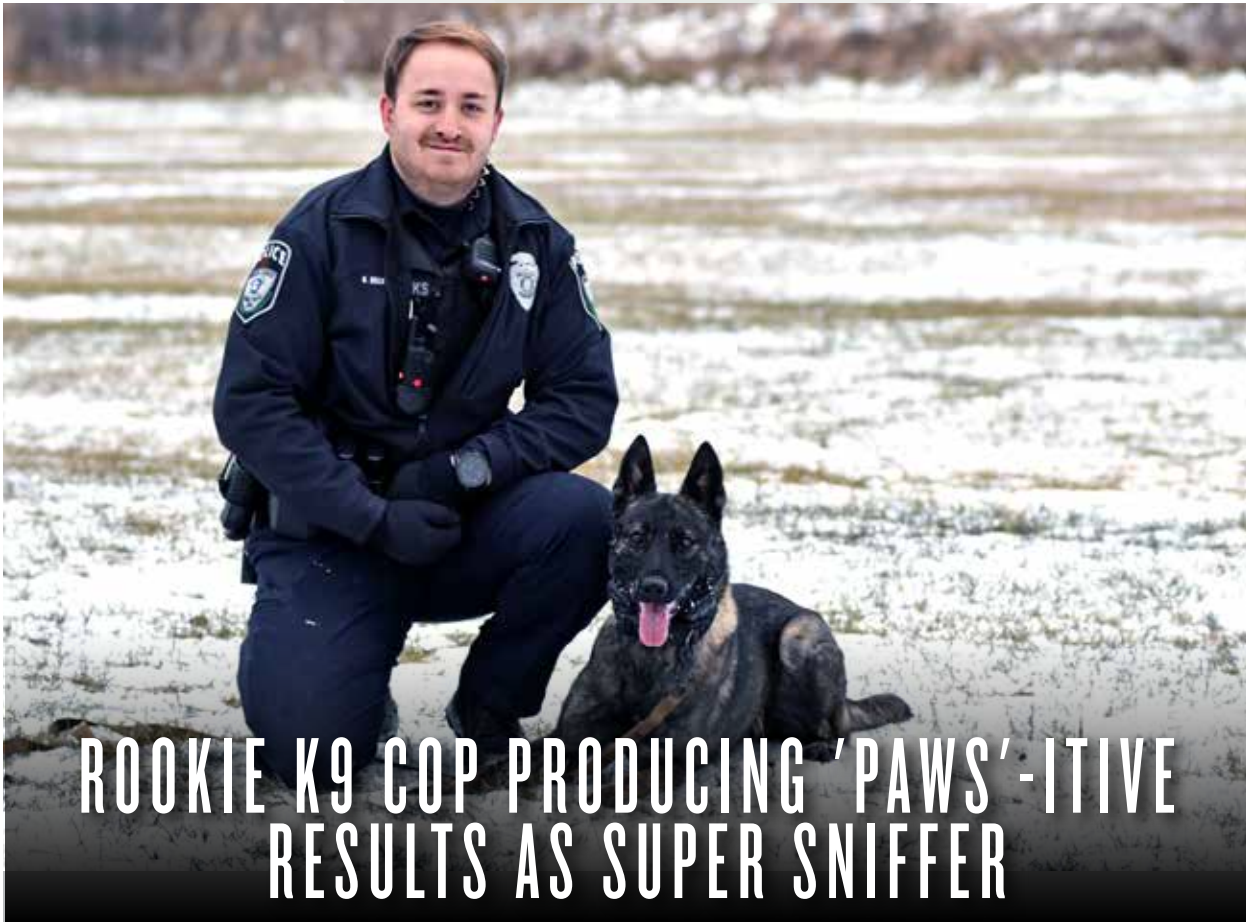




T H E S T O R Y A S I T ' S T O L D



## ROOKIE K9 COP PRODUCING 'PAWS'-ITIVE RESULTS AS SUPER SNIFFER

*Tribal PD Officer Hicks and partner K9 Layka taking illicit drugs off Reservation streets and out of the communities*

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor

K9 Officer Layka is just shy of 2 years old but she is creating quite a buzz as she continues to sniff out illicit drugs, resulting in substantial drug busts throughout the Reservation and local communities. Layka is partnered with Tribal Police Officer Brody Hicks, assigned to District III of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. In recent months, this K9 team has been credited with several substantial drug seizures, resulting in several arrests. Drug seizures included methamphetamines, ecstasy, and fentanyl, including one bust that brought in nearly a half-pound of meth — yes, that's a lot of meth.

Hicks has been with Tribal PD roughly five years, but as far back as he can remember, all he ever wanted was to be a cop when he grew up. He has a strong fondness and connection to canines,

as his family always had dogs throughout his childhood. "I love working with dogs and being around them," Hicks said. "I always wanted to be a cop, so I thought it would be cool to incorporate two different things that I really like into one."

Layka and Hicks started their career together in July 2023. Layka was completely untrained at the time, which meant Hicks was tasked with



Mille Lacs Tribal PD K9 Layka.

[SUPER SNIFFER](#) page 4



Michelle Pomerleau and Christopher Staples to lead GRA Office of Gaming Regulation and Compliance.

## TWO BAND MEMBERS TAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES IN GRA

*Dynamic Duo ready for action*

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor

Michelle Pomerleau and Christopher Staples are a powerful pairing, bringing their individual talents together to team up with the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. This dynamic duo of Band members both recently joined the GRA as Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director of Office of Gaming Regulation and Compliance (OGR&C), respectively. The two Band members combined bring over 40 years of experience to their leadership roles.

As Executive Director, Pomerleau is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the GRA. Responsibilities also include the successful overall direction, administration, and coordination of all GRA operations and activities for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and overseeing compliance monitoring, investigation, and enforcement of all applicable gaming laws and regulations for all gaming conducted on Band lands.

Born and raised in Danbury/Webster, Wisc., Pomerleau is very proud of her heritage. "I work hard to help our Band members and the tribe as a whole, which is why I am honored to be in the position I am in today," she said. "Knowing that the position of Executive Director of the OGR&C plays a huge responsibility/role in protecting our Band's assets makes it a perfect fit for me."

Having served as a GRA Board member from 2014 to 2022, Pomerleau knows the challenges and responsibilities of the GRA. She has worked in tribal government and casino operations for 25 years. Before coming to work for the Band, Pomerleau worked for the St. Croix Chippewa of Wisconsin. For the

[DYNAMIC DUO](#) page 4

## COMMISSIONER APPEGATE SELECTED AS OFFICER OF GLIFWC BOARD CHAIRMAN

GLIFWC's Board of Commissioners recently selected its officers for 2024. DNR Commissioner Kelly Applegate was elected Board Vice-Chairman. Also pictured with Commissioner Applegate is Board Chairman Jim Williams (Lac Vieux Desert Band), and Board Secretary Rodney Loonsfoot (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community).



25th ANNIVERSARY OF TREATY RIGHTS VICTORY — SEE PAGE 8



# MESSAGE FROM THE

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Aaniin, Boozhoo Band members! Despite an uncharacteristically mild February in Minnesota, the Chief Executive's Office has been busy supporting legislative progress this past month.

There have been several updates within the Midwest Indian Gaming Association (MIGA) that pertain to tribal sports betting. Several mobile sports betting bills have been introduced at the Minnesota legislature, and MIGA members have unanimously opposed another bill that includes changes to allow electronic pull tabs to look like slot machines. While there are concerns about the amount of mobile sports betting profits that would leave the state of Minnesota, as well as other compounding challenges, we are committed to working with legislators this session to find solutions that benefit Mille Lacs Band citizens and all Minnesotans.

I attended the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in Washington, D.C. the week of February 12. I met with other tribal leaders and tribal liaisons, and advocated for the needs of my fellow citizens of the Non-Removable Mille Lacs Band.

A major highlight of my time at NCAI was attending the State of Indian Nations (SOIN) 2024 Address on February 12. Every year, during the same week that the President of the United States delivers the State of the Union, the President of NCAI presents the State of Indian Nations address to tribal leaders and citizens, members of Congress, and other government officials.

I was inspired by the two young people who addressed the crowd on this very big stage and online platform that sometimes has over 20,000 viewers. Yanenowi Logan, a Seneca Nation member and the Co-President of the NCAI Youth Commission, and Caleb Dash, a member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Co-President of the NCAI Youth Commission, completely captivated the crowd. Caleb addressed a fear that is shared amongst Indian Country, and a fear that is uniquely ours: losing our tribal sovereignty. He emphasized the need to safeguard it at every level, from the federal government down to how we care for our families and continue our ways.

Yanenowi echoed these sentiments, adding that Native youth not only care about the struggles experienced in Indian Country, but by Indigenous people all across the world. She reports that Indigenous youth are facilitating a community of solidarity worldwide and are capable of making the changes that our ancestors dreamed of and fought for.

I share this to emphasize that when we encourage our Native youth to embrace their voices, platforms, and convictions,

they listen. Behind these two promising leaders stand many others, both within our nation and beyond, deserving of our continued support and encouragement as they bravely pave a more accessible path to leadership and sustained change.

On a similar note, I had the opportunity to assist in the interviewing process for the new Executive Director of the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA). NAFOA has been a critical advocate for tribal economic well-being, connecting us to key institutions like the Treasury Department and IRS. The candidate pool was made up of talented and motivated individuals, giving me great confidence that the future economic success of our tribes is in capable hands.

**"IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK OUR ANCESTORS AND THE LEADERS BEFORE US WHO STOOD UP FOR OUR INHERENT RIGHTS AND PROTECTED THEM AT ALL COSTS."**

~ CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MELANIE BENJAMIN

The Mille Lacs Band hosted the Tribal State Relations Training at the Grand Casino Hinckley on February 14 and 15. This training has been happening for over 10 years, and as of 2023, Tribal State Relations Training is now required by Minnesota Law for Minnesota State Agencies and Departments! I encourage any Band employees who are curious about Tribal State Relations Training to attend when you can.

With last year's state legalization of recreational cannabis use, I have been very busy with trainings, informed presentations, and keeping up with the state's movement in this area to best protect the Mille Lacs Band as we enter this industry. As of now, recreational cannabis use is still illegal at the federal level, and I want to be sure that we respect these federal limitations. I attended a meeting on February 16 at the Office of Cannabis Management and am keeping a close eye out for any updates regarding cannabis business in the state of Minnesota. While the regulations for the state regarding recreational cannabis use and cannabis business are different from those on the tribal level, I want to make sure that we are proceeding lawfully on all fronts, and that we are compliant with Band, state, and federal law.

I also attended the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) session in Bois Forte and the ensuing Executive Session. Just

as it is important for tribal nations to meet with national and municipal governments on a government-to-government level, it is also important for tribes to meet on a nation-to-nation level. Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan was also in attendance, and she continues to make way for much-needed policy changes concerning Indian Country.

In February, I had the honor of participating in several interviews where I discussed leadership, both as a tribal leader and as a female leader. One of these interviews was with Indian Country Today. Over the years, I have greatly appreciated the wisdom imparted by this community, as well as the lessons I have learned while being Chief Executive. Miigwech for the opportunity to learn, grow, and advocate for our nation alongside you.

Next month, we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Treaty Rights being upheld! On March 24, 1999, the United States Supreme Court upheld the Treaty of 1837, saying that Mille Lacs Band citizens and members of other tribes that signed the treaty can hunt, fish, and gather on the ceded land under tribal regulations. Even though it was signed into treaty — and therefore signed into the highest law of the land — that we would retain these sovereign rights, the State of Minnesota prosecuted Band citizens for violation of state conservation laws for many decades. We were wrongly arrested for doing what we knew was our right.

Today, we enjoy these rights without state impediment because of this win. It is important to acknowledge and thank our ancestors and the leaders before us who stood up for our inherent rights and protected them at all costs. Please come and celebrate at the 25th Annual Treaty Rights Celebration! March 21 will be the GLIFWC Ningaabii'anong Run/Walk, a two-hundred-mile run/walk to pray, reflect and celebrate. March 22 will be our Annual Celebration at Grand Casino Mille Lacs! I look forward to seeing you all there, and ensuring that we are equipped to practice these inherent rights for all the generations to come.

Chi-miigwech.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MILLE LACS BAND DELEGATES

Look for new information and updates from the Mille Lacs Band Delegates in upcoming issues of the Inaajimowin. Until then, we want to share some resources and locations you can follow the delegates.

The Mille Lacs Band Delegates Facebook page provides a platform for communication, announcements, and discussions. Follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/millelacsbandofjobwedelegates2019> or search for "Mille Lacs Band Delegates."

Distribution of the Analysis Booklet, A Preliminary Analysis of the Organization known as the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, began in April 2022. The booklet contains in-depth

analysis, findings relevant to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and recommendations from delegates.

Education materials for all six bands are available at the Fond du Lac Constitutional Reform website at <https://www.fdlconstitution.org>. The website provides information from a collaborative work of all the delegations and accepts direct submission of individual band information. This website has served as a hub for information sharing and archives.

The overall aim and one goal of the Mille Lacs Delegates is to compile, share, and forward the "voice" of Mille Lacs Band communities. We are committed to inclusivity, transparency, and community involvement in the decision-making processes.



## TRIBAL STATE RELATIONS TRAINING

Tadd Johnson provides a history lesson for over 300 Minnesota State employees on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at Grand Casino Hinckley.

## TRIBAL ELECTION NEWS

# UPCOMING TRIBAL ELECTION NEWS

*Mark your calendars for these important dates*

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Election will be held this spring for the positions of Chief Executive and District I Representative. The Primary Election will be held on April 2 with the General Election to be held on June 11.

The candidate lottery was live-streamed at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, February 16. Below is the order in which the candidates will appear on the primary ballot. Please note, per the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Election Ordinance for Chairperson (At Large) Nay Ah Shing School Board Member, the position only has two certified candidates, so they will not be on the primary election.

### Chief Executive:

Samuel Archie Moose  
Wallace Ervin St. John  
Virgil Otis Wind

### District I Representative:

Valerie Charissa Harrington-Wind  
Megan Ann Ballinger  
Melissa Marie Boyd  
Carolyn Marie Beaulieu  
Curtis LeRoy Kalk  
Billie Jo Boyd

### District I Nay Ah Shing School Board Member:

Semira Kimpson

### Chairperson (At-large) Nay Ah Shing School Board Member:

Kimberly Kegg  
Leann Benjamin

### District II Nay Ah Shing School Board Member:

Sami Thomas.

### Primary Elections

In the event only two candidates are certified for an office, there will be no Primary Election for that position. If more than two persons are certified under this Ordinance as candidates for any one office in either a Regular or Special Election, there must be a Primary Election ("Primary") prior to the Regular or Special Election. The General Reservation Election Board must certify the two candidates with the most votes in the Primary for the office at issue as the only candidates in the Regular or Special Election. The candidate with the most votes in the Regular or Special Election will be the winning candidate and will be entitled to assume the duties of office.

Candidate forums will be held in March prior to the Primary Election. Band members are encouraged to attend any or all of the forums to learn as much as possible about each candidate. Please note the forums in Districts II, IIA, and III will be for the position of Chief Executive only. Each forum will begin at 5:30 p.m.



## MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE 2024 TRIBAL ELECTIONS CANDIDATE FORUMS 5:30 P.M. AT EACH DISTRICT

Mille Lacs Band members are invited to candidate forums to learn more about individuals running for Chief Executive and District I Representative.

District I and Urban forums will be for Chief Executive and District I Representative.

All other forums will be for Chief Executive only.

Forums are anticipated to last up to two hours.

Dinner will be provided.

For election-related questions, contact the Mille Lacs Band Election Chair Deanna Sam at 320-279-0178.

