestors. We will face the future with the courage of a sovereign nation of many leaders that will continue to endure!

Miigwech!



# 2022 STATE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

## SPEAKER OF ASSEMBLY SHELDON BOYD

Good morning, Mille Lacs Band members, Madame Chief, members of Band Assembly, commissioners, legislative staff, and all those viewing this livestream of the 38th annual State of the Band Address.

This marks the fourth and final speech of my term as Secretary Treasurer and Speaker of the Assembly that was entrusted to me almost four years ago by Mille Lacs Band members.

These last four years for me have been life-changing, passed all too quickly, and looking back the group of people I've had the pleasure of working with have done some incredible things, milestones. And I'll mention those shortly.

It's important to remember that in that election four years ago, Band members voted for the Secretary Treasurer.

For students out there, of the five elected positions in Mille Lacs Band government, the Chief Executive and Secretary Treasurer are called At Large which means all Band members vote for these two positions at elections.

The three District Representatives embody the collective membership votes but in three parts.

The strength of the District Representatives is like a bundle of sticks when bound together; in sessions of Band Assembly together their strength is greater than the collective under Mille Lacs Band law, making this the most powerful branch of government where lawmaking and the power of the purse, starts with these three.

The only check against this day-to-day authority is the signature of the single most powerful voice in Band government, the Chief Executive.

So that appears to leave the Secretary Treasurer as the odd person out. Not so. No other elected position has broad fiscal authority for the finances of the Band where lawmaking and fiscal authority are tasked to one person acting as Speaker of the Assembly and the Secretary Treasurer.

The Secretary Treasurer does not spend money; that person has the duty to make sure the money is safe.

I am making that distinction for the purposes of this speech, and now allow me to briefly summarize and report to the people the accomplishments of the Speaker of the Assembly, then the Office of the Secretary Treasurer for this term of office.

### Speaker of the Assembly Lawmaking versus Finance

The Speaker of the Assembly is the leader of the Legislative Branch and along with legislative staff facilitates legislation and affixes a signature to documents to verify established processes have been followed.

To quote the late former Solicitor General James Genia, "Lawmaking is a like muscle, if you don't use it you lose it."

Lawmaking is one of the cornerstones of our tribal sovereignty and these past four years staff has worked to improve and energize that function of government.

Among these accomplishments has been a series of firsts; some groundbreaking, and some potentially will impact the economic security of the Band, in my opinion, for generations.

But most importantly, these accomplishments have been a group effort and Band members should know that Legislative staff reached out and collaborated with other branches of government and external resources to provide an extraordinary work product during my brief four years in office.

There was reformatting of Band Assembly bill templates for efficiency within sessions of Band Assembly to a wholesale reorganization and digitizing of historical documents.

By Legislative Order draft bills now have a public comment period prior to consideration by Band Assembly where just four years ago only Titles 1 thru 4 required comment further illustrating a more inclusive lawmaking process moving forward.

Figuratively and literally the traffic cop for most of this is the Clerk of the Assembly and Parliamentarian Darcie Big Bear.

These updated processes were given foundation by passing Legislative Order that takes the torch from previous Band Assemblies and continues to solidify the foundations of lawmaking.

As mentioned last year there now is permanent staff within the Legislative Offices for continuity of processes and institutional knowledge.

The Band's Revisor of Statutes, Hannah Valento, has created a Tribal Register online which is the source record for the official acts of government. The amount of content scanned and uploaded has been enormous and provides an unprecedented

look, going back to the 1970s, at the official acts of our tribal government.

Almost all historical legislative documents are now online on the new Tribal Register. This is a huge accomplishment and I urge you all to take a look at the Tribal Register within the Band's website.

Also there is a first printing of what will be an annual publication, the Official Acts of 2020, that contains ordinances, bills, executive orders, commissioner orders, judicial orders and resolutions of Band Assembly for each fiscal year.

A request for proposal for the printing of the Official Acts of 2021 is underway and the intent is to have these publications available for reference for future government officials and historical record.

The intent is 20 years from now there will be 20 volumes for the next generation to have a concise record to draw historical knowledge from.

Along with the initial printing last year of the Laws of the Mille Lacs Band these publications will be distributed to other governmental, legal, and educational institutions as reference and are available to general public at a cost, but as determined by the Revisor are free of charge to Band members.

Legislative staff and Band Assembly examined the theory behind the two-year Assembly and 2 sessions per year concept, such as this is the First Session of the 20th Assembly. The start of sessions coincides with constitutionally mandated elections and account for a change in power.

Staff has recently published a calendar to further promote the lawmaking process based on the Assembly and Session structure for the coming year.

Now think about that, tiny Mille Lacs began a Legislature 39 years ago.

### Live-Streaming

#### To require the prompt recording of the Band Assembly's acts and deeds

In the first week of June 2021, the Live-Streaming of Sessions of Band Assembly began by Legislative Order and changes the level of accountability of government to the people.

Four years ago live-streaming was unheard of and was only a concept associated with the ever elusive term "transparency" and one of the goals of my term in office.

The first resolution put before the Band Assembly was voted down. But anything worth pursuing takes perseverance; you have to keep talking, don't get discouraged, and eventually the idea was accepted and mandated by Legislative Order.

Live-streaming has been a disruptive technology in association with the actual sessions of Mille Lacs Band Assembly in that almost all aspects of sessions have been affected.

There are consistently 100 viewers in attendance, and that has impacted protocol, etiquette, and preparation just to name just a few aspects, because people are now watching and are free to form opinions without influence which has increased transparency and oversight by the people.

Today, the Band Assembly Chambers may be a place of technological standard where meetings are held in person or remote, archived, and live-streamed for online viewing.

But it's the legislative staff whose intentions are to make this a welcoming place to come and where the lawmaking process has names and faces, personalities and deliberation, and where the breadth of subject matter can be fully realized by those who choose to attend in person, view live, or view archived sessions.



### THE HONORABLE SHELDON BOYD, ENIMWEWIDANG, SPEAKER OF ASSEMBLY

Speaker of Assembly Sheldon Boyd spoke of important changes occurring in the Legislative Branch that have the potential to change the lives of Band members for generations to come.

LEGISLATIVE to page 8



Staff has begun inviting students from Ne la Shing School to attend and experience the Band Assembly conducting business, be formally recognized as attendees for historical record, and afterward eat pizza with the members of Band Assembly and Staff.

Live streaming and the eyes of future generations on the Band Assembly put into perspective that we must represent all ages, and our behavior and our words are on display where current leadership is being viewed and assessed by future leaders.

A huge thank you to all legislative staff involved for making what once was an idea and now is a standard of this tribal government.

## Lawmaking versus Finance Investments

I began today by differentiating between lawmaking and finance, Speaker of the Assembly versus Secretary Treasurer,

The Secretary Treasurer managing the finances of the Band takes the form of the Commissioner of Finance and the Office of Management and Budget for government spending.

The management of the treasury, the investments however, has historically been entrusted to outside entities called investment advisors.

One company for 20 plus years for long-term savings and another company for ten plus years for minor trust accounts. These are the two major investment portfolios of the Band.

These business arrangements fall squarely upon the Secretary Treasurer to understand, evaluate, and recommend changes if needed with each term and with each Secretary Treasurer, to superintend and manage.

This is what I didn't see coming as a new Secretary Treasurer three years ago and quickly became the number one priority to review and understand.

Never be intimidated because you don't know something. Ask questions. Then listen. As I've said repeatedly, it's not about intelligence; it's about experience.

You have to find the right competent and honest people to help you, because I quickly found out that the Bands historic investment relationships had serious management structure flaws in relation to the size of the Band's investment portfolios.

In addition, three years ago the Secretary Treasurer had no statutory framework to properly manage the investment portfolios of the Band.

What came to light was the Mille Lacs Band has needed adequate institutional investment expertise for over 20 years and didn't have that.

We currently are in a steep learning curve where we find the institutional investment field is specialized and takes years of experience to become proficient in as a career.

When I first took office investment advisors spoke directly to elected officials, offered advice, and took direction.

In other words, the expertise needed to properly manage a large portfolio like the Band's is similar, in my opinion, to a doctor managing his patients in collaboration with elected officials. Why would investment advisors collaborate for management of investments in the same manner? And I say that being an elected official myself. You do not want a bad doctor taking care of you.

That historic arrangement demanded immediate and substantive change by independent analysis and changes were recommended by the Office of the Secretary Treasurer under the law as mentioned before.

The Mille Lacs Band is not alone — tribes nationally are working toward establishing themselves in the investment field by moving toward adequate investment management in the form of investment committees.

This is my assessment of the past 20 plus years of the management of the treasury of the Band because I was put here by the people and proceed with the people's best interests in mind.

Please give huge thanks to this Band Assembly, Chief Executive, staff members of both branches of government and external resources for collaborating these past 2 years making possible a new law that creates a framework to properly



## DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

District I Representative Virgil Wind, District II Representative Marvin Bruneau, District III Representative Wally St. John.

manage the investments of the Band moving forward, where none existed before.

### Title 17 Banks and Banking Chapter 3 The Institutional Investment Committee Economic Security

I give thanks to the subcommittee who worked to draft this statute over a series of Friday afternoon Zoom calls last year. Instrumental was Shannon O'Leary from the Saint Paul Minnesota Foundation with 20 plus years of experience in investments, Adam Candler, Mel Towle, Syngen Kanassatega, Pete Nayquonabe, Brianna Boyd.

Now this is half of it. Membership must give thanks to Band government for creating the investment portfolio 20 years ago and saving money over the years.

What is being addressed here is adequate management and accountability of those investments.

The Institutional Investment Committee will provide reports to the Band Assembly and is intended to directly oversee the investment professionals responsible for managing the portfolios.

This law creates processes for managing the costs of investments and having independent performance reviews of those investment where none existed before.

This law holds contracted investment professionals accountable by mandating industry standards and business relationships are reviewed periodically.

And to mention a topic that will interest parents, myself included, this law will improve the cost and management of the minor trust funds for future generations where none existed before.

Legislative staff have advertised to fill the position for a qualified Band member to learn the field of institutional investing and serve on the board as a voting member.

This is just getting started and the investment board has a huge workload ahead.

History needs to recognize Commissioner of Finance Mel Towle whose applied expertise guided the Band in this steep learning curve.

This law is necessary, long overdue, and just plain makes sense. Now let me try to summarize this before moving on with the business of today.

Our financial journey continues where 30 years of revenue from gaming has made investments possible and directly funds a government that provides a wide range of services and monthly disbursements intended to supplement work income and help families.

Initiating institutional investing creates a financial foundation similar to states and cities, and provides a measure of economic security for future generations. Because we do not want to have to live paycheck to paycheck as the recent closing of the casinos during the pandemic has clearly shown is possible.

The main purpose and duties of the Secretary Treasurer is to provide economic security.

Tribes to day still face attacks on our sovereignty and history in spite of great strides all across Indian country.

**"NEVER BE INTIMIDATED BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW SOMETHING. ASK QUESTIONS. THEN LISTEN."**

— SPEAKER SHELDON BOYD

Years ago my father Raining Boyd was asked to do the invocation when the Woodlands Bank first opened in Onamia, after which we were riding in the car and he asked if I understood what he said.

"Not all of it Dad."

He said he told them "They always wanted us to be like them and now they don't like what they got."

He was standing in a financial institution, a bank owned by the Mille Lacs Band but knew full well the uphill battle that Anishinabe continue to face.

He was unapologetic in his observation because he and my Mom, like most Native children of their time, were taken from their homes to boarding schools to make them forget their language and culture. That was the only reason because it wasn't to learn, there were schools here that other children went to.

His generation passed on a language and culture that couldn't be beat out of them, and in spite of that still realized the need for education.

It must have all came back to him that morning doing the invocation realizing the Band just opened a bank that showed success unheard of in his time.

The memory of that day reminds me that in spite our successes we must always remember where we came from.

Stay humble and be kind.

It's been an honor to serve the Band as Secretary Treasurer these last four years. No really!

Like any job, learn what you are supposed to do, assess the situation, and work toward getting it done in the time you have.

I believe a good product has been delivered, but mostly it's about the people I've met who are amazing in work ethic, vision, and the ability and willingness to work together. In particular, Adam Candler, I thank you.

It's those people that make me a better person.

Thank you staff of the Office of Management and Budget in particular Katie Radunz, Chris Waite, and Joni Wall, Commissioners, Elected leaders and the people I've met during these last four years.

Legislative staff Deanna Sam, Semira Kimpson, Kianna Morrison, Hannah Valento, Joe Jensen, Adam Candler, Darcie Big Bear, Valerie Harrington, and Brianna Boyd.

Miigwech



Parliamentarian Darcie Bigbear called to order the first session of the 20th Assembly.



## 2022 STATE OF THE JUDICIARY BRANCH

# DISTRICT III APPELLATE JUSTICE SYLVIA WISE

Boozhoo. It is my privilege to deliver the 2022 State of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Judiciary Address today. 2021 was clouded by the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Judicial Branch did experience some rays of sunshine and hope.

Sadly, two of our Justices on the Court of Appeals, Elmer Nayquonabe and David Sam Sr. passed away in 2021. They were beloved Elders and part of their legacies are their many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Even though they both lived rich and full lives, they were looking ahead to see what could be done for future Mille Lacs Band generations.

Justice Sam said that the role of Associate Justice was one of the most meaningful positions that he proactively sought out to attain. To him, his whole life somehow pointed him in this direction. He was honored to be selected and appointed to the role. Justice Nayquonabe was a quieter soul, but he too knew that the position of Associate Justice was well-respected, and he wanted to do his part for the Band's Tribal Court.

Both justices realized that drugs and alcohol are having a devastating impact on the Band, and its younger generation, in particular. They were invested in the planning for the Mille Lacs Band Healing to Wellness Court, Noojimo'wgamig Inaawaniwag, the Healing Journey. In a little while, I will speak more about the progress that we have achieved in making this life-saving program a reality.

Chief Justice Ramona Applegate retired in March 2021 after four years of service on the Court of Appeals. We appreciate her years of service and the good humor that she brought to the Court. I was pleased to be appointed as a Justice on the Court of Appeals on June 26, 2017, and I have enjoyed this challenging position. On September 15, 2021, Brenda Moose was confirmed as a Justice to the Court of Appeals. Justice Moose previously served on the Court from November 1, 2010, to August 30, 2016. We are fortunate to have her wisdom and experience to guide us.

During the two years of the pandemic, our caseload numbers have dropped, but the District Court presided over by Judge Richard Osburn, remains busy. In 2021: 1,025 new cases were filed; 1,820 cases were completed; and 1,447 hearings were held remotely, through a combination of teleconferencing and videoconferencing to avoid spreading the virus.

Interestingly, by having remote ways of participating in the hearings, people were able to attend court sessions more easily and we had far fewer failures to appear. We are grateful to our dedicated court clerks and our court bailiff who processed all those cases under very difficult working conditions.

Thanks to the initiatives of our long-serving Court Administrator, Gilda Burr, the Mille Lacs Band's judicial system is one of the most technologically advanced tribal courts in the United States today. We are the first court anywhere in the country to successfully integrate our case management system, Full-Court Enterprise, with our new electronic filing system, File & ServeXpress. By implementing this integrated system, we have kept court users safe while improving our efficiency and records management. We will be working hard in 2022 to enhance our website to help everyone be able to access justice services more easily.

The planning for the implementation of the Healing Journey program has gone extremely well. Many meetings with advisory committees of elected and appointed officials and key tribal government employees were held in 2021. A mission statement was developed from those meetings that says, "The Mille Lacs Band Family Healing to Wellness Court is an alternative to the traditional court process, and works to reunify families and build a stronger community by providing support and connections to cultural healing services for those impacted

by mental health and addiction."

On December 8, 2021, the Mille Lacs Band Assembly held a public hearing on the proposed legislation amending Title 5 of our statutes to formally establish Noojimo'wgamig Inaawaniwag. The Judicial Branch, through Court Attorney Jill Tompkins, submitted written comments and provided testimony regarding the procedural aspects of the bill. Another step in our progress is the hiring of Theresa James as our Healing to Wellness Court Case Manager. Theresa previously served as the Lead Social Worker for the Mille Lacs Band Family Services Department, and we are delighted to have her deep knowledge and enthusiasm on our staff.

Implementing the Healing to Wellness Court is especially important to the Band's effort to stem the tide of children being abused or neglected by caregivers struggling with addiction and mental health needs. The program will increase collaboration between tribal departments and service providers and will increase the monitoring and support of parents.

The path of one Band family was changed dramatically for the better in 2021 when their child protection case was transferred to our judicial system. For years, the parents had been addicted to methamphetamine and they were abusing oxycodone and other drugs. The drugs had such a hold on them that their children were severely neglected. When state social workers intervened, they found that the children were malnourished, in soiled clothes and diapers, had lice and open sores, and had terrible dental problems. The children were habitually truant but not because they did not want to attend school. One of the youngest children walked to school on a winter day with no coat or socks on. She told her teacher, "I'm happy to be at school so that I can eat." Another child was so malnourished that the child had developed a medical condition that he may have for the rest of his life. It was truly a heart-breaking situation.

This family was involved in prior cases in another tribal court before the latest state court case which started in December 2019. The children had been removed from their parents' custody several times and in one two-year period spent 589 days in foster care. Substance abuse treatment and services had been made available to the parents repeatedly, but they did not make progress on their state-court-ordered case plans. So finally, on March 18, 2020, the County filed a petition to terminate the parents' rights. The Band received notice of this, and the Office of the Solicitor General filed to transfer the case to our District Court according to the federal Indian Child



The Honorable Sylvia Wise, District III Appellate Justice provides the State of the Judiciary Branch.

Welfare Act. The District Court accepted the transfer and in December 2020, the Band's Family Services Department began to work very closely with the parents.

Around the time of the filing of the termination petition, fortunately, the parents seriously engaged in treatment and became sober. Mille Lacs Band Family Services was able to support them in their continued sobriety. The Band's social workers have difficult jobs, but their dedication and persistence can make all the difference in whether a family becomes reunified or not. In this case, over the next 10 months, the assigned social worker made more than 93 contacts with the parents. Family Services and Aanjibimaadizing assisted them to connect with outpatient substance use treatment, therapy, parenting classes, housing, and dental care for the children. They received help to clear their outstanding fines and regain their driver's licenses. Both parents became employed.

Through the hard work of the parents, in close partnership with Family Services, the family was reunified in their new house and the case was dismissed only 10 months after the transfer to our tribal court. It is not an overstatement to say that the efforts of the social workers and the courts saved the lives of these Band children.

With the implementation of the Healing Journey in October 2022, more families will be able to have the same intense services and support that this family did. We hope to reunify families more quickly and to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect that often accompanies untreated substance use disorder.

This past November 22, the legendary Oneida Nation musician Joanne Shenandoah passed away. In addition to her musical artistry, she was known for blazing a global path of "peace through music" as she advocated for the earth and for human rights. She most recently brought attention to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women epidemic.

Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Chief Wilma Mankiller was a mentor to Joanne. Once, Wilma visited Joanne at her home and interviewed her for a book for a whole week. At the end of the week, Wilma said to her, "Joanne, long after you have passed on what will be your legacy?" Joanne spent time thinking about that question and realized that it wouldn't have been about material possessions, but about how we used our true natural gifts to nurture our children and help them realize their potential. She then wrote Chief Mankiller the song "Your Legacy." Some of the lyrics are as follows:

*"After all is said and done, what will be our legacy? What will they say about us? What will they believe? In our lifetime on this earth what did we achieve? How did you prepare the way?"*

*You gave your best for those unborn. And you helped to clear the way.*

*After all is said and done, what will be your legacy? Seeds of life we sowed. Crops, flowers, and trees. Child, great-grandchild, will see the mark you leave. Don't let your footprint in the sand be all you leave . . ."*

Justices Nayquonabe and Sam prepared the way and did their best for those yet unborn. We also remember and honor all the other Mille Lacs Band members who passed in this last year. Each in their own way, also left their mark to guide us and future generations of the Band.

We are mindful that the work of the Judicial Branch — saving lives, safeguarding children, protecting tribal sovereignty, and bringing about sha wa in ma when we can — is part of the Band's legacy. Daily, we take seriously those responsibilities and do our best to make a lasting positive difference for the Mille Lacs Band.

Miigwech.



**BENJAMIN** from page 1

a generation, Benjamin issued a call for the next generation of community leaders to emerge. "Life always comes down to moments. We must recognize what is possible and seize the day. The question comes down to us. Do we have the wisdom and the will to rise to this historic moment? To make positive change, we need more community leaders who dream of a brighter future and inspire others to want that future, too."

Historically delivered to a ballroom filled with Band members and dignitaries, this was the second consecutive year the State of the Band was delivered via an online webinar to protect the community from COVID-19.

Highlights from the speech include:

#### **COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Starting February 1 \***

American Indians, by far, have the highest COVID-19-19 mortality rate of any population in the United States, and the majority of loss has been among Elders. "According to the Centers for Disease Control, and almost every vaccine expert in the world, there is no evidence that vaccines cause harm. There is plenty of evidence, however, that vaccines can save lives." In her speech, the Chief Executive announced that a vaccine mandate will go into effect beginning February 1.

#### **Language Revitalization Achieved Critical Milestones**

The Band published five new books that are written in Ojibwe in 2021. This is the first time in modern history that this has been done. Also, the Band will be releasing the first level of Ojibwe language lessons on the Rosetta Stone language learning platform this month. The lessons are free to Mille Lacs Band members and descendants. "Chi miigwech to all the Band Elders who worked on these projects, along with our younger language-learners. These Band members have been called 'Language Warriors' and have gifted us with their knowledge through story-telling and speaking. And this is a gift that many future generations will be grateful for."

#### **Reservation Boundary Signs Made Important Symbolic Impact**

In her speech Benjamin said one of the most eye-catching changes in 2021 was when the state erected road signs

marking the federal boundary of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. "After fighting for state recognition of our boundary for so many decades, I will never forget the moment I saw these signs for the first time. My heart soared. These signs are largely symbolic but had a deep emotional impact on many of us — especially our Elders who have fought this battle most of their lives."