Please visit the website for more information:

<https://millelacsband.com/government/election-information>

DIII Aazhoomog Community Center March 18, 2024
DII Minisinaakwaang Community Center March 19, 2024
DIIA Chiminising Community Center March 20, 2024
Urban All Nations Church March 21, 2024
DI Old Community Center March 22, 2024
CONTACT INFORMATION Shena Matrious 320-279-3132 Jamie Edwards 612-850-2124 Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Government Affairs

## IMPORTANT DATES

### CANDIDATE FORUMS

**March 18** — District III, Aazhoomog 5:30 p.m.

**March 19** — District II, Minisinaakwaang 5:30 p.m.

**March 20** — District IIA, Chiminising 5:30 p.m.

**March 21** — Urban, All Nations Church 5:30 p.m.

**March 22** — District I, Old District I Community Center 5:30 p.m.

**APRIL 2** — Primary Election (Polling places open from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.).

**APRIL 3** — General Reservation Election Board certifies Primary Results (prior to 8 p.m.).

**APRIL 4** — General Reservation Election Board publishes Primary Results.

**APRIL 5** — Deadline for Request for Recount (filed with General Election Board prior to 5 p.m.).

**JUNE 11** — General Election (polling places are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

**JUNE 12** — General Reservation Election Board certifies results of Election (prior to 8 p.m.).

**JUNE 13** — General Reservation Election Board publishes election results.

**JUNE 14** — Deadline for request for recount (filed with General Election Board prior to 5 p.m.).

NOTE: Complete Election Calendar can be found at <https://millelacsband.com/government/election-information>.

### POLLING PLACES

**District I:** Old District I Community Center, 43500 Virgo Road, Onamia, MN 56359

**District IIA:** Isle Community Center, 2605 Chiminising Drive, Isle, MN

**District II:** East Lake Community Center, 46666 State Hwy 65, McGregor, MN

**District III:** Lake Lena Community Center 45749 Grace Lake Rd., Sandstone, MN 55072

**Urban:** All Nations Church, 1515 East 23rd St., Minneapolis, MN 55404



## COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

For information on CPR/AED, Basic First Aid, Fire Extinguisher Training, Car Seat Training, and free car seats and fire alarms, contact Emergency Management Coordinator Monte Fronk at 320-532-3430.

## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS

*Band Assembly February 21, 2024*

The District Representatives approved Band Assembly Bill 21-01-16-24 (A bill amending section 1 of Title 6 to adopt a revised Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual to add dedicated language for a paid parental leave policy. This bill reflects the compromise between the Chief Executive and the Band Assembly on vetoed Act 51-23 and the later compromised Act 60-23. In a letter from the Chief Executive, dated September 1, 2023, it was requested that a compromise could be accomplished if the Band Assembly "works towards the passage of a bill within 60 days that approves additional amendments to the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual addressing maternity leave and social media usage." Within the 60-day timeframe, the District Representatives worked with the Commissioner of Administration, Assistant Commissioner of Administration, Human Resources, and the Office of the Solicitor General to begin the work on the draft policies. The District Representatives expanded the maternal leave to be a parental leave policy, to include partners of those who give birth. Employees who give birth will now have 12 weeks of paid parental leave. The policy also expands, and encourages, Band employees to use paid parental leave for adoption, fostering a child, or being legally designated to provide a child with care and parental supervision. Employees who adopt, foster, or have been legally designated to provide a child with care and parental supervision will now have four weeks of paid parental leave. The District Representatives continue to work on a social media usage policy and others to ensure the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual stays updated). Resolution 21-01-07-24 (A Resolution denouncing the improper suspension of an appointed official by the Chief Executive).

### Messages from the Representatives:

District I Representative Virgil Wind opened with a statement regarding hard decisions as Elected Officials at times are not meant to pick a fight. The resolution passed [February 21] wasn't aimed at picking a fight; it was aimed at defending someone who did what was right and he will work with the Chief Executive, Office of Solicitor General, and everybody involved to make it so reprimands are clearly articulated in statute. The demands of appointed officials are 24/7 and when they do the right thing there shouldn't be any confusion as to how you can be retaliated against. Rep. Wind appreciates the hard work of the appointed officials. He thanked the District III Representative and District II Representative, who was not on the meeting but stated she is supportive of the resolution.

### Messages from the Secretary-Treasurer:

Thank you Mel Towle Chris Waite, Verus, and Northern Trust for the investment report. The situation now is that we have professionals out there who are experts in the field who are working on behalf of the Band for a set amount of money and there's no incentive. The fiduciary is very clear and allows the Secretary-Treasurer to provide information to the other four elected officials, so they can take that information and make their decisions based on clear financial information so they can make good choices on behalf of the people moving forward and for future generations.



# STATE AND LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS

## Minnesota on the Cusp of Legalizing Sports Betting:

Minnesota is edging closer to joining the sports betting wave that's swept across the nation since the Supreme Court's 2018 decision. Governor Tim Walz and state legislators are optimistic that 2024 could be the year Minnesota taps into the booming \$100 billion sports betting industry. Following a surge in Super Bowl betting, Senator Jeremy Miller introduced the Minnesota Sports Betting Act 2.0, aiming to regulate and tax sports betting to bring new revenue to the state. With a proposed 15% state tax, the initiative could generate an estimated \$60 million in tax revenue within three years. Senator Matt Klein, proposing a 10% tax rate, emphasizes a safe and legal framework for betting, addressing concerns around problem gambling. Both senators stress the bipartisan support for the initiative, which seeks to balance interests between state revenue, tribal exclusivity, and public safety. The Minnesota Indian Gaming Association supports the move towards legal sports wagering, emphasizing the benefits for tribal and rural communities. Governor Walz has pledged to sign a comprehensive bill, marking a significant step towards legal sports betting in Minnesota, poised to enhance the state's economy and modernize its gambling landscape. Source: *K102FM*.

## Politicians, residents discuss managing gray wolves population:

Gray wolves were originally state listed as threatened in Minnesota in 1984 but as wolf numbers continued to increase, they were reclassified as state special concern in 1996. In January 2012 wolves were completely removed from the federal endangered species list. On Dec. 19, 2014 a federal judge issued a decision to immediately reinstate federal ESA protections for gray wolves in Minnesota. This ruling returned the wolf to threatened status under the federal ESA and returned management to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunters4Hunters in Minnesota says its goal is to unify hunters across the state. The main priority right now is wolf predation and management. Hunters4Hunters has organized six meetings across northern Minnesota in December and January to advance discussions on wolves. A session was held on Jan. 22, in Willow River for Pine County residents. The panel consisted of Congressman Pete Stauber (MN-08); Senator Steve Green (02, R); and Representative Nathan Nelson (11B, R). Also in attendance were Kendall Qualls, who ran against Governor Tim Walz; Senator Nate Wesenberg (10, R); Representative Ben Davis (06A); Representative Jeff Dotseth (11A); and Representative Brian Johnson (32A, R). Source: *Pine County News*.

## Proposed 'Prove It First' legislation seeks to protect Boundary Waters by restricting copper mining:

Mining advocates argue the bill would hurt the state's ability to use the mineral resources in its transition to clean energy, but its supporters say the risks to the environment are too great. Current proposed bill, Senate File 1416, known as the "Prove It First" bill, prohibits the state from issuing permits for a copper-sulfide mine before receiving independent scientific proof that a copper-sulfide mine has operated elsewhere in the United States for at least 10 years, and that a mine has been closed for at least 10 years without polluting the surrounding environment. Source: *Minn Post*.

## TRIBAL POLICE

### SUPER SNIFFER from page 1

teaching her the basics of sit, stay, down, come, etc. "She had to learn those before she could go to K9 training," Hicks said.

After that, both Layka and Hicks attended an intense K9 cop training in Minneapolis from August to November, which required attendance Monday through Friday all day, every day.

Through her training, they learned evidence detection, narcotics detection, tracking, and searching for people. Each specific area has a specific command, such as "seek dope" or "find 'em."

Layka is a German shepherd and Belgian Malinois cross. That cross-breeding is becoming the new norm for K9 cops. German shepherds are very methodical and think about things, whereas Belgian Malinois can be high-energy, Hicks said. Malinois are incredibly focused and do well in tasks requiring agility and speed. German shepherds are calmer and more protective. This breeding combines the drive of the Malinois with the stability of the German shepherd.

This is not his first K9 partner, however. K9 Sparta previously partnered with Officer Cook, who was promoted to Investigator in 2021. Sparta was not old enough to retire, so she was assigned to partner with Hicks. He went to K9 cop school with Sparta. Since Sparta was already a seasoned professional K9 cop, it was Hicks who needed to learn how to partner with a K9. They had been partners from 2021 to last July. She finally retired in August 2023, and was given back to Officer Cook to live with him and rest in her retirement. Sadly, she passed away in November 2023. Sparta was 9 years old at the time of her passing.

Watching Layka work, one would not ever suspect she was a rookie. Her eyes are always on her partner, and his every move is tracked. She is quiet, especially for a 2-year-old pup, and she minds her manners, loves to play, and loves to work — everything a dog owner could dream of.

Hicks named her Layka after a U.S. military female war dog who was wounded in Afghanistan protecting her handler and special forces team.

### SUPER SNIFFERS

Dogs can move their nostrils independently, which helps them determine the direction of an odor, much like using their nose for a compass, according to the Humane Society. Just how far a dog smells depends on conditions such as wind and type of scent, but they have been reported to smell objects and people over 12 miles away.

Dogs can smell 100,000 times better than humans. Their olfactory systems work so well that they can be trained to pick up odors as little as a pictogram which is a trillionth of a gram. This sensational sense has allowed them to locate items buried as far as 40 feet underground, and can smell human fingerprints over a week old.

Each person has their own unique scent which comes from the oils, sweat, and breath the body produces. It doesn't matter whether a person uses scented lotion or perfume, that individual's scent still comes through for the canine.

Dogs also sense fear and anxiety in humans because they smell adrenaline, which is produced as a result of the "fight-or-flight" response. This becomes extremely handy for the K9 officers because even if a suspect is hiding and truly believes they are being calm and cool in the face of apprehension, the K9 officer will pick that scent out and be able to locate the suspect. Adrenaline is also produced by humans if they are lost or confused, which can aide a K9 officer in locating lost people.

Hicks uses every chance he can get to work on training Layka. "The more she trains, the better she gets," he said. He will turn every opportunity into a training session, even if he just



Mille Lacs TPD K9 Layka patiently awaits commands from her handler Officer Brody Hicks.

lost his own keys. "Yeah, my keys fell off my belt and I couldn't find them. So I had Layka search for them," Hicks said with a chuckle.

Hicks and Layka demonstrated her ability to find people. Band member Monica Benjamin volunteered to be a person lost in the Meshakwad Community Center. Hicks took Layka down the hall and then commanded her to find Benjamin.

Layka is trained to lay down when she alerts to whatever it is she is looking for. She doesn't bark, she just lays down and looks at Hicks. Benjamin was hiding behind a closed door in the community center.

Later, Hicks demonstrated Layka's ability to find items. That could be such things as evidence for a case, or just missing keys. Hicks threw several items into the snow-covered grass and within moments, Layka alerted to each item.

Layka is the seventh K9 officer on the tribal PD. Karma, who is currently partnered with Officer Kintop will be retiring in the coming months. Tribal PD is currently in training with K9 Falko to take over for Karma after her retirement. Falko has been assigned to Officer Brandon DeCent. Falko will be the eighth K9 for Mille Lacs TPD and is anticipated to be able to hit the road running/sniffing in June.

On April 22, Layka will be two years old. In dog years, she is a teenager. She has a life expectancy of 8–9 years. She has kickstarted her professional career in a big way, and with continuous training, she will continue sniffing out narcotics and taking down the bad guys.

You can follow all of the news about the K9s and other valuable information on Facebook at Mille Lacs Tribal PD.



Mille Lacs TPD Officer Brody Hicks and Band member Monica Benjamin with K9 Layka.

### DYNAMIC DUO from page 1

last 20 years, she has held various positions of leadership within tribal government and casino operations.

Staples has immersed himself in the dynamic world of gaming for over two decades, carving out a rich tapestry of experience across various domains. With a robust background in casino finance, hotel/resort operations, and food and beverage management, Staples brings a wealth of insights and expertise to the table. He is a proud alumnus of the Leadership Twin Cities program.

Pomerleau is passionate about helping fellow Band mem-

bers succeed and protecting the assets of the Band as a whole.

Both Pomerleau and Staples are grounded by values of family responsibilities with empathy and resilience. Pomerleau is enjoying her status as a Band Elder combined with being a mother of two daughters and grandmother of three grandchildren. Staples is a devoted father of three children.

This dynamic duo is ready to make an impact to drive change and foster meaningful experiences within the GRA and the gaming industry as they work with the people who lead the teams.





Band member Steve Premo stands before some of his paintings on exhibit at the "Dreaming our Futures" Indigenous Artists Gallery at the Regis Center for Art in Minneapolis.

# INDIGENOUS ARTISTS GALLERY OPENING

*"Dreaming Our Futures" showcases Ojibwe and Ochéthi Sakówin artists and knowledge keepers*

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor  
Photos by Bradley Roache Jr.

Mille Lacs Band Elder Steve Premo is a highly respected and well-known artist in and around the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation. His work has appeared as murals on the walls of the Government Center as well as Meshakwad and Makwa Cinema, to name just a few. His work has adorned many t-shirts, banners, and billboards, and has been featured in many galleries across the state. And he is currently one of 29 Indigenous artists showcased in a new gallery in Minneapolis.

The Katherine E. Nash Gallery is hosting a group exhibition of 29 Indigenous painters, the inaugural program of the George Morrison Center for Indigenous Arts. The exhibit opened on February 3 at the Regis Center for Art in Minneapolis with a reception and panel discussion led by Brenda Child. Artists showcased included Band member Steve Premo along with Frank Big Bear, David Bradley, Awanigiizhik Bruce, Andrea Carlson, Avis Charley, Fern Cloud, Michelle Defoe, Jim Denomie, Patrick DesJarlait, Sam English, Carl Gawboy, Joe Geshick, Sylvia Houle, Oscar Howe, Wanbli Mayasleca (Francis J. Yellow Jr.), George Morrison, Rabbett Before Horses Strickland, Cole Redhorse Taylor, Roy Thomas, Jonathan Thunder, Thomasina TopBear, Moira Villiard, Kathleen Wall, Star WallowingBull, Dyani White Hawk, Bobby Dues Wilson, Leah H. Yellowbird, and Holly Young.

The exhibit is curated by Brenda J. Child (Red Lake Ojibwe), Northrop Professor of American Studies, University of Minnesota, and Howard Oransky, Director of the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, with Christopher Pexa (Bdewakantunwan Dakota, Spirit Lake Nation), Associate Professor of English, Harvard University.

"George was a professor at the U of M, so it fell in line that they make a center devoted to him, his studies, and his contributions to the art in the United States," Premo said. "He wasn't just an artist from Minnesota, he was part of the abstract expressionists running around at the time like Andy Warhol, Georges Braque, Marcel Duchamp — they all knew him in New York at the time. And then he came back to Minnesota. It is not a building, it is more of an idea."

Child put together some ideas and collaborated with Howard Loranski and things came together. "She started with painters and from there she is thinking of music, dance, writing, could be sculptures — all Indigenous," Premo said.

Premo estimates that in the opening two days, between 400 – 500 visitors had viewed the show.

"It is an honor to be included in an exhibit like this," Premo said. "There is just an incredible lineup of people in the show." He has three pieces in the show and also designed the logo for the art center.

The exhibition premieres at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (January 16 – March 16, 2024), then travels to the Rochester Art Center (April 24 – July 21, 2024) and continues to the Tweed Museum of Art at the University of Minnesota, Duluth (September 3 – December 27).

## MORE ABOUT THE CENTER

Dreaming Our Futures: Ojibwe and Ochéthi Sakowin Artists and Knowledge Keepers is the inaugural exhibition of the George Morrison Center for Indigenous Arts at the University of Minnesota. This new study center in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota — an interdepartmental collaboration between the University of Minnesota Department of American Indian Studies, Department of American Studies, and Department of Art — supports the creation, presentation, and interpretation of Indigenous art in all its forms and makes no distinction between the fine arts and Indigenous traditional arts. Future plans for the Center include the Morrison Center Distinguished Visiting Artists program, related graduate seminars and undergraduate courses on the development of museum exhibitions on American Indian topics and artists, and student internships in conjunction with the Minnesota Museum of American Art, which will allow students to develop expertise working with works by George Morrison and other American Indian artists held in that collection.