#### **Employment of Band members at Band-Owned Businesses Has Never Been Higher**

COVID-19 forced the Band to cut back its workforce at the beginning of the pandemic. The good news is that today, almost all Band-owned businesses are at an all-time high for Band member employment, and 23 percent of Band Member associates are in leadership positions, including CEOs, general managers, vice presidents, directors, managers and supervisors.

#### **Relationships with Most Local Governments Continues to Strengthen**

The Mille Lacs Band meets monthly with Pine County and works closely together on many issues, and the Band has good relationships with Aitkin and Crow Wing counties. Recently the Band also began working with Sherburne County when they invited Mille Lacs Band DNR Commissioner Kelly Applegate to accompany them to Washington DC to jointly advocate for funding to protect county public lands. "For one day, the Mille Lacs Band and Sherburne County walked the halls of Congress together supporting the same goal. This was history-making, and hopefully the start of more projects with county governments."

"Collaborations like this are the kind of relationships we want with surrounding counties, and might be possible someday with Mille Lacs County, if only their leadership would ever decide to stop fighting every single thing that we do. Miigwech (thank you) to Pine, Aitkin, Sherburne, Crow Wing, Ramsey and Hennepin counties for respecting tribal sovereignty and working for the benefit of all our citizens. Also, miigwech to the cities of Brainerd, Garrison, Onamia, Hinckley, McGregor, and Aitkin. We value our government relationships with each of you."

#### **Wild Rice Gained Additional Environmental Protections in 2021**

Every year, the federal Environmental Protection Agency requires states to submit a list of polluted waters that need help. For years, the State of Minnesota refused to include wild rice waters that are polluted on this list. This was about politics, not health, safety or science. Last year, for the first time, the EPA conducted meaningful government-to-government consultation with our tribe and others, and the EPA ordered the State of Minnesota to include wild rice waters that are polluted on the state's list of impaired waters.

#### **Band Launched New Alternative Learning Program; Band members Made Educational Achievements**

In 2021, the Band started a 9th to 12th grade Alternative Learning Program at Nay Ah Shing Schools. Oshki Maajitaadaa ("Let's start new together") is a year-round program during and after school to meet the needs of students. "This was a major project started by former Commissioner of Education Joycelyn Shingobe, and she would be so proud of it being launched. Also, congratulations to the 68 adult Band members who finished their degrees, from the GEDs to PhDs, and received awards from the Band. And we are very proud of our 84 Band members who are receiving college scholarships from the Band to support their tuition, fees and books."

#### **State of the Band**

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

**\*Editor's Note: The Vaccine Mandate was developed before the United States Supreme Court overturned the OSHA mandate on vaccinations and testing. Executive Order 2022-01 has since been rescinded. See page 2.**

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

## RESPECTING THE CREATOR'S CREATION

By AMIK (LARRY SMALLWOOD), MILLE LACS BAND ELDER

*This article by the late Amik (Larry Smallwood) was first published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted here to preserve his teachings and bring them to the next generation.*

When the Europeans first came over to this land, they saw native people and they stereotyped us as savages. They thought we were a lost people with no sense of direction, no kind of organization, no beliefs.

That's not so. Indians had a form of government, and we also had our beliefs.

We believe in the Creator. Some people call him God. We knew there was such a being. And we knew he created this world we live in and everything on it — the vegetation, the animals, the two-legged, four-legged, flying, crawling, swimming. He created all those.

We believe that the last species he created was the human being.

The Creator knew human beings needed direction, so he sent down a messenger to each color of man — the yellow people, the black people, the white people, and the red people.

He sent these messengers to show the people how to live.

The messenger to the Ojibwe people walked around the Great Lakes region, teaching us as he went. He lived by example. He showed our people the medicines. He showed us the way of communicating with the Creator.

Our messenger was funny. He was also serious. He was all things a human could possibly be, even though he was spiritual. He showed the people things that would happen if you do wrong, what would happen if you do good, what would happen if you are foolish. He lived a lifetime doing these things to show the people.

And he told the people about the Creator. He also told them to treat all things with respect because they are the Creator's creation.

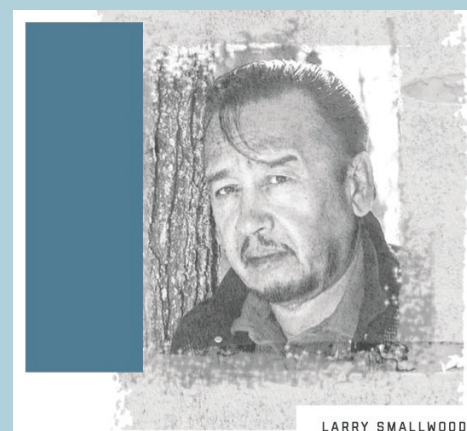
When we go out to use a tree or a plant or anything that grows out of the ground, we have to make a tobacco offering to the Creator. We're going to pull that plant out, or we're going to take the life of that tree. So we ask for forgiveness. We explain to the Creator why we need that tree or plant. We don't disrespect it and just start cutting it down or pulling it out of the ground.

When we go hunting or fishing, we offer the traditional tobacco because we're going to take the life of one of the Creator's creations so we can eat. When we go ricing in the fall, we put tobacco in the lake because we're going to take some of the food the Creator has provided for us. We do this because we were taught to put tobacco down when we pray. There are tobacco plants that grow in the woods that we can use. Some people mix traditional and contemporary tobacco.

Some people say Indians worship the trees, the waters, and the animals. We don't worship them — we respect them because of where they came from.

We have to respect everything because if you don't, you're disrespecting what the Creator created. And the day is coming when you will have to answer for that.

If I disrespect another person because he is a different color, I'm disrespecting what the Creator created. Some people say you have to earn respect. I say no. When I meet someone, they have all my respect because they're from the Creator.



LARRY SMALLWOOD



# NEW OJIBWE LANGUAGE LEARNING PLATFORM

THE MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE ROSETTA STONE IS HERE

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has partnered with Rosetta Stone's Endangered Languages Program (ELP), to create a language learning platform for our Ojibwe Language to empower our community, to maintain our identity, and to help us be successful.

Through the initiative, the Mille Lacs Band and ELP have utilized tribal members' knowledge and authentic cultural resources to create a comprehensive set of Rosetta Stone lessons in Ojibwe language and Mille Lacs dialect. Rosetta Stone Ojibwe is an original Mille Lacs Band product, and is free for all Band members and descendants.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's roots in Minnesota date back to the mid-1700s when it established itself in the region around Mille Lacs Lake. But throughout the next century, non-Indian settlers expanded west and attempted to remove tribal members from the lands they had occupied for generations. Many Mille Lacs Band children were forced to attend government-run boarding schools, forbidden from speaking their language or practicing their cultural teachings.

As a result, generations of Mille Lacs Band members were deprived of their cultural identity, and the Ojibwe language became critically endangered. As part of the Band's commitment to revitalizing the language, educating the public about Ojibwe culture, and providing holistic support to its members, the Mille Lacs Band collaborated with Rosetta Stone to develop Ojibwe language learning lessons.

"As Anishinaabe people, our language was given to us by the creator; learning that language helps us connect with our culture and live our lives in a good way," said Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin. "This partnership with Rosetta Stone is important because it will make learning Ojibwe more accessible to Band members and others and will help preserve our culture for generations to come."

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has been in the forefront of many different national issues including self-governance and treaty rights fights. Every generation has their fight. Prior to gaming the Band had economic issues, land issues, boundary issues, and treaty issues. After gaming the Band was able to build infrastructure, including education, courts, self-governance and multiple other services. While building on the future the Band used culture and language to support community-building. Now that the infrastructure is established the Band can take something like Rosetta Stone to preserve what the Band has always used to survive.

At this point the Band is losing fluent speakers and has only about 20 left. Language and culture is this generation's fight. Survival is in the form of identity and cultural practices. Intentional support is now needed for language and culture. It is about supporting interaction with each other in the community in healthy ways and personally pursuing your purpose and how that fits together as an Anishinaabe community.

The lessons feature Ojibwe community



Amikogaabawiikwe Shirley Boyd is one of the Mille Lacs Band Elders who participated in the project.

and how that fits together as an Anishinaabe community.

The lessons feature Ojibwe community



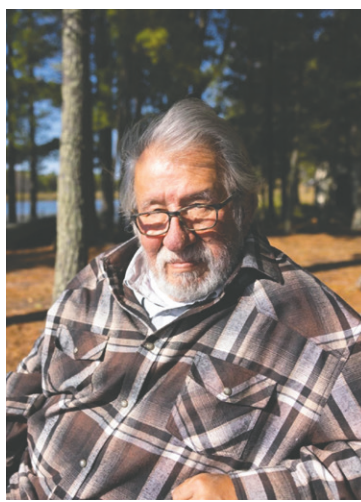
members, videos and illustrations that teach vocabulary and grammar in an engaging and effective way. Rosetta Stone's speech recognition engine, TruAccent, compares learners' pronunciation to that of native Ojibwe speakers to help students fine-tune their skills.

The Mille Lacs Band has first access rights to Rosetta Stone Ojibwe, and the lessons are free for its members and descendants. Learners can access lessons anytime, anywhere on iOS and Android mobile devices, or desktop computers. Band members can apply for the program using a QR code to sign up through Aanjibimaadizing, a division of the Mille Lacs Band Department of Administration.

Aanjibimaadizing translates to changing lives. Aanji supported this project because changing lives and helping people become self-sufficient is more than helping them get a driver's license, training, or helping them write their resume. People need to be holistically healthy to be successful at their job, with their family and in the community. The language learning provides an opportunity for our clients to become empowered and have positive self-identity to move forward in changing their lives.

"We often think of languages as what we speak or write, but overlook how they provide priceless insight into cultures. Indigenous languages are becoming endangered at an alarming rate, and many Native Americans are at risk of losing a vital part of their heritage," said Paul Mishkin, CEO of IXL Learning, Rosetta Stone's parent company. "Our collaboration with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has created resources that support the revitalization of the tribe's language, help pass down knowledge to the next generation of members, and expose the wider public to the Band's rich culture."

The reason Rosetta Stone is a big deal for the Band, is because there hasn't been a successful language curriculum that has consistently produced proficient Ojibwe language speakers. Prior to this being released students were only learning animals, language, and colors in every single grade for the most part. The connection of language to culture cannot be separated. They are integral to each other. This is a program is designed by the brightest Ojibwe minds in the region and also with our most experienced, wisest elders. This software creates access for anybody in any classroom. Any learner who wants to participate has access to those linguistic experts and to those elders.



Gidagigwaneb William Premo is one of the Mille Lacs Band Elders who participated in the project.

## ROSETTA STONE FAQs

### Who can use this product?

Effective January 11, 2022, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members and descendants of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will have free access to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Rosetta Stone. Others should check back March 1, 2022 for access when it will be released to the public.

### How do I register?

1. Go to [aanji.org](http://aanji.org). There is a blue bar across the top of the page with a link that will take you to the Rosetta page where you can register.  
-or- Scan the QR code on the flyer with your phone's camera.  
-or- Go directly to <https://mlbo-laserfiche.millelacsband.com/Forms/Rosetta>.
2. You will get an email verification that your application has been received.
3. Within 1 to 2 business days you will get an email from Rosetta Stone with information on how to set up your account.

This registration link needs to be accessed from a device that is NOT connected to the internet on an MLBO network. After registration is finalized, download the Rosetta Stone Fluency Builder App from your App store. The Fluency Builder App is free. Rosetta Stone can be accessed within the network via computer or smartphone using the Rosetta Stone Fluency Builder App.

### How much does each license cost?

Free to Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members and descendants and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe schools (No charge for 2 years of access. They may re-register after the first 2 years ends if needed.)  
This initial release is only for free licenses. The payment process hasn't been completed yet for paid licenses. Please forward inquiries to [dan.pagnac@millelacsband.com](mailto:dan.pagnac@millelacsband.com).

Licenses will be available March 1, 2022 for a minimal charge:  
(\$25 per license, per level for 2 years of access) for Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe employees, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures employees, other Federally recognized tribes and their members, other tribal schools

Other licenses will include the general public, colleges, any other organization or institution not listed above for a fee of \$100 per person, per license, per level for 2 years of access.

### Who do I contact with questions, or for more information?

Aanjibimaadizing Office 320-532-7407  
Dan Pagnac 320-532-7563 [dan.pagnac@millelacsband.com](mailto:dan.pagnac@millelacsband.com)  
Karen Pagnac 320-362-4139 [karen.pagnac@millelacsband.com](mailto:karen.pagnac@millelacsband.com)



# BAND MEMBER VOICES BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR CLEAN AND SOBER

By Mary Sam, Maajiitaaiziikwe



Dancers pose for a photo.



Children of all ages danced at the New Year's Eve powwow..

At least 400 masked community members attended the New Year's Eve Sobriety Powwow at the new District I Community Center. It was a beautiful sight, bringing in the New Year clean and sober.

District I Representative Virgil Wind shared this was an "amazing event."

"We couldn't have done it without the 30-plus volunteers and wonderful people in our community. The generosity of everyone supporting sobriety is truly heartwarming!" he said. "I am overflowing with gratitude and appreciation for all involved."

Representative Wind thanked his predecessor Sandra Blake for her work to bring the Community Center to District I, where the community rung in the New Year with pride.

This annual powwow has grown to be a placeholder in our region for those wanting to participate in a chemically free New Year's event. The clean and sober community has come together, to lift up sobriety in our area, actively trying to combat addiction. With a wonderful meal catered by Famous Dave's, the event created a space for kids and families, friends and neighbors to catch up and feel connected during a time that many are feeling isolated due to the pandemic, those grieving from the losses we continue to experience, and to have a really fun-filled evening. Amazing prize donations, provided by sponsors listed below, added to the excitement.

Nick Cash, Administrative Assistant to the District I Community Center Coordinator, helped prepare for and staff the event. With pride, he stated this event meant a great deal to him on a personal and professional level. He gave a shoutout to Darla Roach, who managed so many logistics of the event. Nick shared "for those that are clean and sober, this is the brightest time of our lives. There has been so much grief and loss, yet babies are being born, we are celebrating community together, bringing out our commonalities of being on this journey, we are investing in people and adding a little bit of light to their lives when some don't know how to live sober, question where they belong and are learning how to live with gratitude."

Co-sponsoring the event, the Mille Lacs Band Substance Abuse Program invited attendees who identify as 'in recovery' from addiction, to step forward and line up in the front of the gym to publicly acknowledge and celebrate their recovery. The gym was lined up with individuals with a month of sobriety to over 43 years being clean, all walking the path of healing, one day at a time. Those that were unable to stand, raised their hands to also participate in the acknowledgment of being in recovery. Following the group recognition and celebration, participants were invited to receive a sobriety or recovery medallion to hon-



Dancers heading into the arena.

or their months and/or years living chemically free. The pride and positive energy in the gym was an amazing moment. Staff and clients from 4 Winds Treatment Center volunteered as well. Some clients shared the following: "this is my first sober New Years and here I am getting to help, that's pretty cool", "tonight helps me not feel so alone when I am without my kids, until I can make more positive changes in my life," and "I feel good tonight and I feel like a belong, that's a new feeling for me, Miigwech!"

Minutes before midnight, attendees lined up for a two-step dance, to bring in the New Year. The Powwow Committee had arranged hundreds of balloons in a basket on the ceiling of the gym. Unknowing to the crowd of dancers, at the end of the song, crowded in the center of the gym, the balloons fell, inviting everyone to the center to claim not only a balloon, but a hidden prize within it. Witnessing laughter, cheers and celebrating clean and sober, was a great way for many to bring in the New Year.

Miigwech to Master of Ceremony Deanna Standing Cloud, Arena Director Donald "Duck: White, Host Drums: Little Otter and Red Willow and invited drums: Vineland and Pipestone.

## Sobriety Powwow Partners- Mii gwech!

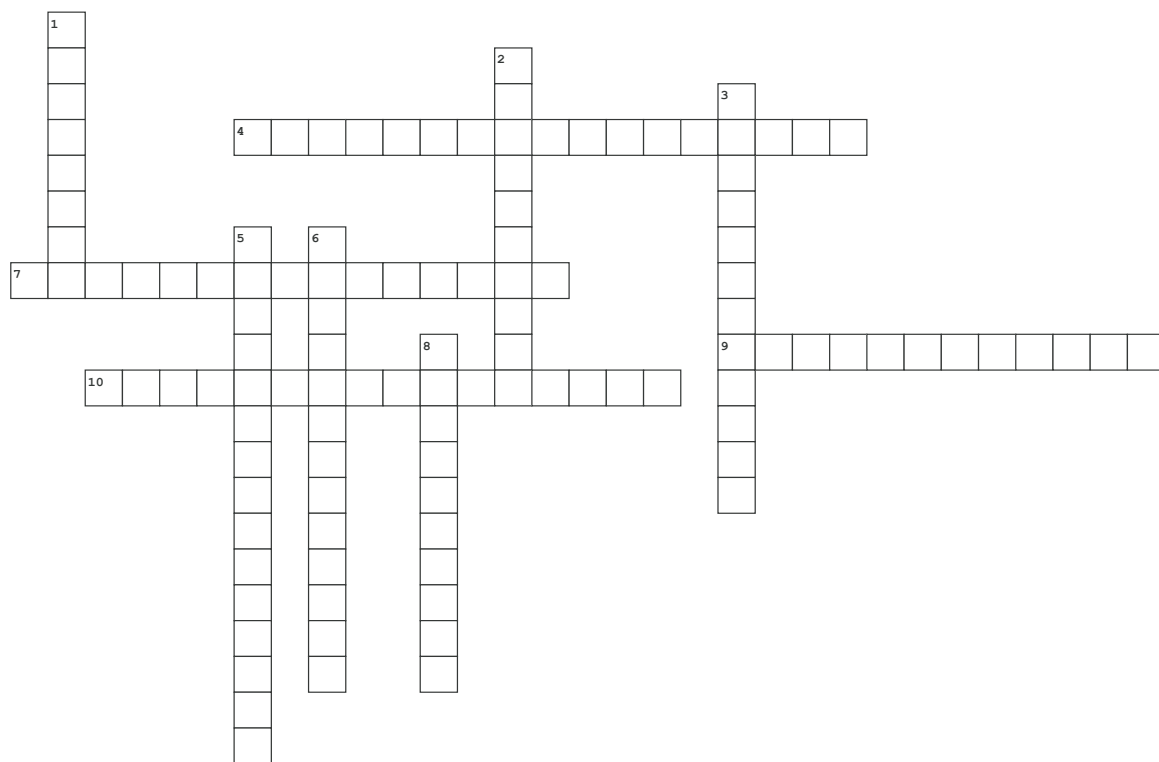
- Mille Lacs Band Substance Abuse Program
- District I Representative Wind's Office
- District II Representative Marvin Bruneau's Office
- District III Representative Wally St John's Office
- Office of the Secretary Treasurer
- AMVETS
- Women's Healing Circle
- Men's empowerment Group
- Ladies Auxiliary
- Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures
- Mille Lacs C V Band Member Recruitment Program





# AAZHAWAAKWASING NAMEBINI-GIIZIS 2022

By Nazhike Mille Lacs Band Member



### Across

4. I am washing my face.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ ina? (Are you washing up/bathing?)
9. I get up.
10. Wash your face!

### Down

1. S/he wakes up.
2. Put your shoes on!
3. I am getting ready.
5. Brush your teeth!
6. You are getting dressed.
8. I am combing my hair!

# WENABOZH WHO?

By Nazhike Mille Lacs Band Member

As Anishinaabe, the winter is time to learn more. Reflecting on the previous seasons on what happened and how to improve. The brain gets an exercise to recall activities and struggles. What were the hardships? What were the successes? Identifying and using them as guides on how your next season is going to operate will determine what you will reflect on next winter. Lay the tracks for how your year is going to go by envisioning your outcomes. Want a job? Envision that life for you. You want to go to college? Envision you in college.

For Anishinaabe, we had a demonstrator. One who would demonstrate what to do and ultimately what not to do. It is Wenabozho's stories that help guide our decision making. What you hear in the stories is what you are meant to hear. Then applying it to your life, as you go, is how you learn, grow and achieve your visions. He did everything wrong and he also did everything right. As my grandmother would say, "he is everything and anything." Wenabozho na gidayaa?

For every 20 positives, it takes just 1 negative to disturb them. In some stories, I have heard of a designated person to do everything opposite. Their duty was to demonstrate what not to do. Whether it was to spear using the wrong side of the spear or go canoeing using the opposite end of the paddle. Even though we know it is ineffective, wrong so to say, having it demonstrated reminds us to be aware of our actions and how out of place we look when we are doing things out of sorts. We all do this on occasion as we are humans. How can we learn from our perils as a people? Wenabozho na gidayaa?

Our community needs to create the vision for how we live. In such tough times with all of the grief, it is tough to imagine a future without \_\_\_\_\_ here with us. Compounded grief through generations magnifies that. I have grief for a person I never met just because my family cared for him so much. His picture was on my grandmother's wall and still is on my dad's wall. Each of us individually has parallel stories such as mine. We also have



larger trauma that makes us feel so small and insignificant to the point where the ways the Manidoog provided for us are rejected. We are unable to envision ourselves as spiritual anishinaabe but merely physical.

With all the contrary happening in our community, you would think it is easy to learn. But what if we as a people believe that we are contrary to our way of life because we are incapable to do so? The language is too hard, our ways are primitive and our way of life is insufficient. All are contrary and strong barriers to envisioning our community as a flourishing, spiritually rich society. What we put out we get back. Individually we are Anishinaabe but together we are Anishinaabeg. Our collective energy is enough to change the future. Learning from our recent history, studying our old history and envisioning our future together just may bring the return of Wenabozho. Wenabozho na gidayaamin? Miigwech

# GIDINWEWINAAN — OUR WAY OF SOUND

By Nazhike Mille Lacs Band Member

At some point at the beginning of the day, the anishinaabe will awaken. Preferably at sunrise to greet the manidoo, Giizis (Sun).