A guest at the opening of the Indigenous Artists Gallery experiencing a painting by one of the 29 Indigenous artists at the exhibit.



Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan viewing a painting by Steve Premo during the opening night celebration.

## NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

### U.S. Senators Tina Smith, Amy Klobuchar Announce STEM Education Funding For Minnesota Tribal Colleges and Universities:

U.S. Senators Tina Smith, a member of the Senate Indian Affairs and Education Committees, and Amy Klobuchar (both D-Minn.) announced funding for White Earth Tribal and Community College and Red Lake Nation College to expand their science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs. The funding comes from the National Science Foundation and is part of a larger project to promote education and careers in STEM for Indigenous students. Source: *Smith.Senate.gov*.

### Native American veterans save millions after VA waives copayments:

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced it exempted or reimbursed more than 143,000 copayments totaling approximately \$2.5 million for more than 3,800 eligible American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. The recent move comes after a policy change last year resulted in eligible members of the demographic no longer being required to make copayments for VA health care, urgent care or prescriptions. Under the policy, VA also reimburses for copayments paid on or after Jan. 5, 2022, according to a department release. "This exemption honors our treaties with sovereign nations. It addresses health care access and disparities. It provides more health care options. And it builds on our work to strengthen our partnerships and trust," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough said during a Feb. 13 meeting of the National Congress of American Indians. Source: *MilitaryTimes.com*.

### Nex Benedict's Death Being Investigated as a Crime; Vigils Across the Nation Mourn Native, Non-Binary Teen:

Sixteen-year-old Nex Benedict, whose mother is a tribal citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, died on Feb. 8, one day after a physical altercation in a girl's bathroom at an Owasso, Okla. high school. Nex's death has made international news and re-ignited a debate about transgender rights. Nex identified as non-binary and used they/them pronouns. Their cause of death remains unclear. Owasso Police Lt. Nick Boatman told the Owasso Reporter on Feb. 22 that foul play is suspected. Vigils took place across the nation over the weekend as crowds gathered to mourn Nex in Oklahoma, Minneapolis, Boston, New York, and more. While it is unclear if Nex was attacked because of their gender identity, advocates and mourners are calling on lawmakers to be held accountable for anti-transgender legislation that encourages hateful rhetoric and violence against the trans community. At a vigil for Nex held on Friday at the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, a tribal citizen of the White Earth Nation, commented on calls for accountability for Oklahoma lawmakers, including Gov. Kevin Stitt (Cherokee), for passing a 2022 bill requiring students to use bathrooms according to the gender listed on their birth certificates. "This did not happen on accident. Policies have consequences," Flanagan said. "As an Anishinaabekwe, I cannot say that it is all right with our Indigenous values that our children are bullied and made to suffer and are hurting. It is not who we are. That is not where we come from, and we will continue to do everything in the state of Minnesota, but that is not enough." Source: *Yahoo News*.





By Sarah Larson, MPH, Community Health Educator

Have you ever heard the phrase “food is medicine”? Foods that are nourishing include many traditional Indigenous foods. However, the modern grocery store looks much different than the nutrient-rich forests and lakes where ancestors historically foraged for food and medicines. Whole food is a common term now used to describe foods that haven’t been processed, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, and whole grains. Whole foods are similar to traditional Indigenous foods in that they are nutrient-rich, but whole foods don’t have the same spiritual and cultural significance that traditional foods can have.

Eating “healthy” doesn’t mean you have to eat like a rabbit. Eating good food is all about how the food makes you feel physically, mentally, and emotionally. Some foods that are high in sugar, salt, and fat kick off dopamine and other feel-good chemicals in our brains. This is what signals our brains to eat more, and why we may crave those foods. But those foods often make us sick over many years and can make us feel worse in the short term, negatively impacting our mental health. Studies have shown that eating foods with lots of sugar can lead to worsening symptoms of depression.

It can be really difficult to change our eating habits, especially if it’s being recommended by a health care provider in light of a diagnosis, or for the sake of prevention. Most of us know what we “should” be eating, but those foods may not appeal to us. It can be difficult to change our habits and taste buds. Did you know that our taste preferences can change with the food we eat? Eating more salt and sugar can

make us crave those even more, and increase our tolerance. The key to making lifestyle changes is slow, small, sustainable, gradual changes. For example, drinking one less soda every week or only having a packaged salty snack two times a week, depending on your current habits.

Not only is it important to limit foods that harm our physical and mental health, but it’s important to be providing nourishing foods to our bodies! If you are working on cutting out certain processed or “unhealthy” foods, be sure to have some ideas of good foods you want instead. Eating good food doesn’t have to mean all carrots and cheese sticks, it can look like vegetarian enchiladas, baked salmon with maple syrup, flavored popcorn, chicken tacos, bison and wild rice meatloaf, and so many other recipes. It sometimes takes just a little curiosity and willingness to try something new. Find some new recipes that include traditional foods by searching “Anishinaabek Cooking Resources” and finding the link to the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan website or find the link on the new Health and Human Services Facebook page.

Think about the food you eat. Is it medicine to your body? How does it make you feel?

Foods should be nourishing, but it’s important to remember that foods shouldn’t be banned either. It is all about balance.

For the month of March, join the Population Health Department in their Community Wellness Challenge: Strive for Five. Community members are encouraged to get five fruits/vegetables every day and keep track using a tracker they can get at the Ne-la-Shing clinic, or pick up at the DII outer clinic or



the DI and DIII senior living facilities. Yes, there will be prizes! Contact Sarah Larson for more information: sarah.larson@hhs.millelacsband-nsn.gov, 320-630-3115.

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

## TREATY OF 1837: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY

By Don Wedll

The Treaty of 1837, an agreement between the United States and the Ojibwe tribe, is still valid today. A lot has been written about what happened after the treaty, especially the treaty’s impact in modern years. But little has been said about the events that led up to the treaty. Maybe if people knew more about what happened and why, they would see this area’s past — and its future — in a new light.

In the early 1800s, this area of Minnesota was still controlled by the British. After the War of 1812, it became part of territory possessed by the United States, and explorers like Zebulon Pike and Lewis Cass searched the upper Mississippi looking for the river’s source. Based on the explorers’ reports, American fur traders and land speculators saw opportunities to expand. White settlers then followed the traders and speculators, leaving the Eastern seaboard and pouring into the Middle West, where they hoped to enhance their lives by having land to farm and timber to build their homes.

The Ojibwe people’s homelands, significant stretches of territory with dense forests, were tremendously appealing to non-Indian eyes. The allure of acres of trees and land was coupled with the settlers’ view of the Ojibwe as nomadic people roaming aimlessly. This view was inaccurate — the Ojibwe moved deliberately with the seasons to the best places to pick berries or hunt game or fish or harvest wild rice — but it gave some settlers a sense of entitlement to the land and lumber because they felt they would use the natural resources better than the Indians.

Since the late 1700s, the United States had adopted the European method of using treaties to acquire Indian land, and from 1836 to 1854, the U.S. would seek and get much of northern Michigan, northern Wisconsin, and northeastern Minnesota this way. The Treaty of 1837 was one of these treaties. Through it, the U.S. acquired a tract starting where the Crow Wing River enters the Mississippi River just south of present-day Brainerd, then extending down the Mississippi to just north of St. Cloud, then east to the Wisconsin-Michigan border. This area encompassed about 12 million acres of land, lakes, and rivers.

*This article by Don Wedll was first published in the Mille Lacs Messenger. It is reprinted here to preserve his teachings and bring them to the next generation.*

Interestingly, many of the Ojibwe leaders who signed the treaty were from lands that lay outside this ceded territory. A few of them hesitated to sign an agreement giving up the lands of others, knowing that this was going to start a major change in the Ojibwe’s lifestyle. But the majority agreed to the treaty terms: a series of payments of money, goods, farm tools and seed, and tobacco, plus help in establishing blacksmith shops. And, of course, the now-famous provision about retaining the rights to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice.

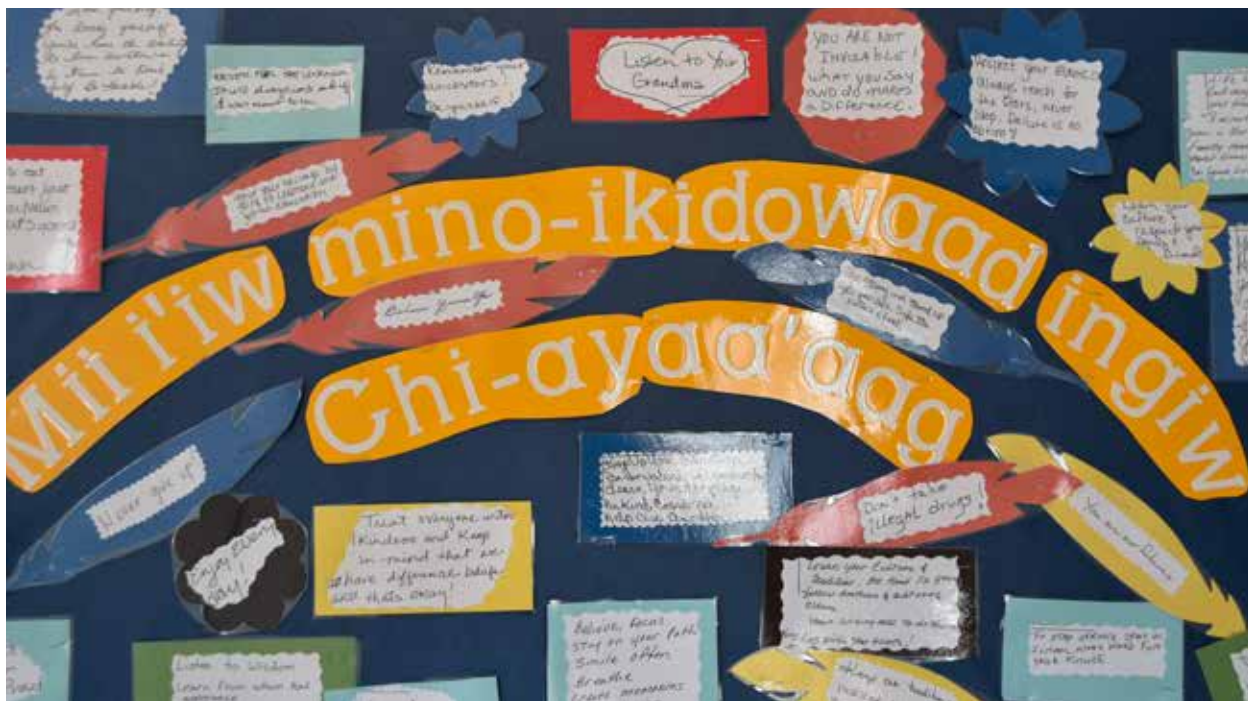
The Indian leaders were also influenced by non-Indian fur traders who attended the treaty negotiations. According to the Treaty of 1837, the fur traders were to receive payments for the Ojibwe’s supposed debts to them, which motivated the traders to press for passage of the treaty.

But more interesting for people in this area, the Mille Lacs Band’s lands were included in the 1837 ceded territory. This occurred because the maps used in 1837 did not accurately show how certain geographical points were located in relationship to other points. The maps showed the Crow Wing River entering the Mississippi River below Mille Lacs Lake, not on the north end of Mille Lacs Lake as it is correctly shown today. This error was corrected with later revisions of maps.

The error wasn’t presented to Mille Lacs Band leaders until they negotiated the Treaty of 1855, which created the Mille Lacs Reservation. They were surprised by the change in the maps. The change illustrates how hard it was for Indian leaders to make treaties in a language they did not read or write, forcing them to rely on the interpretation skills and honesty of others.

The Treaty of 1837 became one of many misunderstandings between the Mille Lacs Ojibwe government and other governments over land and treaty rights. But maybe the passage of time and the Band’s careful management of its treaty harvests — with some historical background for good measure — can end those misunderstandings.





# IN THEIR OWN WORDS & HANDWRITING

*Elders pass down words of wisdom and advice to the youth*

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor

Outside of the door leading to the Oshki-Maajitaadaa classroom inside of Nay Ah Shing School is a brand-new bulletin board filled with the infinite wisdom of Mille Lacs Band member Elders. The words are handwritten messages to the youth which are creating hope and inspiration to all who stop to read.

"It is quite powerful," said Paula Hoffman, Oshki-Maajitaadaa, Alternative Learning Program at Nay Ah Shing Schools. Students and staff alike stop to read a message or two at a time, she said. "Sometimes you can just see a light go on in their heads and see them take a breath or sigh."

The Oshki-Maajitaadaa program was a dream of the late Joyce Shingobe, Commissioner of Education, and Byron Ninham, interim assistant at the time. Their vision was to find a way to meet the students where they are to help them achieve their educational goals. The program is now into the third year, with students at all levels of high school and ages up to 21 years old. Some part-time students are 18-21, some are working, and one is a single, working mom.

"It is a different way of meeting the expectations for graduation that the school board has approved," Hoffman said.

The messages from the Elders are meant for the youth, but reading them, they resonate with everyone. The messages to the youth was an idea stemming from Sarah Larson, MPH, Community Health Educator at Health and Human Services. At the Elder Christmas party, they passed out notecards to the Elders and asked them to write a note of advice to the youth. Larson collected the cards and wanted to keep the messages in the Elders' own handwriting, so she copied each one onto separate cards. She then placed them all in random order on the board.



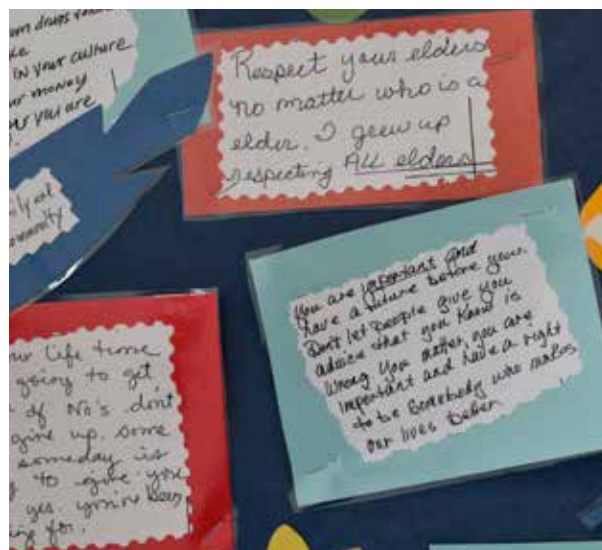
Larson has also been building relationships with the students by leading cooking classes including chicken, homemade pizza, tacos, and mac and cheese, all done with healthy ingredients.

"These kids are hungry for connections; they thrive when they trust," Hoffman said. "And that is what Sarah is doing, is building trust and connection. We have students who simply will not miss her cooking classes!"

The message board is also connecting the students to their community. "What struck me is the connection between our students and the Elders. Our students greatly respect their Elders. It is part of their culture, part of the tradition, it is part of who they are and this brought that to them, right here, in their handwriting, in their own words. I think that is powerful. It is better than any teacher can say. It seems to honor so many things for both the Elders to be able to share it and for the kids to be able to receive it."

NAS has a higher than average level of significant depression and anxiety with some students, Hoffman said. "So when we are working with a student and want to 'reset,' I can take them to the board and they 'hear' the messages. They need to hear that they are valued, to face their fears, that they are strong, that they come from a strong tradition, and they come from a strong people. They needed to feel that power and respect. And that is hope. The hope starts there and that is a good thing for any of our students here."

"Oshki-Maajitaadaa translates to fresh start together. And that's what we all need. We have to succeed together," Hoffman said. "We need our Elders, we need our community, we need our students, we need our future. And we can do this together."



## WORDS MATTER

Nay Ah Shing staff believe the words of wisdom from Band Elders bring messages of hope to all who stop to read and "hear" the messages. The messages also help bring a feeling of connection to the community.

## BRIEFS

### PASSENGER SAFETY IS A SNAP

SNAP — safe Native American passenger training — is held on the first Tuesday of each month from 1 to 5 p.m. Contact Kristina Abear at 320-532-7814 or kristina.abear@hhs.millelacsband-nsn.gov to sign up.

### MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GROUPS

The Women's Healing Group meets on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m., and the Men's Empowerment Group meets Mondays at 5:30 p.m. Both groups meet at the old District I Community Center across from Grand Casino Mille Lacs. All are welcome!

### FIRST AID AND CPR CLASSES AT HHS BUILDING

As part of the Band's Community Risk Reduction or CRR efforts, First Aid and CPR classes are held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month in the Family Services training room at the Health and Human Services building in District I. Family Services staff and foster parents have priority, after which it is open to other departments and community members. There is a \$10 fee for certification cards if participants would like them. Cards are free for Family Services staff and foster parents. Contact Kristina Abear at 320-532-7814 or kristina.abear@hhs.millelacsband-nsn.gov to sign up.

### GRAND CASINO MILLE LACS

#### 2024 JUNIOR AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Looking for a fun place to work? Grand Casino Mille Lacs is seeking all interested community youth (ages 15, 16, and 17) to join our team this summer.

We're on a mission to develop a strong team of future leaders, which is why we are offering various employment opportunities. Now is a chance for youth to gain knowledge and skills in areas of interest by learning Grand Casino Mille Lacs operations.

The goal of the Junior Ambassador Program is to support our youth with future academic and career endeavors by offering training and development opportunities that match areas of interest. We strongly believe that connecting youth with who they are and what they love will help them achieve their full potential.

If you are interested in more information about our summer employment program, which will run from June 2024 through August 2024, please contact:

Lana Oswaldson

Grand Casino Mille Lacs, Band Member Recruiter  
loswaldson@grcasinos.com

320-532-8202

763-238-6629 talk/text

### SIGN UP FOR BAND MEMBER EMAIL

Do you want to receive important information from the Mille Lacs Band? Sign up to receive Band member news straight to your inbox. Send your email to News@millelacsband.com.

### HAVE A NEWS TIP?

Send your news tips to news@millelacsband.com.



# 1837 TREATY TIMELINE

## PART I: 1837 — 1990

1837 — As non-Natives continued to encroach on Ojibwe lands, the Mille Lacs Band signs the Treaty of 1837, ceding territory to the United States government. In return, the treaty maintains and protects the rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to hunt, fish, and gather while allowing the ceded territory to be settled by non-Indians.

1855 — The Mille Lacs Band signs the Treaty of 1855, which sets aside 61,000 acres on and around the south end of Mille Lacs Lake as its reservation.

1858 — Minnesota officially becomes a state.

1972 — Leech Lake on-reservation treaty rights are affirmed.

1979–85 — Band members are cited for illegal netting, fishing without a license, carrying an uncased rifle, and other conservation violations.

1983 — U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit rules in favor of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band in the Voigt decision; affirms Ojibwe Band members' right to hunt, fish, and gather in Wisconsin under the terms of the 1837 and 1842 Treaties.

September 24, 1980 — The Mille Lacs Reservation Business Committee (RBC) adopts the 29-page "Conservation Code of the Mille Lacs Reservation."

October 6, 1980 — Then-Mille Lacs Band Chairman Art Gahbow sends a letter to Minnesota Commissioner of Natural Resources Joe Alexander with the Conservation Code enclosed.

December 12, 1980 — Commissioner Alexander writes Gahbow saying he could not name representatives to serve on the conservation committee due to the state's disagreement about the extent of Band jurisdiction.

January 22, 1981 — A newly formed organization called the Mille Lacs Lake Advisory Association (MLLAA) meets with Mille Lacs Band and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe officials about the Conservation Code. Association officials indicated their opposition to "all gillnetting of gamefish and any other liberal approaches that might threaten natural resources and the local economy."

February 11, 1981 — Almost 100 people attend a special meeting of the Mille Lacs Lake Advisory Association at Carlsons Beach Resort. The April 1 issue also reports that the group has collected more than 5,000 signatures in opposition to the Conservation Code.

1981 — Art Gahbow directs Don Wedll to research how to resolve the Band's treaty rights issues.

1982 — The Band hires Al Ziontz's law firm from Seattle, which appoints Marc Slonim to review legal and historical information about treaties Mille Lacs Band members had signed.

August 13, 1990 — The Mille Lacs Band and four enrolled Band members file a complaint in federal district court claiming that the state of Minnesota has adopted and enforced natural resource laws and regulations that violate hunting, fishing, and gathering rights guaranteed by the Treaty of 1837. The Band tries to settle the issue out of court for the next two-plus years.

\*Treaty timeline compiled by Brett Larson and previously published in the Ojibwe Inaajimowin.



## 5-4 Victory decision confirmed hunting, fishing, and gathering rights for eight Anishinaabe tribes

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor

On March 24, 1999, the highest court in the land had ruled 5-4, affirming Indian hunting, fishing, and gathering rights under the treaty of 1837 for eight Anishinaabe tribes. The dispute divided two cultures entwined in a tumultuous battle that lasted longer than WWII. By mid-morning that day, the media swarmed the Mille Lacs Lake area as Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe leaders gathered in front of the Mille Lacs Band Government Center along with state officials, local residents, and business owners.

Under the spring morning sunshine, the late Chief Executive Marge Anderson spoke eloquently the words that still resonate today, 25 years later. She said, "Today the United States has kept a promise, a promise that agreements are made to be honored, not broken.... Our path has been a long and difficult one, often marked by broken agreements on the part of the government. We are thankful that the nation's highest court has seen things our way, and has ruled that the treaty between our people and the United States in 1837 means what it says. Our rights are not just words on paper, they are vital to our being."

The battle began under the leadership of then Chairman Art Gahbow who directed Don Wedll to research the Band's treaty rights in 1981. In 1982, the Band hired the Seattle law firm of Al Ziontz's to review legal and historical information about treaties Mille Lacs Band members had signed. Marc Slonim was the attorney assigned to the case.

The Band was also working through a reorganization of the government structure called Separation of Powers and creating departments to provide services to the Band. The creation of the Band's Department of Natural Resources was assigned to litigate the hunting, fishing, and gathering rights.

It took the Band's DNR from 1984 to 1990 to raise the one-half million dollars to bring the suit. Each of those years, Chairman Gahbow directed the Commissioner of Natural Resources, Don Wedll, to file the lawsuit. And finally, in August of 1990, the case was filed and the state of Minnesota requested to negotiate a settlement of the lawsuit.

In 1990, the Mille Lacs Band, under the leadership of Chairman Gahbow and Speaker of the Assembly Marge Anderson, and four Band members (Chairman Gahbow, Walter Sutton, Carleen Benjamin, and Joe Dunckley) filed suit in federal court (the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota) against the State of Minnesota, seeking a court order affirming the existence of their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights under the 1837 Treaty and prohibiting the State from interfering with the exercise of those rights. Slonim and his partner John Arum represented the Band. The United States intervened in the case to support the claims made by the Band and its members, according to Slonim.

Anti-Indian and anti-treaty groups organized vocal public opposition to the Band's claims. Resort owners and citizens were outraged and Wedll played a pivotal role as he represented the Band as the public spokesperson.

In April 1991, the Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 in favor of hiring an attorney, Steve Froehle, with the intention that the county would intervene and join the lawsuit as defendants in the Band's lawsuit against the State. And by November that year, eight other counties intervened in the treaty lawsuit, as well as landowners. The attorney for the landowners was Randy Thompson.

When Minnesota's Legislature rejected a settlement agreement negotiated by the Band and Minnesota's DNR, the

case proceeded to trial in 1994. The State argued that the Band's rights under the 1837 Treaty had been extinguished by an Executive Order issued by President Zachary Taylor in 1850, which directed the removal of the Ojibwe from the territories ceded in the 1837 Treaty (as well as those ceded in an 1842 Treaty), the 1855 Treaty ceding additional lands in Minnesota (and establishing the Mille Lacs Reservation), and the 1858 Act admitting Minnesota to the Union. Band members Herman Kegg, Brenda Boyd, and Joe Dunckley testified about arrests and citations they had received for exercising their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights, the enduring importance of hunting, fishing, and gathering to the Band, and the unlikelihood that their ancestors would have ever relinquished these essential rights, recalled Slonim. Expert witnesses Charles Cleland, James McClurken, Bruce White, John Nichols, Helen Tanner, and Tom Lund provided ethnohistorical, linguistic, and historical legal context for the 1837 Treaty, the 1850 Removal Order, and the 1855 Treaty.

### Slonim's summary

In 1994, Chief District Court Judge Diana Murphy ruled in favor of the Band and its members. She found that President Taylor's 1850 Order was unauthorized because it exceeded the President's authority under the 1837 Treaty. She also found that neither the 1855 Treaty nor the 1858 Statehood Act impaired the Band's rights under the 1837 Treaty. Accordingly, she held that the Band's rights to hunt, fish, and gather on lands ceded in the Minnesota portion of the 1837 ceded territory remained in force. She ruled that the State could not regulate or otherwise interfere with the exercise of those rights except as necessary for conservation of the resources or public health and safety, that any regulation of the treaty rights had to be non-discriminatory and the least restrictive possible to accomplish its objective, and that the State could not regulate at all if the Band's own regulations were adequate for conservation, health, and safety purposes.

Judge Murphy's ruling set the stage for a second phase of the case, in which the lawfulness of specific state hunting, fishing, and gathering regulations would be considered. The case was transferred to Judge Michael Davis to conduct this phase of the case after Judge Murphy was appointed to serve as a judge on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

During the second phase of the case, a separate lawsuit filed by the Fond du Lac Band was consolidated with the Mille Lacs case to address common regulatory issues. Also, the six Bands of Wisconsin Ojibwe (Bad River, Lac Courte Oreille, Lac du Flambeau, Red Cliff, Sokaogon, and St. Croix) intervened to assert their rights under the 1837 Treaty in Minnesota. The Bands worked together with the assistance of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission under the leadership of its Executive Director, Jim Schlender, to develop a comprehensive code to regulate the exercise of their members' hunting, fishing, and gathering rights. In addition to Wedll, the Commission's Policy Analyst Jim Zorn, biologists Neil Kmiecik and Jon Gilbert, and two world-renowned fisheries experts, Ransom Myers and John Hoenig, were of great assistance in this process.

With few exceptions, the State agreed that the Bands' code was adequate for conservation purposes and to protect



public health and safety and, therefore, the State could not impose its own regulations. Judge Davis resolved the remaining issues largely in favor of the Bands and entered a final judgment in 1997, bringing the case to a close in the District Court.

The State, the Counties, and the landowners appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals, in an opinion by Circuit Judge Donald Lay, affirmed the District Court's decision in all respects. The State, the Counties, and the landowners then sought review in the United States Supreme Court. The Court granted the State's petition in early 1998 and, after extensive briefing, the case was set for argument in November 1998. The attorneys for all the Band's participated in the briefing, with critical contributions from Doug Endresen and Anne Noto representing Fond du Lac, Howard Bichler representing St. Croix, and Jim Jannetta representing Bad River. The Bands were also supported by amicus briefs from other tribes and Indian organizations around the country.

While the case was pending in the Supreme Court, an attorney for the United States and the attorneys for all of the Bands met at Mille Lacs to discuss strategy. They convened for a sunrise ceremony on the shores of Mille Lacs Lake to receive spiritual blessings and strength from Band Elders. During the ceremony, an eagle could be seen circulating overhead. While the attorneys continued to prepare for the Supreme Court argument, the Bands organized a run in which a ceremonial staff was carried by Ojibwe runners from northern Wisconsin to Washington D.C. When the runners arrived in Washington, they assembled at the offices of the National Indian Gaming Commission just a few blocks from the Supreme Court, where a ceremonial fire was lit and additional ceremonies were held in the days leading up the argument. The attorneys again received the blessing of spiritual leaders and Elders. The ceremonial staff was brought to the Supreme Court and was in the building during the argument.

After a spirited argument before the Supreme Court, the State, the Counties, and the landowners left feeling convinced that they would prevail. The Bands' attorneys were less certain of the outcome, but the Band members who attended the argument were confident their rights would be upheld. They gathered for final ceremonies before leaving Washington D.C.

Tensions mounted at Mille Lacs as all sides awaited the Court's decision. But in a letter to the Editor of the Mille Lacs Messenger, Chief Executive Marge Anderson again eloquently expressed her most heartfelt concerns. She wrote, "Whether the Mille Lacs Band wins or loses this case, we must move on. For over 100 years we have shared the lake with our non-Indian neighbors. As with all neighbors, we have had our tough times. It is my hope that when this decision is rendered, all of us, Indian and non-Indian alike, can rise to the occasion. Let us not be bitter, let us not be boastful, let us not hurt each other. The decision will be a chance to show our children, win or lose, that neighbors can have a civil dispute — and when that dis-



"Today, the United States has kept a promise." The late Marge Anderson, Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, said at a press conference held at the MLBO government center March 24, 1999. Photo courtesy of the Mille Lacs Messenger.

pute ends, a new day dawns. As a community of Indians and non-Indians, this could be our finest hour."

Slonim recalled the morning of March 24, 1999 when he received a call from Minnesota Public Radio asking for a comment on the Court's decision. "I had to ask the reporter what the Court had decided. She simply said 'you won.' I told her I was relieved," Slonim said. "I was relieved that after nearly a decade of litigation, the Band's treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather had been upheld once and for all by the highest court in the land. These were rights that were central to Band members' history, identity, and culture; rights that helped define who they were and how they lived. While the litigation was pending, the Band had opened successful gaming enterprises and achieved a level of prosperity it had not known for over a century. Yet at its core, the Band remained an Ojibwe community, with fundamental and unbreakable ties to Mille Lacs Lake and the natural resources found in the lake and the surrounding region. The Band's ancestors had secured access to those resources in 1837, and the Court's decision affirmed that the Band and its members would retain access to them in the years to come."

Chief Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's opinion was richly woven with history of Indian land negotiations with the United States. The findings upheld the decision of the lower court rulings. She wrote, "After an examination of the historical record, we conclude that the Chippewa retain the... rights guaranteed to them under the 1837 Treaty."

"March 24, 1999, is a day Band members will continue to celebrate and remember the courageous leaders of our past who fought this battle all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, showing current and future generations that tribal sovereignty and inherent rights must never be compromised," Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin said. "Band members continue to exercise treaty rights and will continue to teach the youth and future generations the traditional ways. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will remain the stewards of the rights secured in the 1837 Treaty for generations to come."

# 1837 TREATY TIMELINE

## PART II: 1990 — 1999

November 1990 — In response to the Band's complaint regarding treaty rights, the Minnesota DNR formally denies the claims in federal district court.

April 1991 — The Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners votes 3-2 in favor of hiring an attorney, with the intention that the county would intervene as defendants in the Band's lawsuit against the state.

November 1991 — Mille Lacs County and eight other counties intervene in the treaty lawsuit.

January–February 1992 — Then-U.S. District Court Judge Diana Murphy overturns the ruling that allowed the nine counties to intervene in the treaty lawsuit. The counties appeal this decision.

April 1992 — The Save Lake Mille Lacs Association (SLMLA) forms to oppose a negotiated settlement between the Band and the state of Minnesota.

April 15, 1992 — The Hunting and Angling Club leads a mass rally at the Minnesota Capitol in opposition to Indian treaty fishing.

Summer 1992 — Local landowners backed by the Hunting and Angling Club have their motions to intervene in the treaty case denied.

October 28, 1992 — The Band and the Minnesota DNR reach a tentative settlement that allows for limited subsistence spearing and netting and does not allow commercial use of game fish, big game, and timber. The agreement needs State and Band approvals prior to a final agreement.

February 23, 1993 — Mille Lacs County commissioners vote 4-1 to urge the Legislature to oppose the proposed treaty settlement.

March 1993 — Mille Lacs Band members vote 200 to 139 to approve the proposed treaty settlement.

April 1993 — The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals rules that nine counties and six landowners are allowed to intervene in the Band's lawsuit against the state.

May 3, 1993 — The Minnesota House of Representatives rejects the treaty settlement on a 70-64 vote (the Minnesota Senate passed the agreement on a 40-25 vote on April 30, 1993).

October 1993 — The U.S. Justice Department joins the Mille Lacs Band's treaty lawsuit as a plaintiff against the state of Minnesota. The SLMLA is denied their intervention motion.