The work that goes into preparing an anishinaabe for the day gets fairly repetitive. Health and wellness has been practiced by anishinaabe since the beginning of time. We treat our body with respect as it is a gift from the world to act as a vessel for our spirit. We shall take care of our vessels. And, speak ojibwe...

Goshkozi. = S/he wakes up. (Go shko zih)

Indoonishkaa. = I get up. (In doo nish kah)

Gigiziibiigazhe ina? = Are you washing up/bathing? (Gih gih zee bee guh zhay in nuh)

Giziyaabide'on! = Brush your teeth! (Gih zee yah bid day' own)

Ninazikwe' = I am combing my hair! (Nih nuh zik way')

Giziibiigiingwen! = Wash your face! (Gih zee bii geen gwayn)

Ingiziibiigiingwe = I am washing my face. (In gih zee bee geen gway)


Gibiizikonaye. = You are getting dressed. (Gih bee zik cone nuh yay)

Babiichiin! = Put your shoes on! (Bub bee cheen)


Indoozhiitaa. = I am getting ready. (In doo zhiitah)

Use every morning to keep clean and learn Ojibwemowin!! Miigwech

You can hear many words and sentences pronounced by native speakers at [ojibwe.lib.umn.edu](http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu).



Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Office of Justice Services



## Missing & Murdered Unit

Email [OJS\\_MMU@BIA.GOV](mailto:OJS_MMU@BIA.GOV)


Call  
**1-833-560-2065**

Confidential | Toll-Free | 24/7

Text Keyword **BIAMMU**  
and location to **847411**

Call, text, or email tips or referrals to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services, Missing and Murdered Unit to help with any information concerning a missing Indigenous person or homicides in Indian Country.

**YOU CAN HELP.**



Missing and Murdered Unit  
<https://www.bia.gov/bis/missing-murdered-unit>

**OPERATION LADY JUSTICE**  
<https://operationladyjustice.usdoj.gov/>



# TRIGGERING THE EXCITEMENT OF WINTER SPEARING

## PASSING ON THE TRADITION TO THE NEXT GENERATION

BY VIVIAN LAMDORE, INAAJIMOWIN EDITOR

What if you were thinking of trying your hand at winter spear fishing, but then thought you did not want to be cold, you had no equipment, and really did not know how to spear a fish or what the regulations are? The Mille Lacs Band Department of Natural Resources has begun a new program aimed at eliminating some of those variables that may be holding beginners from trying traditional spear fishing. The program is also meant for those who already know how to spear, but lack the equipment to do so. The winter spearing program is now being offered to Band members, giving them easy access to fully operational spear houses complete with heat and pre-cut holes. While the program was initially to focus on making spear fishing available for Elders and children, it is available at no cost for all Band members.

The DNR currently has three single-hole spear houses and two double hole spear houses available for Band members. All you need to do is call the DNR to reserve a house. When you have your reservation ready, DNR staff will be happy to prepare the house ahead of your arrival.

Fisheries biologist Keith Wiggins and Fishery Technician Harvey Goodsky have been working on setting up the program for months and it is now available for all Band members. The DNR was able to obtain five spear houses formerly belonging to Eddie's that were no longer being used. A little work was put into repairs and a fresh coat of black paint on the inside was just about all it took. Black paint is used to keep the spear house dark on the inside to minimize the glare of any movement inside the house that may startle the fish as they swim by.

Keith and Harvey can even give you a ride out to the spear house if you need a lift. They will get you set up, let you have some fun, and hopefully, spear a fish!

If you have not ever tried spearing before, Keith and Harvey are more than willing to help teach you how.

"I love introducing people to fishing, whether it is in open water or hard water," Keith said. "I myself am always learning, and I love teaching people what I know. The coolest thing about spearing is you can see so much of what goes on under water and under the ice. You can get mesmerized looking through that hole watching for a fish to swim by."



Harvey Goodsky and Keith Wiggins are happy to begin the wintespearing season at the DNR spear houses. All Band members are encouraged to give it a try.

Keith said the most important part of winter spearing is to "just get out here. Any time you can be out here is a blessing."

Harvey agrees. He added that getting out there to try it is the first step. The best part is watching what happens next after a first-time fishing experience. "Then you are hooked. It happened to my kids," he said.

Harvey explained he brought his two boys, ages 13 and 11, out for a day of winter fishing on the lake. This particular day, they were not spearing; they wanted to try fishing with a rod and reel first, before they tried spearing. At first, the idea of fishing on a frozen lake was not all that interesting for the boys, who continued to play with their "Switch" game while in the car on their way. They hardly looked up from the glowing screen of the hand-held video game. But Harvey was intent on the boys at least giving fishing a try.

The boys were a not all that excited and perhaps a bit hesitant to even walk on the ice. After a bit of coaching from Dad, they began the day in a warm house. Soon the boys settled in and began the traditional of watching the hole for any action. After quite some time, Harvey suggested they leave for the day. "I told them we had been out there three hours," Harvey said. He wasn't expecting what happened next.

"They were like, 'What? It doesn't even feel like three hours! Can we just stay for one more? Please?' I just couldn't believe it. They were hooked." Harvey said. "That is what it is all about for me. I want to pass this on to the next generation. That is super important."

The boys caught only one small fish, and by the time it was cleaned and cooked, "It was only enough for a sandwich," Harvey said, laughing.

"But they were so thrilled to have caught a fish, cleaned it, cooked it and ate it. We talked about where food comes from and all that we really need is provided for outdoors. The manidoo have provided food for us to eat. And the boys talked about how cool it was to eat food that they were able to get for themselves, and their excitement was building. That is what needs to be triggered," Harvey said. "All the way home they never even picked up their Switch again. They just kept talking about fishing and different lures and when can they do it again. That was the coolest part. And I got to watch it with my own eyes. It was cool."

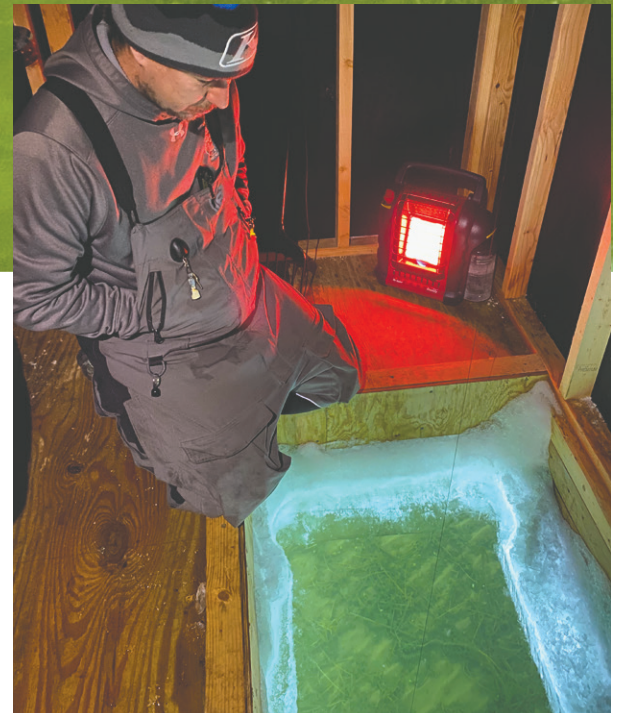
Keith said that is the goal: to introduce as many Band members — especially kids — to spearing. "We want to make sure we pass this on for generations to come."

The houses are easily accessible for Elders as well as kids. "We will bring you out here and help you every step of the way if you want help. Otherwise, we will come out here and get you all set up and let you just fish on your own."

The Woodlands Fire Crew guys take care of the ice roads, making sure they are plowed to make access to the houses easy. DNR staff will make sure to open the houses, open the holes, and turn the heat on for Band members who have reserved a house. They also supply the spears that are a weight-forward spear weighing about 15 pounds each with a rope attached with a writ strap. Lures are available if needed. Those who prefer to fish with live bait must supply their own, but the DNR has bait harnesses available for those who may need them.

"The DNR is proud to offer this cultural spearing experience to Band members. Our staff here worked hard to make this happen, and truly enjoy providing these opportunities. Come on out and spear some fish!" said Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of the DNR.

"Making sure we can get Elders out here who want to spear is just as important as teaching kids to spear," Keith said. "If we are able to set people up in a warm, fully equipped spear house, that takes some of the pressure off people so all they have to do is come out and fish. Whether they are able to spear one is not the main goal. Just being out here. I can practically



Keith Wiggins, DNR Fisheries biologist watching his decoy as he attempts to lure potential fish into the area.



DNR Fisheries team Keith Wiggins and Harvey Goodsky demonstrate the double hole spear house with a bench and a hole for spearing for both of them.

guarantee, once they try it, they will love it."

But dress warm. Even though the spear houses have heaters that can bring the inside temperature to 50 to 60 degrees, it is still advisable to dress as though you will be outdoors. A warm outer layer including a coat and snow pants, boots, hat, and gloves are highly recommended.

And remember to bring your own tobacco.

*Spear houses will be available through the DNR offices pending the ceremonial blessing. The ceremony will show respect to the Manidoo in the lake and thank the Creator for all that's here for us as Anishinabe. To reserve a spear house, please contact Leroy Day at 320-532-7896.*

## WHAT'S IN FISH?

By JACKIE BRAUN, REGISTERED DIETITIAN and DIABETES CORDINATOR

*Fish is a high-quality protein, filled with omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, and several other minerals that can help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke. The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least two times per week as part of a healthy diet.*

*A 3 ounce serving of walleye contains only 100 calories, 21 grams of protein, and 0 grams of carbohydrates. Walleye is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which help promote brain and heart function. Northern pike is rich in several other important nutrients, including selenium, Vitamin D, vitamin B12, and niacin.*

*Breading or frying fish adds excess fat, carbohydrates, and calories. The most nutritious way to cook fish is to*



# BAND MEMBER ASSISTS WITH NICOTINE RESEARCH STUDY

## METABOLISM AND STRESS MAY BE KEY FACTORS IN UNDERSTANDING WHY NATIVE AMERICANS ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF LUNG CANCER

Band member Elder Carol Hernandez has recently assisted in a research project to help Native Americans quit cigarettes and to help understand why some Native Americans are at increased risk for lung cancer.

The study was a collaboration between Minnesota tribes and researcher, Dana Carroll, who is an assistant professor at the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota. Dana has been honored to work alongside Native American tribes and communities in their pursuit for health equity. Carol was a research coordinator for the study.

There were two goals for the project. The first, was to look at reasons why some Native American adults who smoke are more addicted to cigarettes than other Native American adults who smoke. The second, was to understand why Native American adults have higher lung cancer risk than White adults.

"It is important for Native Americans to participate in research so we can gather data specific to Native Americans," Carol said. "Current data tends to be gathered from studies on persons of European descent and results may not be in line with what is best for us. Research can lead to better treatment options, new medications, new interventions, and possibly cures for Native American populations."

The study identified a couple reasons why some Native American adults may be more addicted to cigarettes. One reason is nicotine metabolism — the speed at which the ad-

dictive chemical nicotine from cigarettes is broken down in the body. Study participants who metabolized nicotine quickly were more addicted to cigarettes than participants who metabolized nicotine slowly.