August 24, 1994 — U.S. District Court Judge Diana Murphy affirms the rights of the Mille Lacs Band and the other Indian tribes that had joined the lawsuit as guaranteed by the Treaty of 1837.

August 26, 1997 — A three-judge panel of the Eighth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals upholds the lower court's decisions.

November 1997 — The Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denies a request to reconsider the ruling of the three-judge panel. The case is then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

December 2, 1998 — The U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments in the 1837 Treaty case.

March 24, 1999 — The United States reaffirms Mille Lacs Band members' hunting and fishing rights, as outlined in the Treaty of 1837.

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
Department of Natural Resources  
Treaty Rights

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Don Wedell, Former Commissioner of Natural Resources  
Jim Zorn, Former Executive Director for GLIFWC  
George Newago, Former Red Cliff Chairman

**SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**  
Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive  
Betty McCollum, U.S. Representative  
Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of Natural Resources  
Bruce White, Historian/Author

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES:**  
Bradley E. Harrington, Tribal Liaison MN DNR

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# OMASHKOOZ: HISTORY AND HARVEST

## Mille Lacs Band successful elk harvest

By Mashkodebzhikigahbaw, Benji Sam

Prior to the western expansion into the heart of North America, a once plentiful resource walked within the borders of the woodlands, plains, mountains, and even the great Northwoods of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Over the last 200 years, with growing densities of fur trade routes, voyagers, and logging camps, this once great resource began to change historical range across North America. While offering a valuable protein source for all who lived across the Northwoods, these four-leggeds brought an additional level of biodiversity into the local ecosystems of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Old-time writers from the 1800s spoke about the ease of harvesting omashkooz (elk) who had never seen human pressure and weapons with long-range capabilities compared to the local Native tribes. Over time, and with increasing settlers throughout the region, over-harvest, and development of more proficient weapons, the elk herds began to diminish, and those that survived moved into new territories where they were not so easily tracked or exposed. By 1886, elk were completely eradicated from the landscape, leaving tribes across the Midwest wondering where the once plentiful omashkooz had gone.

Multiple attempts have been made over the course of this nation's history to revive omashkooz in the Midwest, and in the 1930's Wisconsin tried to replenish elk across central Wisconsin but failed due to poaching of the elk over the next 18 years. However, recent efforts from 1995 to date in Northern Wisconsin, the northeastern-most portion of the ceded territory of 1837 and within the boundary of the Treaty of 1842, in the Chequamegon National Forest, elk have been reintroduced successfully. After years of research, protection, habitat management, and tracking of annual movement patterns, the Wisconsin elk herd is strong and has shown positive signs of growth over the last decade alone.

Travis Bartnick, a biologist at GLIFWC and a Wisconsin Elk Advisory Committee member, is an expert on the reintroduc-



The Omashkooz elk are sizeable cervid species animals that can weigh up to 1100 pounds for a mature bull (male) elk while cows (females), like the one captured above by Carla BigBear on their hunt in Clam Lake, Wisc., can weigh between 500-600 pounds when mature.

tion, health, and management of the elk herd. "Prior to 1995, there were a few failed attempts to reintroduce elk into the landscape here in Wisconsin," said Bartnick. "It wasn't until the first 25 elk were introduced from Michigan's herd into the Clam Lake area that the herd began to develop long-term success." Bartnick added that management concern for healthy biodiversity led to the introduction of another 31 elk from Kentucky in 2017, and another 60 in 2019 were translocated to add to the growing herd while expanding into a second county in central Wisconsin.

The Clam Lake herd alone has grown to an estimated 330 elk, and the state DNR, tribal affiliations of the Voigt Intertribal Task Force, GLIFWC, and multiple biology teams determined that a safe allocation of harvest tags could be sustained by the

herd while maintaining growing numbers. In 2018, Wisconsin offered its first-ever elk hunt in which 10 total tags were allocated equally between state and tribal hunters. As a Wisconsin resident, the harvest tag applications cost \$10 dollars each year and are raffled off for a once-in-a-lifetime tag. The revenue from the lottery raffle goes into habitat management, land allocation, research into herd health, and management strategies for maintaining a growing, healthy herd of the future.

The remaining tags each year are divided amongst the 10 total affiliated tribes, where tribes selected partake in an opening ceremony at the Clam Lake elk harvest camp before each year's hunt. Here, hunting groups gather to partake in ceremony and feast for the elk, for their safety, and for their appreciation to each other and all involved in the harvest of omashkooz. This is also when Travis Bartnick, and the rest of the biology team at GLIFWC overseeing the elk hunt, orients hunters to their responsibility of what follows tribal harvest of a bull elk. Harvesters are required to contact their respective conservation officers from GLIFWC as well as the GLIFWC biology team upon confirmation of harvested elk to gather tissue, blood, and post-mortem measurements that give researchers valuable information about the health of the herd.

"The elk hunt provides biologists a rare opportunity to collect biological samples from healthy elk," said Bartnick. "The samples of blood, lung, and liver tissue, as well as lymph nodes, brain stem, and neck girth measurements all contribute to testing for disease, nutrition, growth rates, and collaring estimates for future elk in the herd so they can be researched in the future." This has proved to be a vital resource to biologists across Wisconsin in understanding the movement, growth rate, and quality of life of the elk, as well as the land management strategy that could benefit them for generations in the future.

This year, the Mille Lacs Band was awarded a bull omashkooz tag and the MLB DNR performed a raffle for an elk hunting party to participate in the Chequamegon National Forest. Carla Big Bear, Keith Wiggins, Todd Sam, and Brandi Sam were selected as the hunting party to join the ceremonial elk hunt in north central Wisconsin. In late September, the entire group



From left to right: GLIFWC wildlife technicians John Wilmer Jr. and Adam Oja on the left, GLIFWC wildlife biologist Travis Bartnick on the right with an elk that was trapped and fitted with a new tracking collar. GLIFWC and other partners were invited by the Wisconsin DNR to assist with elk trapping efforts in the northern elk range in January 2023.



traveled over to Clam Lake to join multiple other tribes for an opening ceremony, tag allocation, and orientation to the harvest process. “We didn’t really know what to expect traveling to Wisconsin for this hunt,” said Big Bear, “We had to learn a lot of new rules and regulations, and study multiple mapping resources before we got familiar with the new territory.”

Both Big Bear and Wiggins noted that the group traveled to Wisconsin nearly every weekend this fall to partake in the ceremonial elk hunt and had to cover hundreds, if not thousands, of miles in their vehicle, on UTV, and on foot to develop a sense of where these incredible creatures made safekeep. “I didn’t realize the collaboration and effort it would take to find and harvest one of these elk,” said Wiggins. “We traveled around and around, talked to landowners, residents, tourists, bird and bear hunters, and everyone in between to get a feel for where and why these elk were where they wanted to be.”

For those unfamiliar with Clam Lake, Wisconsin, it is a cornerstone in the Chequamegon National Forest, where the only major roadways that pass through congregate with a single gas station, a few campgrounds and motels, and a bar. But despite its size, Clam Lake draws a tremendous crowd of hunters, recreational ATV/UTV motorists, campers, sightseers, and tourists who are drawn to the mighty elk hub. “It took us months to see our first elk, but once we found that first group it was like it was finally meant to be,” said both Big Bear and Wiggins. On the final day of the season, around 12:30 in the afternoon, the group was able to track and find not just one, but multiple legal bulls that the group could safely and ethically harvest.

The group found a small herd of elk with multiple legal bulls with them, standing downwind, so they had to back out and create a plan to proceed. “We had to wait a few hours before making a move in on the elk because they knew we were there,” said Wiggins. “We backed out and gathered ourselves before heading in for the final push.” That’s when the group came across a GLIFWC officer who took it upon himself to work in collaboration with the Mille Lacs hunting team, as well as a hunting group from St. Croix who elected to help in this final day of hunting.

After nearly two hours of cat and mouse between this group of elk, a legal bull presented himself with a safe, ethical shot, and a harvest was made. As many hunters know, pulling the trigger is the easy part, because now they had to work towards completing their field tests and recover the animal in a safe amount of time. If you are unfamiliar with elk, the average size of a mature bull elk is between 700–1100 pounds, so getting this out of the woods is no small task.

“Jim Stone, a GLIFWC conservation Sargent, was incredibly helpful in aiding in the harvest of the elk,” said Wiggins. “He helped direct traffic, performed a drive near the woods, and even helped drag the bull we harvested out of the woods a few hundred yards.” After the shot, the GLIFWC biologist team was also contacted so they could collect multiple samples before



GLIFWC wildlife technician John Wilmer Jr. assists the Mille Lacs elk hunters as they load up the elk to bring to a local meat processor. The meat from all four elk harvested by GLIFWC-member tribes was processed at local meat processors and divided up equally among the tribes.



GLIFWC wildlife technician John Wilmer Jr. assists Mille Lacs hunters Keith Wiggins and Carla Big Bear as they remove the elk head for biological sampling.

the animal was removed from the field. Bartnick added that this is the most crucial part of the process to aid in research of these animals for generations to come.

The omashkooz harvested this year, and every year prior, are brought to a local butcher to be distributed between the 10 affiliated tribes across Minnesota and Wisconsin involved in the Treaty of 1837 to be used for ceremonial use, large events, and to feed Elders and hunters across each community. In their time reflecting on the hunt that came to pass, both Big Bear and Wiggins added that their experience was incredibly fatiguing, rewarding, challenging, and humbling. “If we had gotten the elk in the first week, we never would’ve been able to meet the people we met, we never would have been able to see and learn about the landscape of northern Wisconsin like we did. This was the most rewarding hunt I have ever been on, and if given the chance, I would go back in a heartbeat,” said Wiggins.

The next 10 years of elk management in Wisconsin is currently being finalized between all management parties, with the goal of management for herd health, population growth, minimized human-elk conflict, and to create an environment for social, ecological, economic, and cultural benefits to the tribes involved. “Ultimately, the goal is to maintain a healthy herd and to continue providing this great resource to the people of this region,” Bartnick said.

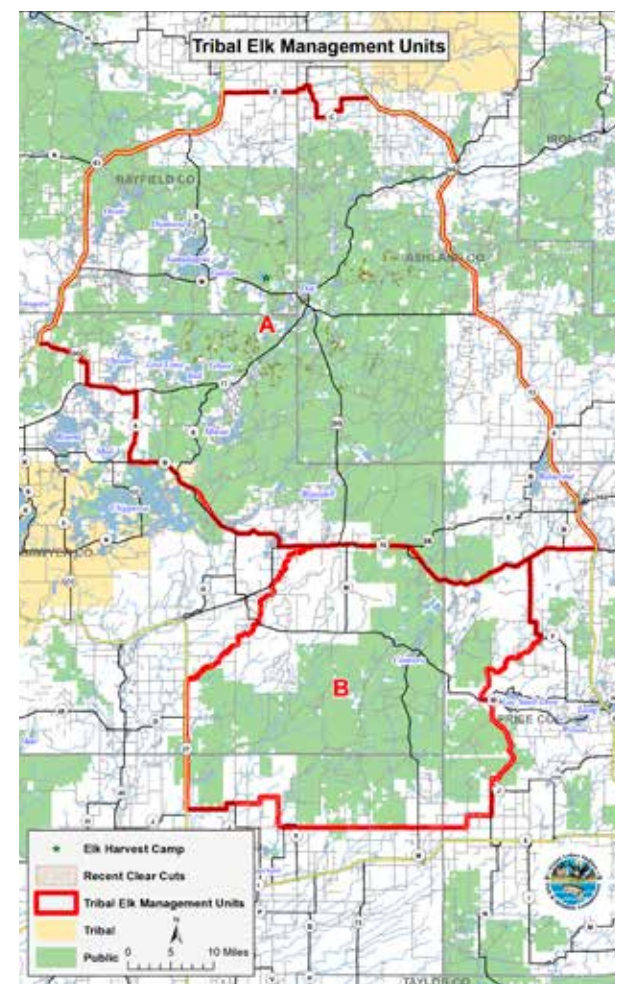
If you would like to learn more about the growing elk herd



Keith Wiggins and Carla Big Bear holding the Mille Lacs Band Omashkooz harvest on January 6, 2024. A young bull that will provide meat to distribute among all the associated tribes and GLIFWC to feed Elders, hunting parties, ceremonies, and cultural events throughout the region.

in Wisconsin, please visit the Wisconsin DNR page or the Clam Lake Elk Info page. For future information regarding Mille Lacs involvement in the elk hunt, please follow the MLB DNR pages.

The Mille Lacs Band Commissioner of Natural Resources Kelly Applegate said, “The reintroduction of elk into the 1837 ceded territory has been a wonderful project for the GLIFWC member tribes and we look forward to the population expanding. When planning the hunt, it was important for the tribes to do this in a cultural way. Putting out our asemaa, having ceremony, and giving thanks to the Manidoo were first and foremost in planning for the harvest. I recall the first omashkooz hunt several years ago, and how those Elders described an omashkooz standing still, demonstrating its willingness to give up its life so that we as Anishinaabe may eat. This was a powerful message and one that shows how these gifts from the Creator sustain the people, and our responsibility to acknowledge and be thankful for them.”



This map shows the boundary of the tribal elk management units for the northern elk herd in the Ceded Territory in Wisconsin.



# NANDA-WAABANDANAN IKIDOWINAN ONAABANI-GIIZIS 2024

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## NANDA- WAABANDANAN IKIDOWINAN

by Nazhike Mille Lacs Band Member

Can you find these words?

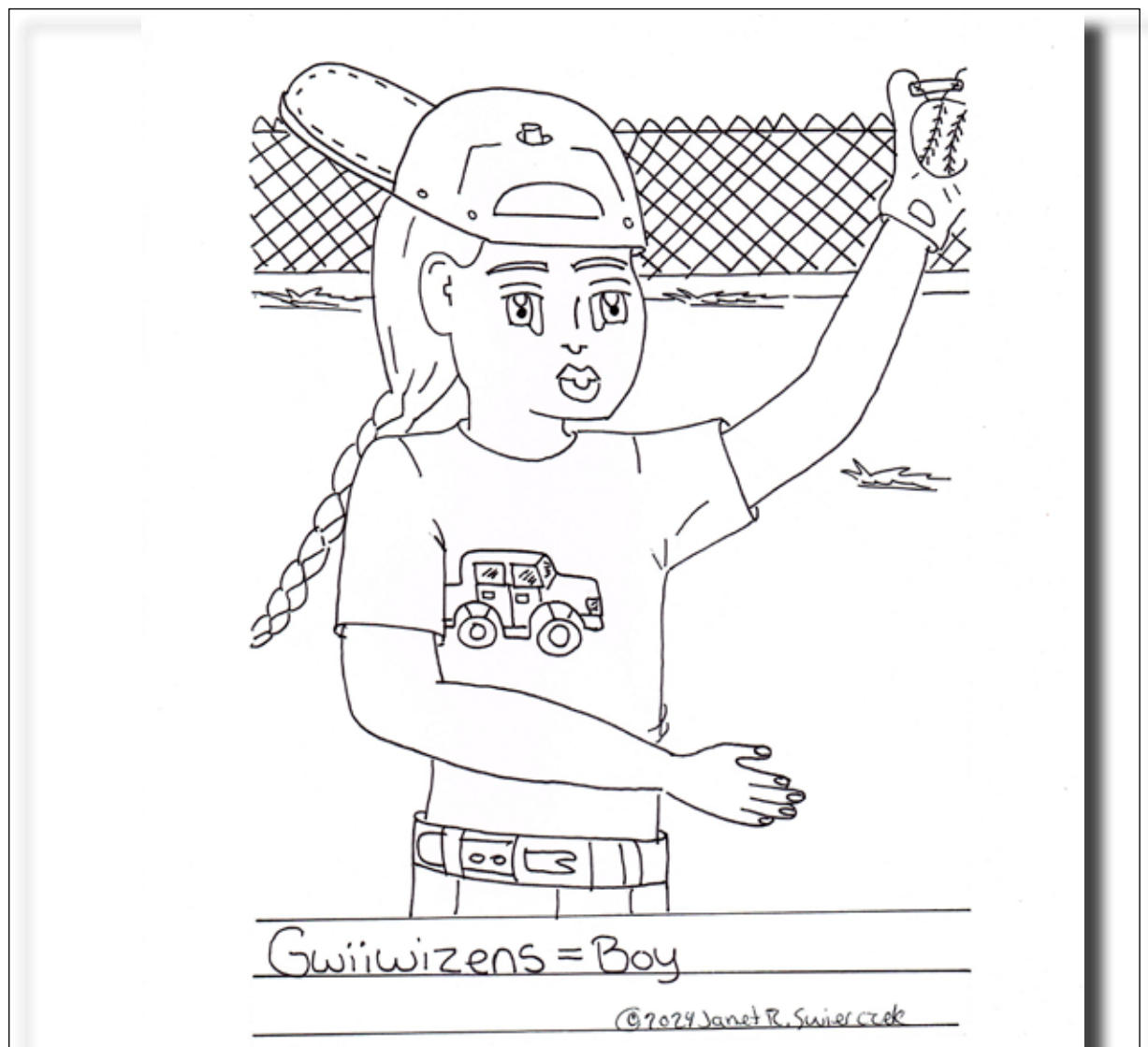
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## KIDS COLORING CORNER GWIIWIZENS = BOY

Artwork by Janet Swierczek, Mille Lacs Band Member

Janet Swierczek is an artist and Mille Lacs Band member Elder who lives in Minneapolis. She has developed over 50 coloring books. Find out more about her work by checking out the archives of the Inaajimowin at <https://www.inaajimowin.com/news-blog/meet-the-artist-behind-the-kids-coloring-corner>. You can also check out her website at [www.janetscoloring-books.com](http://www.janetscoloring-books.com) and follow her on Instagram at @coloringbookgirl-janet and Twitter at @Booksbyjanet.