Another reason is stress. Specifically, participants who reported having greater stress smoked more than those who had less stress. Interestingly, study participants who reported less stress were also more likely to report being more resilient (i.e., ability to bounce back from misfortune easily).

Other studies, which have been conducted mainly with White adults, have shown that knowing someone's nicotine metabolism not only helps understand why they smoke more than others but also may help identify which treatment for quitting smoking is best for them. Specifically, people who metabolize nicotine quickly may be more likely to quit smoking if treated with the medications such as Chantix or Bupropion/Zyban. People who slowly metabolize nicotine may be more likely to quit smoking if treated with the nicotine patch. However, this work has yet to be explored with Native Americans who smoke.

A next step could include looking at whether using information on nicotine metabolism to help select treatments for quitting smoking does indeed benefit Native Americans. Next steps could also include understanding perceptions on using nicotine metabolism to help select the quitting treatment that may work best for each Native American who smokes.



Mille Lacs Band member Carol Hernandez with University of Minnesota Assistant Professor Dana Carroll.

The relationships between resilience, stress, and smoking are also helpful. An implication could be seeing whether a quit smoking program that focuses on managing stress and building resilience can aid Native Americans in quitting smoking or even more broadly. Tips for managing stress may be helpful and include: mediation, exercise, laughing, and connecting with others.

Interested in quitting smoking now? Call the American Indian Quitline at 1-833-9AI-QUIT (924-7848). It is free for any Minnesota resident that identifies as American Indian. In addition to one-on-one coaching, the Quitline offers email and text support, educational materials, and quit medication (nicotine patches, gum or lozenges) delivered by mail.

## GRA UPDATE

### What Is "Gaming" Under the Law, What Is Not, and What Are Some Other Ideas About Promotions or Games You Can Do

The Gaming Regulatory Authority (GRA) always gets questions about what types of promotions, raffles, contests, and games are officially considered Gaming, more commonly known as gambling, under the law. Only the casinos and Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures can conduct Gaming on the Reservation and only the GRA can oversee that Gaming. But that doesn't mean groups and people can't still run other types of games and promotions.

First, let's get our definitions straight. In order to be Gaming, (gambling), you need three things. Think about it like a three-legged stool:

- 1) Something of value must be wagered (a bet).
- 2) That something must be wagered on the outcome of a contest of chance or a future contingent event, not under his or her control or influence (a chance)
- 3) In exchange for something of value (a prize).

A bet, on a chance of something happening, for a prize.

That's it. Remove any one of the three requirements and you are not "Gaming" (gambling) and it's perfectly legal.

For example, if you have a bingo game but nobody is wagering something of value, if everybody gets to play for free, it's not Gaming. Or imagine everybody gets entered into a lottery and they don't even have to buy anything or put any money up. That's also not Gaming.

What all Gaming is tightly controlled by the GRA, there are plenty of games and events you or your group can play that are not gaming. Other examples could be:

- Door prizes, entering somebody into a contest to win something just for showing up.
- Silent or live auctions.
- Some games that are based on skill where the contestants win prizes (shooting, racing, basketball). Note: only the contestants themselves can win valuable prizes. If you're

### GAMING REGULATORY AUTHORITY



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

betting and winning on the sidelines, it's gambling.

- Sales. Indian Tacos, tee shirts, etc.
- Asking for donations
- Free bingo, mentioned above.
- Free lotteries, mentioned above.
- Raffles or bingo that take place off of reservation lands, for example at a local American Legion or school.

This is a very short list. Let your imagination be your guide.

Also remember that in certain limited instances, charitable organizations can do some types of "Gaming" (gambling) legally on the Reservation, but they need to be official Indian Charitable Organizations registered through the GRA.

For more information on that or anything mentioned in this article, contact the Mille Lacs office at 320-532-8196 or the Hinckley office at 320-532-8196 or check the Band's website.

*The Mille Lacs Band Gaming Regulatory Authority (GRA) is an independent regulatory agency of tribal government established to separate the government's regulatory function from the management function of the Gaming Enterprises. More information and contact numbers can be found at <http://www.millelacsband.com/government/gaming-regulatory-authority>. You can also LIKE us on Facebook at Mille Lacs Band GRA. GRA Board meetings are open to the public. Due to COVID-19, meetings are currently being conducted remotely using Zoom.*

**THE AMERICAN INDIAN QUITLINE**  
CALL 1-833-9AI-QUIT

**OUR TRADITIONS TO KEEP AND OUR WAY TO QUIT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO**

**ABOUT THE AMERICAN INDIAN QUITLINE**  
Developed with guidance from the community, the American Indian Quitline from Quit Partner offers completely free and specially designed support to help you, or someone you know, quit commercial tobacco.

**HOW WE CAN HELP**  
Please call the American Indian Quitline at 1-833-9AI-QUIT (1-833-924-7848). If you live in Minnesota, you can get the following free help to quit commercial tobacco:

- A dedicated team of American Indian coaches who understand your culture and respect your traditions.
- Up to 10 calls with the coaches, allowing you to get to know them.
- Up to 12 weeks of free lozenges, gum or patches to help you quit the addiction.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS NOT OUR LEGACY**

To report suspected human trafficking, call the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) tip line:  
**1-866-347-2423**

If you are a victim and need help, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline:  
**1-888-373-7888**

**BLUE CAMPAIGN**  
One Walk, One Mission, End Human Trafficking.



# MEKWENIMINJIG

## THE ONES WHO ARE REMEMBERED

### Donald "Don" Boyd — Bezhi gwewidong

Bezhi gwewidong, Donald "Don" Boyd, 57-year-old resident of Onamia, MN passed away on December 21, 2021. Visitation was at 6 PM on Sunday, December 26, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was at 10 AM on Monday, December 27, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Nazhike officiating. Interment will be in the Boyd Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Don was born on April 4, 1964, in Brainerd, Minnesota. He was known in the Vineland area for repairing cars. He liked to spend his time with his grandchildren, gardening, and listening to country music.

He is survived by his partner, Mary Sam; children, Clayton, Christina, Stacy, Priscilla, Waylon, Alysia, Marissa, Natasha, Josie, Delaney; parents, Delores & Larry Hegland; brothers, Ray (Toni), Jacob; and sister, Carolyn (Marvin).

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Dan & Daisy Boyd; brother, Kevin Boyd; granddaughter, Kiley Jones; and many more loved ones.



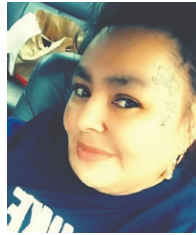
### Sheena Rae Gahbow — Wechaawabiikwe

Wechaawabiikwe, Sheena Gahbow, age 39 of Onamia, MN passed away on January 2, 2022. Visitation was at dusk on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was at 10 a.m. on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Obizaan officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Wechaawabiikwe, Sheena Gahbow was born on May 13, 1982, in Onamia, Minnesota to Cheryl (Beaulieu) and Arthur Gahbow. She enjoyed crafting, collecting dream catchers, and discovering new recipes and foods she liked. Sheena liked to spend her time watching movies, listening to music, and sharing with others on social media. She will be dearly missed by all.

Sheena is survived by her mother, Cheryl Garbo; brothers, Pete Gahbow, Marvin (Carol) Beaulieu, Thomas (Vanessa) Benjamin, Erik Gahbow, Jared Gahbow, Norman "Bates" Adams; sisters, Wanetta (Anton) Thompson, Raenelle (Jereck) Weyaus, Rayna Gahbow; special niece, June Nadeau; and many loving nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and We'ehs.

She was preceded in death by her father, Arthur Gahbow; grandmothers, Batiste and Georgianna; grandfathers, James, Simon, Frank, & Pete; sisters, Judy, Janet, Alena, Tami, and Nancy; brother, Harold "Willie"; baby Garbo; and numerous aunts & uncles.



### Brenda Lee Schaff —

Brenda Lee Schaff, age 54 journeyed to the spirit world on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at Regions Hospital in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She was born on April 29, 1967 in Cass Lake, Minnesota the daughter of Frank Schaff and Shirley Whipple.

Brenda was a very loving and caring daughter, sister, mother, grandmother and friend. She loved nothing more than family time. Her favorite things were going to the park with her kids and grandchildren to play Badminton, Kickball, Softball and Frisbee. Brenda never let her age slow her down. Loved going to the casino and drinking her Coke, listening to Fleetwood Mac and Prince. She worked as a C.Y.S. for Mille Lacs Community Youth Service.

Brenda loved her kids more than life itself. She raised them to be strong, independent, caring, thoughtful and to always stick together. She had a goofy sense of humor. She could always bring a smile to everyone's face. Brenda helped so many people throughout her life.

Survived by her father: Frank Schaff; mother: Shirley (Whipple) Layman; significant other: Darrin Kegg; sons: Brino Gamboa Jr., Nicholas "Brother" Lufkins jr., Brino Gamboa III and dog: Brillo Schaff; daughters: Tania Gamboa and Sara Lufkins; godson: Zachary McCormack; brothers: Andy Schaff and Ernest Beaulieu; sisters: Loreen Estey, Betty Schaff and Amber Schaff; grandchildren: Braylen Lufkins, Evaliah Gamboa, Corey, Marcel and Aaron Jackson, Antonio and Cali Weous and one great grandchild: Santana Gamboa

Preceded in death by her grandma: Dorothy Whipple; brother: Troy Adam Goodman; granddaughter: Binesiiikwe Jackson; cousins: Elisa and Julie Whipple.

All-night visitations were held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 and Wednesday, January 12, 2022 both beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the American Indian Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. An all-night visitation was held on Thursday, January 13, 2022 beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the Veterans Memorial Building in Cass Lake, Minnesota.

A Funeral Service was held on Friday, January 14, 2022 at 12:00 (Noon) at the Veterans Memorial Building in Cass Lake, Minnesota.



### Dale Pindegayosh —

Dale Pindegayosh, 72-year-old resident of Onamia, MN passed away on December 24, 2021. Visitation was at 4 PM on Monday, December 27, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Funeral was at 10 AM on Tuesday, December 28, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Interment was in the Vineland Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Dale was an original Northsider. He was a Marine and was awarded two Purple Hearts. Dale liked spending time with family and friends. He enjoyed helping others because his father told him to. He loved old cars.

Dale is survived by his sons, Paul Rogalski Tony Cumpian Jamison (Deanna) Bellanger, Matthew Bellanger, Robert Bellanger Johnny Pindegayosh; daughters, Lisa (Oscar) Haynes, Sheila (Chad) Walters, Laura (Mike) Pindegayosh-Bondgien, Lisa Marchaud, Yolanda (Chad) Dahlke, Vonnie Monroe, Stacy Bellanger; brothers, Alan Pindegayosh; sisters, Elisse Aune, Mary (Greg) Flores, Shelly Pindegayosh, Patricia Pindegayosh.

He was preceded in death by Kevin Pindegayosh, Michael L. Pindegayosh, Theresa Pindegayosh, Michael T. Pindegayosh, Troy Edgington, Ma-koons Bellanger, Ma-kwam White Eagle, Bianca Rogalski.



### Marlys Louis Bushey — Madweyaashiikwe

Madweyaashiikwe, Marlys (Shaugobay) Bushey, age 66 of Isle, MN passed away on January 4, 2022. Visitation was at 6 p.m. on Friday, January 7, 2022, at the District 11 Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 8, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Baabiitaw officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds.