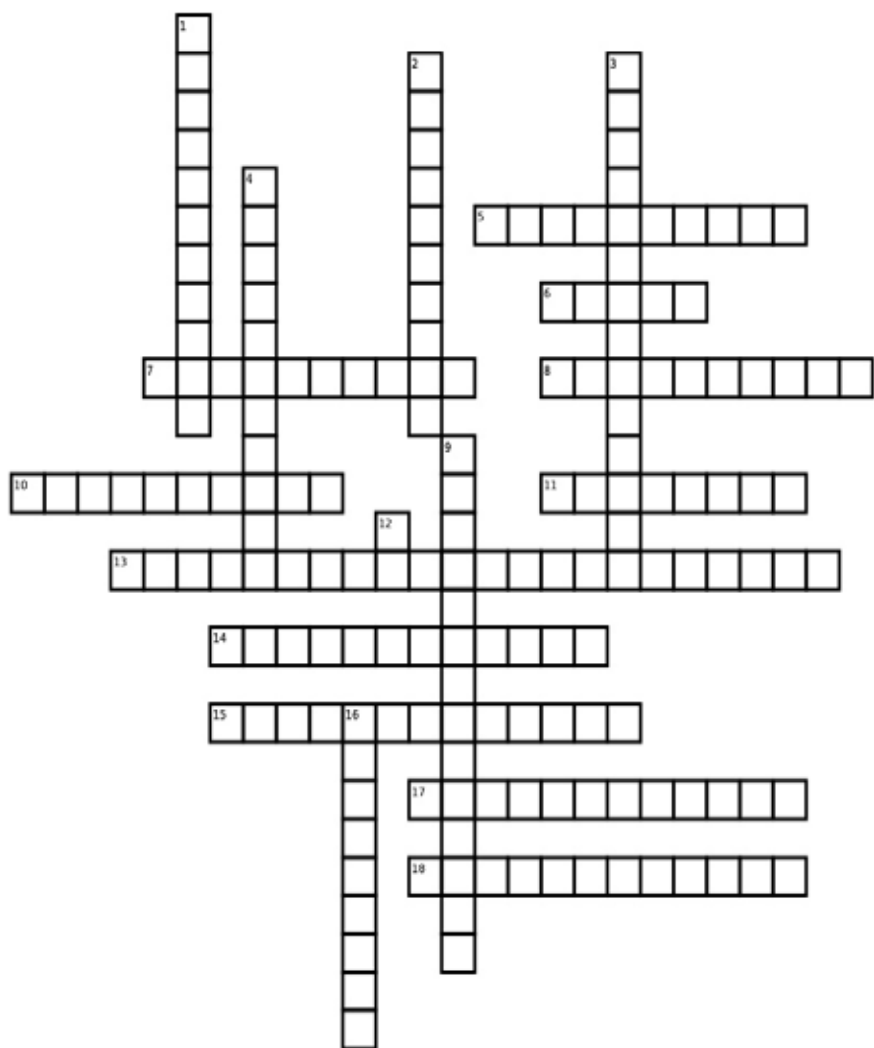
"I'm always open for more requests," Janet said. "So feel free to email me at [janetswierczek06@gmail.com](mailto:janetswierczek06@gmail.com)."





# AAZHAWAAKWASING ONAABANI-GIIZIS 2024

By Nazhike, Mille Lacs Band Member



## Down

1. Awiya \_\_\_\_\_. (S/he is calling someone.)
2. Awiya \_\_\_\_\_. (Someone is calling you.)
3. A meeting.
4. A text message/email.
9. A pen/pencil.
12. \_\_\_\_-mawadisishin (Come visit with me.)
16. \_\_\_\_ daso-diba'gan (40 hours.)

## Across

5. Awiya \_\_\_\_\_. (I am calling someone.)
6. \_\_\_\_ gaganoonid (Someone is calling me.)
7. Awiya \_\_\_\_ (Someone is calling me.)
8. Where s/he works.
10. Phone.
11. Breakfast/weekend.
13. An Ipad/tablet.
14. Where you work.
15. Where I work.
16. Niimidana \_\_\_\_ (40 hours.)
17. Bi-\_\_\_\_. (Come visit with me.)

# GIDINWEWINAAN — OUR WAY OF SOUND

By Nazhike Mille Lacs Band Member

Ojibwe language use can happen at work. Depending on your job, there are a variety of words that can be used during your day. Start using these words and day by day your language will grow. Give it a try!

Endanokiiyaan = Where I work.  
(ayn duh no key yawn)

Endanokiiyan = Where you work.  
(ayn duh no key yun)

Endanokiid = Where s/he works.  
(ayn duh no keyed)

Giigidowin = Phone.  
(gee gid do win)

Mawanji'idiwin = a meeting.  
(muh wuhn jih' id dee win)

Bi-mawadisishin = Come visit with me.  
(bih muh wuh dis sish shin)

libii'amawin = A text message/email.  
(ee bee um muh win)

Niimidana daso-diba'igan = 40 hours.  
(nii mid duh nuh duh sew dih buh' ih gun)

Ozhibii'iganaak = A pen/pencil.  
(oh zhib bee' ih gun nock)

Mazinaabikiwebinigaans = An iPad/tablet.  
(muh zin nah bik kih way bin nih gahns)

Awiya gaganoonid = someone is calling me.  
(uh wee yuh guh new nid)

Awiya gaganoonik = someone is calling you.  
(uh wee yuh guh new nik)

Awiya gaganoonag = I am calling someone.  
(uh wee yuh guh new nug)

Awiya gaganoonaad = S/he is calling someone.  
(uh wee yuh guh new nod)

Anwebing = Breaktime/weekend.  
(uhn way bing)

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

## WHAT IS GRATITUDE WORTH?

By Nazhike, Mille Lacs Band Member

As Anishinaabe, how do we show gratitude? Gratitude can be displayed in many ways, like a smile, high five, or a fist bump. It can be expressed in a talk, article, or simply "miigwech." Gifting is another. We commonly think gifts are gestures of grace or affection. But that is Zhawenim. Compassion for our fellow Shinaabe.

Gratitude can also be in prayer, asking the spirits to care for someone. To cast good causes and guidance to another is a way to express gratitude. With all that said, what taboos now exist in regards to gratitude?

European perspectives on gratitude have overwhelmed our senses in regard to how we care for people who care for us. How do we show gratitude as Anishinaabe?

What we see is in services or care of a type of assistance, there is a price placed by the giver of services. "How much?" is a common question. How much does it cost to fix my car? How much for a chiropractor? How much to do a funeral? How much to name my baby? What is the normal amount to give for traditional healing? We would normally expect to be told a cost for services rendered. For us, as Anishinaabe, it's different.

Tobacco is the price. If you need any services like someone to speak for your food, assist you in ceremony, give a name, and so on, asemaa is the price of all Shinaabe services. Anything additional is really not additional. Along with the tobacco, there have been customary gifts. The gifts are part of the offering being paired up with the toll — asemaa. Asemaa is the required toll that acts as the conduit to send messages as an offering. Think of the tube at a bank. The capsule is like the asemaa, you can put as much as you want in there to send through the tube which connects to the spirit world. Additionally, the gifts that go with it are part of the offering and the receiver of the gifts



accepts them on behalf of the spirits. That additional price is set by the giver/receiver of services.

When thinking about how much to give when hiring an Anishinaabe to provide services, also think about, how much does the service mean to you? What is it worth to you? Of course, some things may not have any monetary value. That is the American thought where value is associated with money. Think of what you put into gifts, whether it be a blanket, pair of gloves, a shirt/skirt, food, money. It's the intention behind the gift that has the real value. Just like how our language does not translate well into English, our value does not translate well into the American perspective of worth.

Gratitude expressed spiritually has the power to change and/or give life to the recipient. What would you give someone to ensure that your relative has an Ojibwe name? Get funerary instruction? Speak for your offerings? Whatever the Shinaabe service may be, gratitude is tied to intention. How can we express gratitude to our ancestors? For what they saved for us? For what we want our future to have? A little bit of tobacco can go a long way.

Miigwech.



# WAABISHKIBINES ENENDAANG — JOE'S THOUGHTS GWIWISSENSIWIYAAN (WHEN I WAS A BOY)

GAA-TIBAAJIMOD (told by) JOE NAYQUONABE SR.,  
WAABISHKIBINES

GAA-TIBAAJIMOTAWAAJIN (transcribed by)  
JAMES CLARK, OZAAWAANAKWAD

I was brought up by my grandparents Jiibise(ban) (Maggie) and Imbaagwe(ban) (Pete). I remember very early, as far back as I can remember, going to the dances with them. At the old dance hall, the heat was from a wood stove, there was no running water, and the lights were gas. I remember sitting there, not getting much out of it, but I listened to the songs, the talks, and watched the men dance. I didn't retain much at the time being so young.

My life changed when I was in first grade, as my father passed away shortly after starting. My life continued to change as I moved back in with my mom and stopped living with my grandparents. Many things in my life changed during this time, including a decrease in going to the dance hall.

I remember one time though, we were home and there was a knock at the door. My mom answered it and the man at the door told her, "They're feeding at the dance hall." At the time, I didn't think anything of it. She thought that we should go, so we put on coats and we walked to the dance hall.

First, they spoke for the food. Then we went up and ate — there was a huge amount of food in front of us. After everyone was done eating, some of the guys went to the drum and started singing some social songs. I was unsure at that age if I should dance to this or that song and I didn't even think to ask my mom.

Once it got dark, I remember trying to listen to the man that got up from the drum — he was telling people the agenda of what they'd be doing tomorrow, and of course that they'd be feeding again in the morning. So, we came back the next morning and ate what was served and we stuck around for the day at the dance hall.

That's when I noticed that the drum was up on all four legs and still I was curious, but didn't bother to ask. After breakfast was done, my mom's sister and husband were so nice to give us a ride home, and right before we left the dance hall, that guy got up again and spoke about the afternoon's events. When we got home, they asked if we wanted to go back, so we did. Once they picked us up and we arrived there, I noticed there was a

lot more cars outside and a lot more people inside the dance hall than last night and that morning combined.

I remember the atmosphere of the room; it was so friendly and open. There were handshakes, hugs, and greetings going around to everyone in the dance hall. I went by my grandma and visited with her, it was nice to see her. Not too long after that, they began the afternoon session of the dance.

I again watched and listened to what was going on, still not fully understanding what and why everything was going on. To this day, I can't remember if they put out bundles for the visiting drum keepers, but I don't believe they did. So that was the end of the afternoon, and we were driven home. My relatives asked my mom if we were going to go back. When she said yes, I noticed my mom grabbed a few blankets.

Again, we went for the evening dinner and again the atmosphere was just filled with friendly behavior and discussion. One thing I remember was that the legs of the drum were removed. While the tables were put away, some of the men were on the drum singing songs. It was time for the evening social dance. The man got up and spoke to kick the evening off. They were going to sing the ladies songs to which the Ogichidaakweg got up and danced. After their song was done, they went back to their chairs, grabbed a blanket, and found someone to dance with for the next song. Back then it was mostly ladies dancing to those songs; however, as it got later and later, the ladies were asking the men to dance to the songs. The dance that night went all the way till about 1 or 2 in the morning. Boy was it a good time. That was my first real time at the drum. I was trying to listen and observe.

Shortly after that dance, my uncle Johnson came over to me. He offered me a position on the drum. He said there was a drum warmer position open and that's when he gave me asemaa to be in that position. I told him I would consider it.

Following the ask, my mom and I had a discussion. "They're offering you a position on the drum, third drum warmer," she said.

"What do you think?" 9-year-old me asked my mom. I was very confused and unable to comprehend the entire scope of the position to the point where I nearly overwhelmed myself. In the end, I told my uncle that I would take that position.

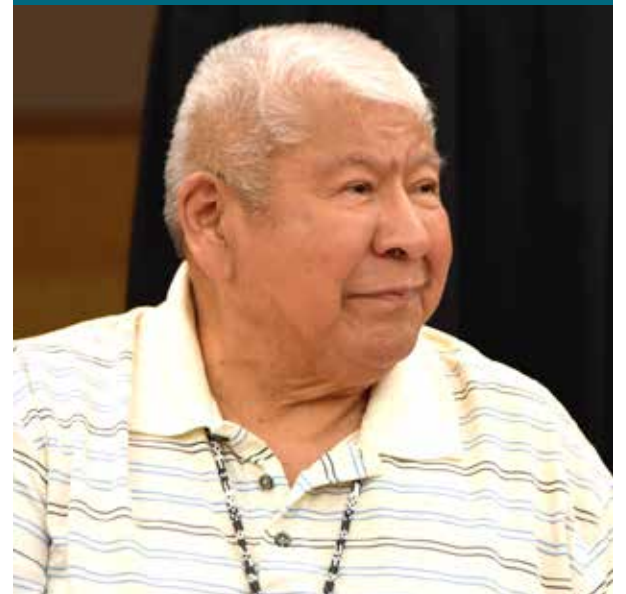
I remember thinking, how are these people going to treat me? Are they going to laugh at me? I had such a lack of

## NOTES FROM JOE:

Aaniin Anishinaabedog! Waabishkibines omaa. (Hello fellow Anishinaabe!) Joe Sr. here. With the times we live in, I must tell you about the article I have submitted. This article is full of my words, observations, and experiences that I have encountered throughout my life, and it is time to have these subjects written down. Understand not everything needs to be written, but various teachings cannot be lost.

That being said, as Anishinaabe, we all experience life differently. This disclaimer is needed for all intents and purposes as the goal of this article is: to better equip our people who'd like to learn, and for topics people may not have the ability to ask an Elder about. If these teachings are not as you learned them, that is okay. It is not our way to blame and criticize but to teach and show compassion.

Any comments, questions, or further discussion, please feel free to reach out to me and I'd be happy to have a conversation. Miigwech.



self-confidence back then. At 9 years old, it was a pretty big step for me, so I stopped by my grandma's later that week and talked to her.

"I think it's a good thing for you to accept it," she said. "I am sure they're going to help you and teach you what to do. I think people are going to be glad that you accepted this position." That made me feel a lot better.

The day that I was put on the drum, I remember walking in and sitting by my grandma. People on the way in were smiling at me and being very kind towards me. Finally, my uncle came and took me by the hand and took me around the drum and then sat me in that position. He then told the people in attendance that I was asked to be in that spot and I accepted that asemaa. He ended with giving me a gift. The drum members also came up and gave me a gift with some pats on the head. After they were done, then the audience got up and shook my hands and gifted me things. Holy man! It was more than I could've ever dreamed of. After everyone was done, someone came up and talked to me and said how happy he was that I took this position. The rest of the talk he gave me is a talk that I still use today when I help put people on. I listened very closely to everything that he said.

Since then, I've been put on eight other drums and the talks used were pretty much the same for all eight. I was very fortunate that my first language was Ojibwe and that there was no doubt as to what he was saying and no translation needed.

That really helped set things in motion for me as to what my duties and responsibilities were. But I remember him telling me, "Whenever there's a drum happening, try and be there. When you get there, offer them your help with your position, regardless of if they need it; they will appreciate it and highly respect you for it."

And that kick started my journey with the drums. As said in other articles, I took a hiatus for a long time. After dealing with some issues and some wars, I finally came back.

I can still hear that man saying those words to me. So, to those who sit on the drums, I implore you to go to a drum whenever you can as that old man told to me all them years ago.

**2024**  
**GRAND CASINO MILLE LACS**  
**POLAR PLUNGE**

**TAKE THE PLUNGE TO SUPPORT SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA!**

**SATURDAY, MAR. 9 | 1 PM**  
**EDDY'S RESORT**

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**POLAR PLUNGE**

PRESENTED BY THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA



## AROUND THE RESERVATION



# GROWING THE GAME

By Mashkodebzhikigahbaw, Benji Sam

Few things bring people together more than organized sports in this country. And as sports have continued to grow over the last few decades, opportunities for youth in the realm of sports continue to grow with it. Never have we seen the level of accessibility to training, group sports, courts, and competition for the youth of today. A group of young Band members have bonded together over the course of time around the game of basketball and continue to grow the game they know and love. Lead by Eldayshun Big Bear, recent graduate from Isle high school, these young men look to continue growing the game of basketball in the greater Mille Lacs area.

Big Bear, a former Isle Huskie point guard, prides himself on molding his life to reflect the career he carried in basketball. In his time with the Huskies, Big Bear set multiple school records that will stand against history as the leading single season assist record and all-time career assist leader. Big Bear also traveled around the region competing at multiple levels of high school basketball as well as Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball for both the Minnesota Heat and Minnesota Comets. These programs are renowned for bringing together talent from across the corners of Minnesota. Like his career in basketball thus far, Big Bear's vision for growing the game of basketball is being passed off to the next generation, but this time, through the lens of a coach.

In his first year as a coach, Big Bear has taken on his first coaching assignment with the Mille Lacs Raiders Boy's C-Squad team and an assistant coach for the varsity level. With the new-age Mille Lacs Raiders program, Big Bear and others have worked towards building the game of basketball



The 2023-2024 Mille Lacs Raiders C-Squad team featuring Coach Big Bear and players from left to right: Waylon Mitchell, Ari Dunn, Jaxon Johnson, Ethan Peterson, David Carpenter, Levi Mauer, Owen Kapsner, Curtis Fohrenkam, Gerard Fohrenkam, Ziyad Nitifi, and Fabian Sam.

in this community. "This has been a great learning experience. Seeing the players take steps and progress week to week has been so rewarding," he said. "We want to build something special here. We want to build something these kids can be proud of." Something special, like the new District I Community Center in which the court features one of the most beautiful hardwood floors in the state, is building around Mille Lacs area basketball.

The last few years, Big Bear, along with basketball family members Cedric LaFave, Mykal Garbow, and Joseph Benjamin, have created a culture around the sport that has ignited a fire around the game of basketball for our youth. "We have hosted dozens of camps in the last year or more and hold open gyms every Saturday for kids to come in and work on skills, shooting drills, and just playing some basketball," said Big Bear. He added that any given week, there are from 15-20 regular attendees to open gyms, and some weeks there have been almost double. On top of running camps, open gyms, and working with the local high school program, the vision of growing the game in Mille Lacs is about to get a whole lot bigger.

These four young men are holding tryouts this month for the inaugural season for the new Mille Lacs AAU team which will travel the major boys' basketball circuit throughout the state of Minnesota and the Midwest. These inaugural teams will span across four age levels to feature players from across the Mille Lacs area, both tribal and non-tribal. These tryouts are open to all qualifying-age players. The goal is to bring four age groups into competition, including a 13 and under, 15 and under, 16 and under, and a 17 and under team. "We have received questions from parents and players across Minnesota from Hinckley to Fond du Lac. We are going to field the best, most competitive teams possible and give our youth a chance to compete for something more," says Big Bear.

This tryout will be open for all and will come at no cost for participants at the DI Community Center on March 16, 2024. The coaches do want to urge participants that if a player makes a team, there will be a \$400 participation fee that covers jerseys, travel costs, and tournament fees. This team fee is a non-refundable deposit and will secure your place on the Mille Lacs AAU team. For more information please follow the Mille Lacs Basketball Camps on Facebook.

With each step forward, the youth in the Mille Lacs area have been given another opportunity to not only grow as individuals but also as a culture — a basketball culture. A wave of energy moves on the Reservation and the surrounding community because this is going to be something special. "I think it's important for kids to see someone who looks like them and was raised where they were raised. That's what we're hoping to give to our youth. Maybe one day they can help give that to the next generation," said Big Bear.



Hi Auntie,

During the State of the Band address there was talk about the Talon mine and they played a video. I would like to watch that video again. I may be a young man in high school, but I do pay attention to adults and what they're talking about especially if it pertains to our environment.

I am a sophomore in high school and very interested in going to college for natural resources and conservation. Can you share with me about the nickel mining and what we could do to help with this?

Thank you,

Your future land protector nephew

Aaniin Nindoozhim,

This is a great question. I also would like more information. From what I understand, there were grants developed from the Department of Energy to ensure batteries for electronic vehicles be made in America. The grants were given to boost the production of the electronic vehicle batteries. The issue is the proposed mining site is just 1.3 miles from tribal lands and Band member homes. The Band is concerned about the impact on the environment and wants information on the data and study on the environmental impacts of the mining.

For us as a tribe and tribal members, we always want to make sure our land and resources are taken care of and respected. We have a connection with the earth that others may not understand. I admire that you are drawn to the natural resources and conservation career — that means your spirit is drawn to the land and you are a natural environment leader.

I need to do more reading and learning on this myself. I know the Band does have a "Water Over Nickel" campaign and there is a lot of information we can receive from that. The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources has hosted a tribal engagement session and has spoken at community meetings.

For more information we can reach out to the DNR and also stay informed at this page on the Mille Lacs Band website: Mining Impact | Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and take action here: Take Action — Water Over Nickel.

Stay on your career path. You are destined to help. You are the environment warrior, nephew.

Auntie

### DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR AUNTIE?

Anyone can send in a question for Ask Auntie. All questions are kept confidential. Send your question to [News@millelacsband.com](mailto:News@millelacsband.com).



# MEKWENIMINJIG

## THE ONES WHO ARE REMEMBERED

### ONI KOO GA BOU, MONTGOMERY JAY STAPLES

Oni koo ga bou, Montgomery Jay Staples, age 73, of Hinckley, Minnesota, passed away on January 27, 2024. A funeral ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at the Aazhoomog Community Center. Interment was in the Stevens Lake Cemetery.



Monte was born October 15, 1950, to George and Frances (Reynolds) Staples, the second of thirteen siblings, Temperance McLain, Denise (Mark) Chamblin, Melanie Benjamin, Marvin Staples, Dean Staples, Bernadine Roberts, Arlene (Chris) Victor, and Brandon Benjamin.

Monte was preceded in death by the following siblings: Mervin Staples, George Staples, Arnold "Sonny" Victor, and Francine Staples. Monte was a father to four children: Cheyenne, Billie, Spring, and Kiowa (twins).

Monte was born in Shell Lake, Wisc., and because of the U.S. policy of relocation, his dad, mother, siblings, and other relatives moved to St. Louis, Mo. Monte had many friends from living in St. Louis, Mo. As a very young man, Monte traveled all over the USA and even went to Seattle, Wash., to work on the shrimp boats. Monte was a talented artist in the mediums of beadwork, painting, wood burning, and wood carving. His most recent art projects were carving canes utilizing natural materials to create art, such as miniature fireplaces and incense holders. Monte was an exceptional administrative assistant who was very meticulous and excelled at organization and file management within any office environment. He was recognized not only by his supervisors but also by his co-workers for his skills. Monte could be found at the bingo hall many times a week. We will miss his intriguing life stories, which he would always tell from a humorous point of view. He had a one-of-a-kind style and personality with a very distinctive strut.

### JIGEWEGAABAWIIKWE AMI SULLIVAN-FLEMING,

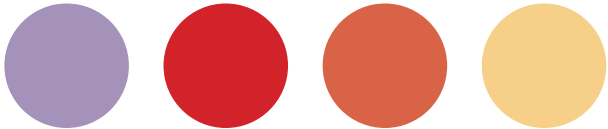
Jiigewegaabawiiikwe, Ami Sullivan-Fleming, age 31, passed away on January 30, 2024. Visitation was held at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, February 2, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation. A funeral ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation, with Baabiitaw officiating. Interment was in Vineland Burial Grounds.



Jiigewegaabawiiikwe, Ami was born on February 25, 1992, in Minneapolis, Minn., to Paula Benjamin and Anthony Sullivan. She enjoyed reading books, going for walks in the city, and playing video games and board games with her family. Ami was a free spirit who loved spending time with friends and going wherever the wind would take her.

Ami is survived by her son, Jesse Lee Sullivan; daughters, Mary-Jane Rose Fleming, Angelica Violet Fleming, Athena Kenny Fleming; father, Anthony Sullivan; siblings, Angel Benjamin, Toni Sullivan, Lawrence (Tysha) Sullivan; nephews, Angel Lynn, Jordan Jefferson Jr., Joseph Miller Jr., Quartz Del'Amber Sullivan, nieces, Golden Lynn, Nevaeh Jefferson; aunt, Donna Sullivan; cousins, Christina Sullivan, Thomas Sullivan, Danny Ring, Amber Ring; and many other aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Paula Benjamin; brother, Del Benjamin; paternal grandmother, Eleanor Sullivan; maternal grandmother, Pauline Benjamin; maternal grandfather, Douglas Eagle; uncle, David Sullivan; cousins, Cheyenne Mitchell, and Trent Mitchell.



### NEZHIKEWAASANG, LARRY WIND

Nezhikewaasang, Larry Wind, age 76, of Onamia, Minn., passed away on February 1, 2024. Visitation will begin at 6 p.m. on Sunday, February 4, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation. A funeral ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Monday, February 5, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Reservation, with Nazhike officiating. Interment was in the Vineland Burial grounds.



Larry was born on May 20, 1947, to Dorothy (Sam) and Sonny Wind. He enlisted in the United States Air Force and was honorably discharged. He was an excellent pool player and was on a pool league. Larry looked forward to his chance to enter the area demolition derbies. He liked to spend his time going to the casino and playing bingo. Larry will be remembered for his sense of humor and for making those around him smile and laugh.

He is survived by his sons, Sonny Benjamin, Adam Benjamin Sr., Paul (Mary) Benjamin; sister, Joyce (Ray) Trudell; grandson, Adam Benjamin Jr.; and many nieces and nephews.

Larry was preceded in death by his parents, Dorothy (Sam) and Sonny Wind; sister, Eloise Wind; brothers, Virgil Wind, Clyde Wind, Dale Wind, and Duane Wind.

### BIMAWAY GEESHIG GOO QWAY CHRISTINA F. BENJAMIN

Bimaway geeshig goo qway Christina F. Benjamin, age 90, a resident of Danbury, Wisc., passed away peacefully at home with her loved ones by her side. Christina was born on September 1, 1933, in Grantsburg to parents William and Maggie Austin, Sr.



Christina married the love of her life, Edwin Benjamin, on December 20, 1952, in Pine City, Minn. Together they raised six children.

She spent over 20 years working for Honeywell. She enjoyed flowers, yard work, watching the hummingbirds, going to the casino, and in her day, she loved to watch softball. She also took pleasure in watching westerns, doing word search, and spending time with her grandchildren.

Christina is preceded in death by parents; husband, Edwin; sons, Ronald Staples and Gary Benjamin; granddaughter, Savannah; sister, Dorothy Garbow, and brother, William Austin Jr.

She will be forever missed by her children, Romona (Orin Sr.) Reyes, Gloria (Dwayne) Benjamin, Ed (Pat) Benjamin Jr., Roberta Benjamin, Tracy Benjamin, Kelly (Louis) Benjamin-Mackoyl and Michael Benjamin; 22 grandchildren; 41 great grandchildren; 13 great-great grandchildren; sisters, Marion Nelson and Gladys Loger; along with other relatives and many friends.

Visitation was held on Monday, February 12, 2024, after 6 p.m. at the Lake Lena Aazhoomog Community Center. Services were held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 10 a.m. at the Aazhoomog Community Center. Interment followed at the Danbury Cemetery. Pallbearers were Ryan Benjamin, John Bearhart, Delbert Benjamin Jr., Marvin Staples, Raymond Benjamin and Karl Matrious, Jr.; honorary pallbearers were Bemosaakwe, Edward Benjamin, and her many grandchildren.

Arrangements were entrusted to Swedberg-Taylor Funeral Home, Webster. Online condolences can be made at [www.swedberg-taylor.com](http://www.swedberg-taylor.com).

### WAASEYAANGE, RAYMOND DOUST JR.

Waaseyaange, Raymond Doust Jr., age 57, passed away on February 11, 2024. Visitation was held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation. A funeral ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at the District I Community Center on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation. Interment is in the Vineland Burial Grounds.



Waaseyaange, Raymond Eugene Doust Jr., was born March 14, 1966, in Brainerd, Minn. to Delores Hegland and Raymond Doust Sr. Raymond was known for his humorous personality and generosity. He would always tell you how it is, and what

### NAZHIKEWIGAABAWIIKWE HELENA MOOSE GRAIKOWSKI

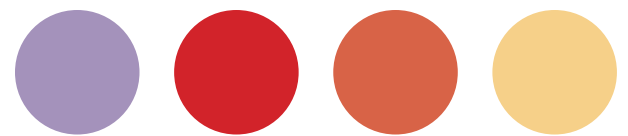
Nazhikewigaabawiiikwe (Alone Standing Woman), Helena Moose Graikowski, age 85, passed away on February 20, 2024. Visitation was at 6 p.m. on Friday, February 23, 2024, at the District II Chiminising Community Center on the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Reservation. A funeral ceremony was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 24, 2024, at the Chiminising Community Center near Isle, Minn. Interment is in the Faith Lutheran Cemetery. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel of Onamia.



Helena was born October 12, 1938, in Cloquet, Minn., to Alex Moose and Anne (Davis) Moose. She attended the Minnesota School for the Deaf in Faribault, Minn., and in 1959, Helena graduated. In 1961, Helena married Richard Graikowski and together they raised five children in eastern Wisconsin. While Dad was working, Mom took pride in raising her children, making sure we grew up with love, discipline, and a sense of humor. Helena taught all her children and others American Sign Language (ASL). She loved being a mother, she entertained the family with game nights and outside activities which were a regular event. She influenced her children with good work ethics. Helena lived a full and active life. She loved to travel, cheered on the Green Bay Packers, and looked forward to playing Dominoes with all her grown children and grandkids. She attended various vocational schooling which allowed her to work many different occupations, such as a beautician, data entry clerk, machinist, a clerk with the U.S. Postal Service, and lastly, at the Mille Lacs Band Office of Management and Budget as a file clerk. She faced numerous challenges throughout her life and overcame every obstacle with grace and dignity. She is the last of the original Moose family that help populate the old Indian Mission Road Reservation in the early 1940s. In her final days, she expressed that she lived a long and satisfying life; and was extremely proud to see her children grow up to succeed in life.