Madweyaashiikwe, Marlys was born on August 26, 1955, in Onamia, Minnesota to the late Ervin Shaugobay and Shirley Jones. She grew up on the Mille Lacs Reservation and attended school in Onamia. She lived with her grandmother and helped care for her siblings. Later, she moved to Minneapolis where she attended cosmetology school and became a nursing assistant registrar. Eventually she settled in the Mille Lacs area and was currently living on the reservation. She adored and loved her children, grandchildren and family, attending pow-wows, fishing, and was an avid bingo player. She was always smiling and kind to people.

She is survived by her husband, Anthony Bushey; son, Richard Shaugobay; daughters, Mavis Stobb, Rachel Shaugobay, Candace Shaugobay; sisters Janice Shaugobay, Ruth Ann Shaugobay; brothers, David Shaugobay, Robert Moose; grandchildren, Lydia, Kelia, Cyrell, Railei, Camdyn, Carmelo, and Mysonne; We-ehs; many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Charlotte Shaugobay; brothers, Chucky Shaugobay and William Shaugobay.



### James Smith —

James Smith, age 45 of Onamia, MN passed away on January 11, 2022. Visitation was at 6 PM on Friday, January 14, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 AM on Saturday, January 15, 2022 at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Nazhike officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds.

James "Jim" Smith was born on June 5, 1976, in Onamia, Minnesota. He liked to spend time with his daughter Jeanette, brother Jack, and his mother. Jim loved listening to music, joking, and laughing with his friends and family.

James is survived by his mother, Alvera Smith; daughter, Jeannette Smith; brothers, Jack Smith, Dan Boyd, Tim Boyd, Chris Weyous, Coleman Weous; sisters, Mary Boyd, Rachel Boyd, Danielle Boyd, Danni Jo Harkness

He was preceded in death by his father, Daniel Boyd Jr.; son, Jameson Anderson; brother, Bruce Boyd; nephews, Simon Boyd, Jack Daniel Smith III; sister, Sheila Marie Boyd.



*This page is offered as a service to those families who would like to share the news of their loved ones' passing. Please submit memorials for Mekweniminjig to news@millelacsband.com. Photos are accepted but not required. Because this is a new feature in the Inaajimowin, we are accepting tributes for Band members who have passed away beginning January 1, 2021.*



**Anthony Tanner —  
Zaangwewegaabow**

Zaangwewegaabow, Anthony Tanner, age 45 of Minneapolis, MN died on January 6, 2022. Visitation was at 6 PM on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at the District 1 Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 AM on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at the District 1 Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Ombishkebines officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds.

Zaangwewegaabow, Anthony Bruce Tanner was born on October 14, 1976, in Minneapolis, MN to Marina Dorr and Kenneth Tanner. He is survived by his sister, Tina Harsdorf. He was preceded in death by his parents, Marina Dorr and Kenneth Tanner; brother, Marlin Tanner Sr.; and nephew, Marlin Tanner Jr.



**Peter Gahbow —  
Nitaamigaabaw**

Nitaamigaabaw, Peter Gahbow, age 56 of Onamia, MN died on January 12, 2022. Visitation was at 6 PM on Saturday, January 15, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 AM on Sunday, January 16, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Gisibaganeb officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Nitaamigaabaw, Peter Gahbow was born on June 20, 1965, in Onamia, Minnesota to the late Lorena (Mitchell) and Arthur Gahbow. He attended and graduated from Fond Du Lac Ojibwe School. Peter was a cultural mentor and teacher to many. He made sure to pass down his teachings to others by telling the story of the jingle dress. Peter was the founder of the Little Otter Group, a 3rd Degree Mede, and Big Drum Society member. He enjoyed traveling to various pow-wows where he was the Master of Ceremonies, and being with his grandchildren who lovingly referred to him as "papa". He will be greatly missed by all.

Nitaamigaabaw is survived by his sons, Les (Whitney) Gahbow, Gabriel (Danielle) Gahbow, and Christopher "Spud" Gahbow; daughter, Chasity (Keith) Gahbow; brothers, Kyle (Kim) Cash, Archie (Dallas) Cash, Erik Gahbow, Jared Gahbow, Tom (Vanessa) Benjamin Sr., Frank Benjamin, Darrel Kingbird, Alden (Demery) Connor, Crow Bellcourt; sisters, Corrina Cash, Rayna Gahbow; 16 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild; and many wehe's, relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lorena (Mitchell) and Arthur Gahbow; daughter, Lynelle; brothers, Harold "Willy" Gahbow, and Amik (Larry Smallwood); sisters, Tammy, Nancy, Janet, Judy, Alena, and Sheena Gahbow.



**Unique Beaulieu —  
Amikogaabawiikwe**

Amikogaabawiikwe, Unique Beaulieu, Age 6 of Onamia, MN died on January 13, 2022. Visitation was at 6 PM on Monday, January 17, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 AM on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Obizaan officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Amikogaabawiikwe, Unique Sincere Beaulieu was born on December 11, 2015, in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, to Philip Benjamin and Chantelle (Davis) Beaulieu. She enjoyed being with her family, especially mom and baby sister, Aurora, who she loved playing and singing with. Unique looked forward to going to school, seeing her teacher, and learning how to draw and read. She liked playing games on the PlayStation, her tablet, and watching her favorite cartoons and movies. Unique also loved using her imagination while playing with her toys. She was always singing, dancing, and laughing. She enjoyed taking pictures, swimming, and going on rides in the car. Unique loved spending her free time hanging out with uncle Blade.

Amikogaabawiikwe is survived by her mother, Chantelle (Daniel Brooks) Beaulieu; father, Philip Benjamin; sister, Aurora Beaulieu; brother, Philip Benjamin Jr.; stepbrothers, Aiden Brooks and Freeman Brooks; grandma, Ardana Beaulieu; grandpa, Robert Sam; great-grandpa, John Stately; uncles, Blade Bastedo, Joe Bastedo, Vincent Beaulieu, Leland Sam; aunties, Brittany Beaulieu, Melissa Benjamin, Rosi Benjamin; great-auntie, Candida Mitchell;

She was preceded in death by her great-grandma, Audrey Stately; great-grandpa, Art Benjamin; grandma, Janet Benjamin; special uncle, Shane Boyd.



**Frederick Shingobe**

Frederick Shingobe, 63-year-old resident of Onamia, MN passed away on December 22, 2021. Graveside services were held at 10 AM on Wednesday, December 29, 2021, at St. Therese Little Flower Cemetery in Vineland, MN with Baabitaw. Officiating. Arrangements were with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Frederick "Fred" Raymond Shingobe was born on May 17, 1958, in Onamia, Minnesota to Susan (Benjamin) Weyaus and Frank Shingobe Sr. He enjoyed good times with family and friends. He will always be remembered for his sense of humor and smile. Fred worked at the ALU in Maintenance and According to a resident, "Fred was good people, happy-go-lucky, and always smiling." He will be greatly missed by all.

Fred is survived by his daughter, Kelly; siblings, Kathy, Bonnie, Chuck, and Ken.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Susan (Benjamin) Weyaus and Frank Shingobe Sr.; sisters, Geri, Melanie, and Evelyn; brothers, Frank "Franco" Jr, and Johnny.



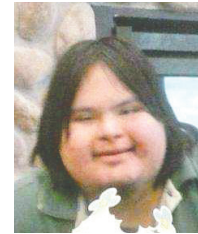
**James Nickaboine Jr. —  
Naawigiizhig**

Naawigiizhig, James Nickaboine Jr., 34-year-old resident of Onamia, MN passed away on December 27, 2021. Visitation was at 6 PM on Thursday, December 30, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A Funeral Ceremony was held at 10 AM on Friday, December 31, 2021, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation with Obizaan officiating. Interment will be in the Vineland Burial Grounds. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.

Naawigiizhig, James was born on June 14, 1987, in Onamia, Minnesota to James Nickaboine, Sr. and Lori Weous. He attended and graduated from Onamia High School in 2006. He loved to sing and dance. James liked to spend his time with his cousins where they would play wrestle and being an uncle to his nephews. He looked forward to going to the casino by himself and journaling about his daily activities.

James is survived by his parents, Lori Weous and James Nickaboine Sr.; siblings, Christopher Weous, Karla Nickaboine, Moe Nickaboine; nephews, Brody Eli Smith, Alexander James Nickaboine; and many loving cousins, aunts, and uncles.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Tony and El-lerraine Weous, Lawrence "Cha butch," cousins, Kenneth Eagle III, Toni Weous, and William Nickaboine.



**Snowshoes, an American Indian Invention**

*In the deep of winter, traditional Ojibwe hunters strapped on snowshoes to maneuver through thick snow. Snowshoes, which were developed by American Indians in the Great Lakes region, allowed the hunters to move more easily in their efforts to feed their families.*

*Ojibwe hunters wore snowshoes while trapping or stalking prey with bows and arrows. Traditional snowshoes were made up of two basic parts: a hardwood frame and a netting made of hide, twine or sinew (animal tendon). Wide and strong, snowshoes distributed the hunter's weight across a larger surface, preventing the hunter from sinking into the snow.*

*Ojibwe called the rounded type of snowshoe the "bear paw" because the contraption left a bear-like print in the snow.*

*Other groups of American Indians referred to the snowshoes as "catfish" because of their shape.*

*Although the Great Lakes Indians had used the devices for centuries, European trappers and hunters had never seen snowshoes before meeting Indians. Most Europeans, new to the region, relied on horses for transportation, but the deep snow made this kind of travel nearly impossible. So after forging friendships with local Indians, the European trappers and hunters began using snowshoes too.*

*Few people, Indian or non-Indian, continue to trap or hunt during the winter. But snowshoes are now known throughout the world and are widely used for sport and recreation. From the February 2012 edition of the Inaajimowin.*



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

**UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS**

Have you moved? Do you feel like you are missing some important information?

Just a reminder to Band members who are over the age of 18 to please update your address with Enrollments Office either in-office or through the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe website.

Make sure you are getting the latest updates from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and update your address today!

If you have any questions, please contact the Enrollment office at (320)532-7730. .



# TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

## FEBRUARY ELDER BIRTHDAYS

Bruce Alan Anderson  
 Laura Ann Ashcroft  
 Mahlon Scott Barnes  
 Della Jo Benjamin  
 Maurice Wayne Benjamin  
 Melanie Ann Benjamin  
 Steven Benjamin  
 Debra Jean Blake  
 Sandra Lee Blake  
 Judy Ann Carlson  
 Renee Carreon-Clara  
 Dennis Wayne Davis  
 Harry Richard Davis  
 Dawn Marie Day  
 William Carl Erickson  
 Eileen Frances Farah  
 Nicole Anne Froemming  
 Beverly Ann Graves  
 Mary Louise Hoffer  
 Richard Nolan Holm  
 Donald Ray Houle  
 Sharon Louise Howard

Colleen Michele Johnson  
 Ronald James Johnson  
 Kurt Drew Keller  
 Susan Marie Klapel  
 Carolyn Dawn Lewis  
 Ornorfo Zachary Lyons  
 Scott Armond Meyer  
 Cheryl Anne Miller  
 Rhonda Jean Mitchell  
 Victoria Gina Mitchell  
 Lawrence Mark Nickaboine  
 Debra Lee Northrup  
 Patricia Ann O'Brien  
 William John O'Brien  
 Viola Marie Olson  
 Robert Halvor Oswaldson  
 Robin Lou Oswaldson  
 Rhonda Lynn Peet  
 Alan Pindegayosh  
 Ellen Marie Roth  
 Bette Sam  
 Darrell Duane Sam  
 Gladys Diane Sam  
 James Allan Sam

Pauline Marie Sam  
 Kelvin Ray Shingobe  
 Alvera Marie Smith  
 Bennie David St. John  
 Edward Louis St. John  
 Stanley Conrad St. John  
 Richard Jay Staples  
 Robert Lee Staples  
 Gary Marshall Thomas  
 Russell Harvey Thomas  
 Kenny Jack Towle  
 Michael Leo Towle  
 Valetta Irene Towle  
 Ramona Joyce Washington  
 Patrick Weyaus  
 Marilyn Jean Whitney  
 Rose Marie Wind  
 Wendy Lee Wind  
 Dorothy May Wistrom

## NOTEBOARD AND CALENDAR GUIDELINES

The Tribal Noteboard welcomes Band member submissions, including birthdays, congratulatory messages, and memorial tributes. For birthday messages, send name, birthday, and a brief message that is **20 WORDS OR LESS** to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or **320-630-8195**. *The deadline for the March issue is February 15. Photos may be included if space allows.*

If you would rather not have your name included in the Elder birthday list, please contact the Government Affairs office at 320-237-6851 or email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) before the 15th of the month preceding your birthday. Send calendar items to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-630-8195.

## VISIT THE WEBSITE!

Inaajimowin.com is updated regularly with news and more! New photo gallery coming soon! Don't miss out! Check it out!

# IMPORTANT TRIBAL GOVERNMENT PHONE NUMBERS

*Please refer to the following list to find answers to your questions or to reach the individuals or departments you need.*

**Mille Lacs Band Government Center:** 320-532-4181

**Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police:** 320-532-3430

**Non-Emergency Phone:** 320-630-2994

### Commissioners:

Administration: Peter Nayquonabe: 320-630-3118; Maria Costello: 320-630-7643

Natural Resources: Kelly Applegate: 763-221-0320

Community Development: Tim Jackson: 320-362-4245

Health and Human Services: Nicole Anderson: 320-364-9969

Finance: Mel Towle: 320-532-7475

### Chief Executive's Office

Stephanie Dunkley: 320-532-7828

### Court Administrator

Gilda Burr: 320-532-7401

### Legislative Inquiries

Brianna Boyd, Legislative Affairs Director: 320-532-7536 (work); 320-630-8702 (cell); 320-532-7506 (fax)

### Band Assembly Inquiries

Darcie Big Bear, Parliamentarian/Clerk of the Assembly: 320-532-7420; [darcie.bigbear2@millelacsband.com](mailto:darcie.bigbear2@millelacsband.com)

### Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Inquiries

Deanna Sam at 320-279-0178 or 320-532-7498 to make an appointment.

### Aanjibimaadizing

District I — Candace Benjamin, Director of Case Management: 320-362-0014; Kaari Weyaus, Case Manager: 218-316-2437

District II — Winona Crazy Thunder, Case Manager: 320-364-3049

District III — Renee Allen, Case Manager: 320-591-0559

Urban — Wahbon Spears: 612-360-5486

### Housing Emergency On-Call

Districts I and IIa: 320-630-2498

District II: 320-630-2492

District III: 320-630-2497

Dan Boyd, Housing Director: 320-630-2620

Brian Schienost, Public Works Director: 320-630-2624

Tony Pike, Roads/Solid Waste Supervisor: 320-980-5367

Sean Racelo, Waste Water Supervisor: 218-838-8391

Mike Moilanen, Director of Planning: 320-630-2623

Chad Dunkley, Earthworks: 320-630-4763

### Health and Human Services

24/7 Nurse Line: 320-630-0855

Provider appointments: 320-532-4163 option #2

Nurse Line Clinic: 320-630-0397

Mental Health appointments: 320-532-4163 option #2

Mental Health call line: 320-674-4385

Substance use assessments and counseling: 320-532-7773

Pharmacy: 320-532-4770

Dental emergencies: 320-532-4779

Commodities: 320-630-8362

Emergency Services: 320-532-1755 or 320-532-1756. After hours: 320-630-2432 or 320-362-4672

Family Violence Prevention 24/7 Crisis Line: 866-867-4006

Elder Advocate: 320-630-7666

### Office of Management and Budget

Economic Support and Per Cap: Email address updates to: [kathy.heyer@millelacsband.com](mailto:kathy.heyer@millelacsband.com) or call Danni Jo Harkness: 320-532-7592

NOTE: The Office of Management and Budget will continue to provide essential services with further increased efforts toward a virtual and paperless environment.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Mille Lacs Band members and community members from other tribes can be paid for news stories published in *Ojibwe Inaajimowin*. For stories of 500 words or more, compensation is \$400. The deadline for stories is the 15th of each month. If you have a story to submit or would like more information, please email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-630-8195.



## SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

This photo was taken at the New Year's Eve Sobriety Pow Wow that was held on January 31. It is a special picture of Kehlani Renae, Biskaakonekwe, age 1 1/2, at her very first Grand Entry. She is being led by her grandparents, Asiniikwe and Miskwaanakwad (Jason Sam.) Biskaakonekwe is our future jingle dress dancer! Miigwech.

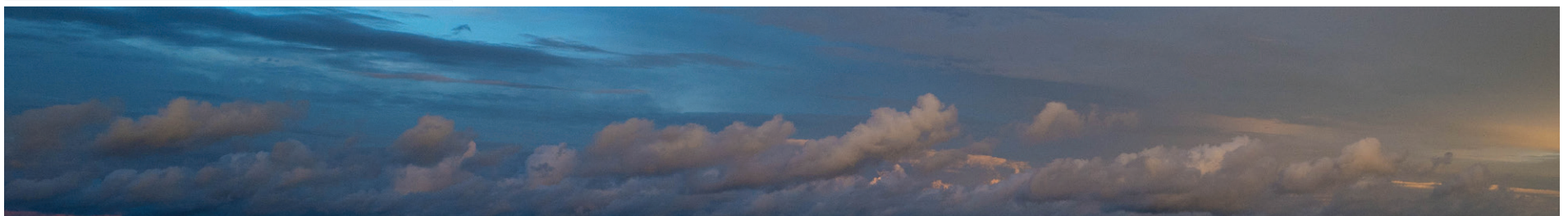
## DRUG TIP HOTLINE

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.





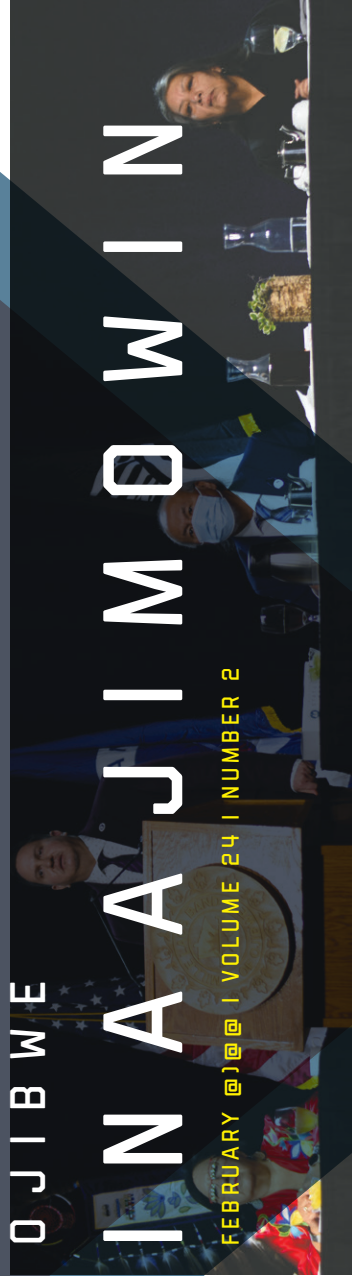
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		<b>1</b> <b>First Tuesday SNAP</b> see page 7 <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>2</b> <b>Red Brick AA/NA Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>3</b> <b>Men's group</b> 6 p.m. Old District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>4</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>On the RedRoad</b> <b>See below</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	
	<b>6</b> <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b> See below <b>The Rez NA</b> 6 p.m. Aanjibimaadizing building	<b>7</b> <b>Migizi Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Women's group</b> 5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center	<b>8</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>9</b> <b>Red Brick AA/NA Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>10</b> <b>Men's group</b> 6 p.m. Old District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>11</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>On the RedRoad</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.
<b>13</b> <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b> See below <b>The Rez NA</b> 6 p.m. Aanjibimaadizing building	<b>14</b> <b>Migizi Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Women's group</b> 5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center	<b>15</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>16</b> <b>Third Wednesday (check):</b> <b>District III Community Meeting</b> 5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley	<b>17</b> <b>Men's group</b> 6 p.m. Old District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>18</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>On the RedRoad</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	
<b>20</b> <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b> See below <b>The Rez NA</b> 6 p.m. Aanjibimaadizing building	<b>21</b> <b>Chiefs Day</b> Government Offices Closed <b>Migizi Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Women's group</b> 5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center	<b>22</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>23</b> <b>Red Brick AA/NA Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>24</b> <b>Men's group</b> 6 p.m. Old District I Community Center <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	<b>25</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>On the RedRoad</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference.	
<b>27</b> <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b> See below <b>The Rez NA</b> 6 p.m. Aanjibimaadizing building	<b>28</b> <b>Migizi Meeting</b> 7 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b> 8 p.m. via Zoom conference. <b>Women's group</b> 5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center	<div> <h3>RECOVERY GROUP MEETINGS HELD VIA ZOOM</h3> </div> <div> <p>Many recovery meetings are held via Zoom conference. The Sunday Wellbriety ID is 601 532 2869 and the password is 456 267. The Monday night Migizi meeting ID is 856 8473 0121, and the password is 56359. The Wednesday night Red Brick meeting ID is 895 631 97923, and the password is 56359. The Thursday Wellbriety meeting ID is 966 0395 9591, and the passcode is 944772. The nightly Zooming Towards Recovery code is 601-532-2869, and the password is zoom800. Urban recovery groups meet Tuesdays at 7 (Sa Miikana) and Fridays at 6:30 (On the RedRoad). ID: 214 608 6245; password: Redroad.</p> </div>					







**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE**  
43408 Oodena Drive  
Onamia, MN 56359  
[millelacsband.com](http://millelacsband.com)



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



### UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

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

### ABOUT US

Ojibwe Inaajimowin is produced monthly by the Government Affairs Department of the Mille Lacs Band's Executive Branch. Please send questions, comments, corrections, or submissions to [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-630-8195. 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 at one of the following on-call numbers:

District I and IIa: 320-630-2498.

District II: 320-630-2492.

District III: 320-630-2497.

**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.

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