Helena is survived by her four children, Corwin (Ruth Sam) Graikowski, Onamia, Jay (Emma aka Mackie) Graikowski, Fort Lauderdale, Gilda (Tracy) Burr, Onamia, and Emma Gagnon, Wausau Wisc; nieces, Dawn Boyd-Chosa and Jenny Moose-Buckholtz; nephew, Bob Moose; grandchildren, Luke (Libby) Gagnon, Cassandra Graikowski, Corrista Graikowski-Dwyer, Jeremy, Loren, Danica and Jace Burr, and April Coming Hay; seven great-grandchildren, Kingsley McKuene, Damion Coming Hay, Esme, Ethan, Everleigh, Novalee Burr, and Auna Burn.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Alex and Annie Moose; brothers, Paul, Basil, Bob and Freddie Moose; sisters, Brenda, Bernice, Nancy Alice; daughter, Paula; nephew, Richard Graikowski-Del Kittie and David Boyd; and her ex-husband, Richard Graikowski; other great nieces and nephews.



you needed to hear whether you wanted to hear it or not. Raymond was a proud veteran having served in the Army. He enjoyed spending time with family, friends, and also with his beloved dogs. He liked going to the casino, playing his guitars, watching sports, and rooting for his Minnesota teams. He also enjoyed listening to his country music.

Raymond is survived by his daughter Athena Sagataw, his mother, Delores Hegland (Larry Hegland); brother, Jacob Doust Sr.; sister, Carolyn (Marvin Beaulieu); many nieces, nephews, other loving relatives, and friends.

Raymond was preceded in death by his beloved wife Toni Doust; sons, Donevin, Daniel, and Eric; brothers, Kevin Boyd and Don Boyd; grandparents, Dan and Daisy Boyd; and many loved ones and friends.



## SILENT NO MORE

# THE ANNUAL MMIWR MARCH DRAWS AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

By Vivian LaMoore, Inaajimowin Editor  
Photos by Bradley Roach Jr., Band member

Hundreds gathered in the East Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis on Wednesday, February 14, to bring awareness to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives and to show support to families of missing and murdered loved ones at the annual MMIWR March. A number of Mille Lacs Band members joined the annual event with bus service offered by the District 1 Representative's Office of Virgil Wind.

"While attending the MMIWR March, I was moved by the power of hearing first-hand accounts of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives," Rep. Wind said. "The stories shared were raw, emotional, and heart-wrenching, but they also highlighted the resilience and strength of our Indigenous communities. It is through these accounts that we are reminded of the urgency and importance of seeking justice for our missing and murdered loved ones. We must continue to amplify these voices and demand action to end the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals. Their stories will not be forgotten, and their spirits will guide us in our fight for justice."

In communities across the country, Indigenous women and relatives are being murdered at a rate of 10 times the national average. Native peoples represent less than one percent of the total population yet they account for more than eight percent of the total number of missing and murdered women, children, men, and two-spirit. Homicide is the leading cause of death for Native women ages 10–24 and the fifth leading cause of death for Native women 25–34, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, research is missing on rates of murder violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women living in urban areas. A National Institute on Justice (NIJ)-funded study from 2008 found that the rates of violence on reservations are much higher than the national average. However, according to the Urban Indian Health Institute, no research has been done on the rates of such violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women living in urban areas despite the fact that approximately 71 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas.

Moreover, reports indicate that there is no reliable count of how many Native women go missing or are killed each year. Researchers have found that women are often misclassified as Hispanic or Asian or other racial categories on missing-person forms and that thousands have been left off federal missing-persons lists.



Minnesota is one of the top ten states in the U.S. with the highest case numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives, according to Minnesota Native News. In 2019, Minnesota created the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Yet, much work needs to be done to address the crisis and end the violence.

February 14 is the day dedicated to remembering, honoring, and bringing awareness to the crisis in Minnesota, across the U.S., and Canada.

"A very grateful thank you to all the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members who attended this powerful event with us," Rep. Wind said.

See more photos at [inaajimowin.com/galleries](http://inaajimowin.com/galleries).





# TRIBAL NOTEBOARD

## MARCH ELDER BIRTHDAYS

Gerald Applegate  
Debra Rose Barge  
Cynthia Eileen Beaulieu  
Marie Ann Bengtson  
Laurie Marie Benjamin  
Randy Elmer Benjamin  
Andrew Clarence Boyd  
Patricia Lorayne Christofferson  
Curtis Anthony Cody  
Dean Russell Davis  
Laureen Gay Davis  
Keith Leon DeFoe  
Lucille Deborah Doffing  
Robert Allen Dorr  
Raymond Eugene Jr.  
Thomas William Drumbeater Jr.  
Bonnie Elaine Dumler  
Darrell James Erickson  
Dawn Renee Fahrlander-Peel  
Terry Duane Frye  
Cheryl Darlene Garbow  
Mary Lynn Gerke  
Donald Anson Graves  
Kathleen June Hill  
Kristine Renee Hines

Bernadette Melissa Johnson-Clark  
Bradley Allen Kalk  
Curtis Leroy Kalk  
Leslie Roger Karsjens  
Sandra Arlene Kegg  
Jeffrey Jay Keller  
Gary Wayne Kuntz  
Barbara Jane LaBlanc  
Ursula Lynn LaFave  
Lorelei Lee LaFave-Nygren  
Mert Elaine Liebgott  
Wanda Roxane Mendoza  
Anita Ann Misquadace  
John Donivon Mojica  
Lester Lee Nelson  
Jeffrey Sheldon Nickaboine  
Michael James Nickaboine  
Jason Perry  
Marlene Ruth Poukka  
Curtis Lee Pryce  
George Wayne Rea  
Debra Jo Sam  
Fred L. Sam  
Kathryn Mar Sam  
Sharon Lee Sam  
Melinda Marie Sandoval

Francis Dean Schaaf  
Susanna Lee Schaaf  
Thomas William Schleeve  
Merle Lee Skinaway Jr.  
David Smith Jr.  
Terrance Lee Smith  
Harvey Joseph St. John  
Gloria Ann Starkey  
Tawnya Mary Lynn Stewart  
Toya Lynn Stewart Downey  
Sami Thomas  
Robert Tibbetts Jr.  
David Fredrick Tonogan  
Dawn Rose Toth  
Bernard Leroy Weyaus  
Charlene Rene Wilson  
**Please note:** If you would rather not have your name included in the Elder birthday list, please email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) before the 15th of the month preceding your birthday.

## HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday **Jarvis Jr.** on March 5, with love from the

Harrington family • Happy birthday **Jayla** on March 18, with love from dad, Lileah, Papa Brad, Grannie Kim, Papa Kyle, Auntie Val, Dan, Kev, Pie, Myla, Auntie Randi, Auntie Rachel, Rory, Uncle Jay, Taylor, Adam, Uncle Brad, Daphne, Braelyn, Payton, Eric, Wes, Waase, Brynley, Galli, Bam, and Binesiiikwe • Happy birthday brother **Bruce** on March 19 with love from Sissys and Brothers!  
• Happiest Birthday wishes are being sent to **Mary Gerke!** Best wishes for many more! Love and hugs from Joy, Robin, and Jon too!  
• Happy March 26th birthday to **Mary** with all my love, Pokeman. • Happy birthday **Mary** from one old boiler to another, Love you! Robyn XX • Growl, roar, happy birthday roar, grrr, roar **Mary!** – Godzilla • Happy birthday **Mary** and thank you for your continued support! – Funko Industries • Baby Yoda is not my name but your birthday it is

**Mary** – Grog. • Another hole in one, Mary? Talk about a birthday gift! Love, Greg. • A very Merry Birthday on March 26 to **Mary Gerke**, a fierce lady warrior with love, Jan and Geo • Happy Birthday Mommy! **Mary Flores** I hope you have the bestest day ever! Love, the Hunters.

## 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 April issue is March 15. Photos may be included if space allows.

# IMPORTANT TRIBAL GOVERNMENT PHONE NUMBERS

**Mille Lacs Band Government Center:** 320-532-4181  
**Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police:** 320-532-3430  
**Non-Emergency Phone:** 320-630-2994  
**Chief Executive's Office:** 320-532-7484

### Commissioners:

Administration: Sam Moose: 320-630-2607; Assistant Commissioner: Maria Costello: 320-630-7643, or 763-260-0164  
Community Development: 320-630-7643, or 763-260-0164  
Education: Niiyogaabawiiikwe, Brooke Mosay Gonzalez: 320-362-4245  
Finance: Mel Towle: 320-532-7475  
Health and Human Services: Nicole Anderson: 320-364-9969  
Natural Resources: Kelly Applegate: 763-221-0320

### 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

### Public Works

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: 320-362-4672  
Family Violence Prevention 24/7 Crisis Line: 866-867-4006; or Kristen Allord: 320-630-2677  
Elder Advocate: 320-630-4395  
On Call Social Worker: 320-630-2444

### Other frequently requested phone numbers 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 Case Managers

District I — Candace Benjamin, Director of Case Management: 320-362-0014; Kaari Weyaus: 218-316-2437, Rosa Sam: 320-364-3187; Julie Peterson: 320 290 8729; Camille Smith: 320-982-0836  
District II/IIa — Winona Crazy Thunder: 320-364-3049; Autumn Ballinger: 320-674-0655; Mary K Boyd: 320-630-1307  
District III — Renee Allen: 320-591-0559; Kathy Nelson: 320-630-2671  
Urban — Winona Spaulding: 612-360-7219

### Office of Management and Budget

Economic Support and Per Cap: Katy Radunz: 320-532-7471, or Per Cap: 320-532-8928

**Enrollments:** 320-532-7730

## ELDERS NEEDED!

The Government Affairs Department is seeking Elders to tell their stories for a new Moccasin Telegraph series as well as to preserve video and audio in the Mille Lacs Band archives for future generations. If you are willing to participate in a video interview to share your memories, please email [news@millelacsband.com](mailto:news@millelacsband.com) or call 320-630-8195.

**2024 BOYS**  
13U 15U 16U 17U  
**TRYOUTS**  
**MARCH 16, 2024**

**FEE: \$400**  
(JERSEYS AND TOURNAMENT FEES)

WHERE:  
NEW D1 COMMUNITY CENTER, 18458 MINOBIMAADIZI LOOP, ONAMIA, MN 56359

**NO REFUNDS- ONCE PLACED ON A ROSTER YOU MUST COMMIT THROUGH THE REMAINDER OF THE AAU SEASON**

## DRUG TIP HOTLINE

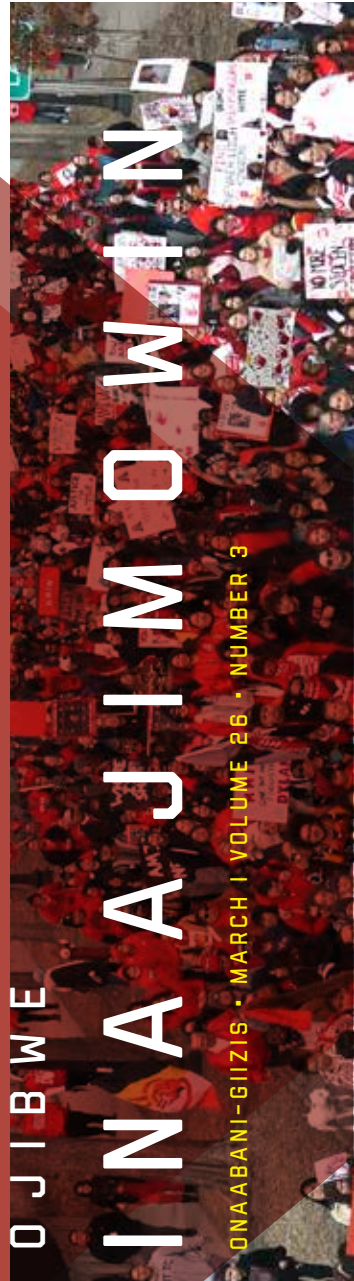
The Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department's anonymous drug tip line is 320-630-2458. Feel free to leave voicemails and/or text messages. If you would like a call back, be sure to leave your name and phone number. In case of emergency, dial 911.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>District III Family Fun Day January 2024. For more photos, please visit <a href="http://Inaajimowin.com/galleries">Inaajimowin.com/galleries</a>.</p> 					<p><b>1</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>On the RedRoad</b></p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>
<p><b>3</b>  <b>Keepin' it Real Recovery</b>                      6 p.m. Red Brick Building  <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b></p>	<p><b>4</b>  <b>Men's group</b>                      6 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Migizi Meeting</b>                      7 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>First Tuesday SNAP</b> see page 7  <b>Women's group</b>                      5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>6</b>  <b>Red Brick NA Meeting</b> 6 p.m. at Red Brick.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>On the RedRoad</b></p>	<p><b>9</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>
<p><b>10</b>  <b>Keepin' it Real Recovery</b>                      6 p.m. Red Brick Building  <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b></p>	<p><b>11</b>  <b>Men's group</b>                      6 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Migizi Meeting</b>                      7 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>Women's group</b>                      5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>	<p><b>13</b>  <b>Red Brick NA Meeting</b> 6 p.m. at Red Brick.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.  <b>On the RedRoad</b></p>	<p><b>16</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>
<p><b>17</b>  <b>Keepin' it Real Recovery</b>                      6 p.m. Red Brick Building  <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b></p>	<p><b>18</b>  <b>District III Election Forum</b>                      5:30 p.m. Aazhoomog  <b>Men's group</b>                      6 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Migizi Meeting</b>                      7 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>District II Election Forum</b>                      5:30 p.m. Minisinaakwaang  <b>Women's group</b>                      5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom</p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>District IIa Election Forum</b>                      5:30 p.m. Chiminising  <b>Red Brick NA Meeting</b> 6 p.m. at Red Brick.</p>	<p><b>21</b>  <b>Urban Election Forum</b>                      5:30 p.m. All Nations Church  <b>District III Community Meeting</b>                      5:30 p.m. Grand Casino Hinckley</p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>District I Election Forum</b>                      5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.  <b>On the RedRoad</b></p>	<p><b>23</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>
<p><b>24</b>  <b>Keepin' it Real Recovery</b>                      6 p.m. Red Brick Building  <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b></p>	<p><b>25</b>  <b>Men's group</b>                      6 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Migizi Meeting</b>                      7 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom</p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>Women's group</b>                      5:30 p.m. Old District I Community Center  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom conference.</p>	<p><b>27</b>  <b>District I Community Meeting</b>                      5:30  <b>Red Brick NA Meeting</b> 6 p.m. at Red Brick.</p>	<p><b>28</b>  <b>Wellbriety</b> 6 p.m. via Zoom conference.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.  <b>On the RedRoad</b></p>	<p><b>30</b>  <b>Zooming towards Recovery NA</b>                      8 p.m. via Zoom.</p>
<p><b>30</b>  <b>Keepin' it Real Recovery</b>                      6 p.m. Red Brick Building  <b>Wellbriety Talking Circle</b> 10 a.m. via Zoom.  <b>Zooming towards Recovery</b></p>	<div style="background-color: #e0f0e0; padding: 10px;"> <p><b>WELCOME, LITTLE ONE!</b></p> <p>The Office of District I Representative Virgil Wind recently met with a family to gift a Celebration of Life baby basket. Justine and Cody Meyer welcomed their first baby, Waylon Shane Meyer. He was born on December 6, 2023, he weighed 7 lbs., 13 oz., and he measured 21½ inches long. We're happy to welcome Waylon to the DI community!</p>  </div>					





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



<b>DREAMING OUR FUTURE</b> page 5	<b>NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH</b> page 6	<b>25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TREATY RIGHTS VICTORY</b> page 8	<b>OMASHKOOZ (ELK) HISTORY AND HARVEST</b> page 10
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### 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 April issue deadline is March 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: Family Violence Prevention.**

District I: 320-532-4163 ext. 7793

District II: 320-630-7666

District III: 320-630-2691

**24 Hour Crisis Line:** 866-867-4006

**Batters Intervention:** 320-532-4163 ext. 7793

**Elder Services:** 320-532-7854

**Emergency Services Loans:** 320-532-4163 ext. 1755 or 1757

**Food Shelf:** 320-362-4672

**Waivered Services:** 320-362-0027

**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:** 320-532-4163, ext. 1714

On-Call Social Worker/After Hours Emergency 320-630-2444.

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