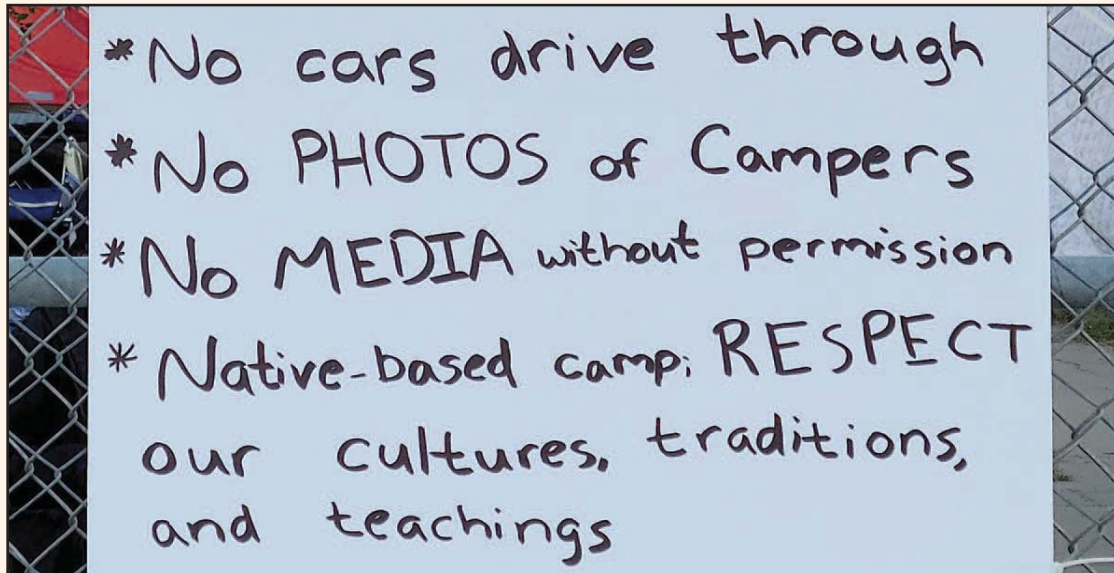




Activist wants to prevent Wall of Forgotten Natives



Sign at the Wall of Forgotten Natives in September in Minneapolis. (Photo by The New Wall of Forgotten Natives 2020 Facebook.)

BY EDDIE CHUCULATE

Outreach worker Jase Roe is determined to prevent a Native American homeless camp from exploding into one similar to 2018 that grew to over 300 people, garnered national attention and was dubbed “The Wall of Forgotten Natives.”

Although located on the same state-owned property, this fall’s “Wall” is strictly about getting Natives housed with winter encroaching, and with long-term goals of something permanent.

“We came here a few weeks ago to draw attention,” said Roe, 44, a Northern Cheyenne from Lame Deer, Montana, who was adopted and grew up in the Twin Cities suburb of Eagan. “Now that that’s done, we’re working on real resources and a permanent solution.”

Rioting in late May after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minnesota police left even more people homeless in a city already struggling with a shortage of affordable housing and beds for the indigent.

A Christmas Day fire that destroyed a downtown hotel that had been converted to transitional housing, leaving 250 homeless, didn’t help.

Tent cities sprang up this summer in numerous public parks in a city ranked No. 1 in the US in 2020 for its parks system by the Trust for Public Land.

A number of those camps reportedly became problematic with sexual assaults, fighting, littering, rampant drug and alcohol use and bur-

glaries and vandalism in neighborhoods adjacent to the parks.

Camping in public parks in Minneapolis is illegal. But due to the pandemic and extraordinary circumstances, the city allowed it this summer.

Some residents in the parks’ nearby neighborhoods welcomed it, even campaigned for it, carrying signs and petitioning Mayor Jacob Frey and the city’s Parks Department.

But some were against it from the start, and when police were called twice on alleged sexual assaults involving minors to the largest encampment at Powderhorn Park in the city’s South Side next to a school zone, officials pulled the plug.

A two-week notice was issued before park police dismantled lodgings that were left behind, bulldozing tents and abandoned property into piles. The Powderhorn Park encampment had grown to 560 tents by July 9.

One of those ordered to disband was a camp for mainly Native Americans surrounding the Franklin Avenue Corridor where many Native-administered organizations, housing, businesses and other services such as medical clinics and social agencies like the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center (MIWRC) are located. It was deemed uninhabitable.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 –

Language Revitalization During the Covid-19 Pandemic

BY BRAD HAGEN

Language revitalization is widely recognized as an essential aspect of strengthening Native nations across Turtle Island. For some, there are more immediate matters like health care and housing to worry about while for others, language is central to healing our communities. For Randy Gresczyk, language revitalization is both his passion and profession.

Gresczyk is the Indian Education coordinator as well as an Ojibwe language instructor for the Robbinsdale school district, where he’s worked for six years. His school district is the home of one of the only high schools that offers an Ojibwemowin class for college credit.

In addition to this work, he is also an adjunct faculty member at MCTC and Augsburg University, and is one of the founders of the Kiwenz Language Immersion Camp in Sawyer, Minnesota. He has done much for the Ojibwe people throughout his career and continues to provide excellence through his work.

Because of the pandemic, Randy and I are conversing via Zoom. “What up, niij?” I say as he joins the meeting. We spend some time catching up, given that we haven’t talked in almost a year, but the conversation quickly turns toward the current state of language revitalization.

“How do you think the pandemic has affected language classes?” I say.

“People definitely have had to do more of an online approach, so for people who aren’t used to doing that kind of instruction, that was a challenge. I know I’d take in person instruction over online. In person, you can have better conversations and instructors have more things that they can do versus ‘here, let me pull up this document for you, let me share this resource.’”

Despite the negative aspects of distance learning when learning a language, Gresczyk is quick to highlight some of the positives, as well.

“I think this could also be a positive in that it could reach a broader audience, like the Indian Center has a[n Ojibwe] class with almost 200 people in the Zoom session. There can be more instances of languages being recorded online so I think this is going to help get a lot more material out there.”

In Gresczyk’s eyes, this mode of instruction could also increase grant opportunities for language classes by making it easier to monitor the spaces that language revitalization occurs, which could make it easier to see all the good work occurring and how important this work is.

“For you personally, why does language revitalization matter?”

“It’s just part of who I am as an Ojibwe person and being fortunate enough to be in a situation where I had elders growing up around me, first language speakers growing up around me. My dad’s an [Ojibwe] language teacher.

“When I was going to go to college, I had no interest in teaching or Indian Studies for that matter, but I think that as I got a little more mature and saw the need and necessity that there was going to be for people to carry on the language, I figured I could help pass on what I know and carry on the legacy of elders that were kind enough to share teachings with me. Being around them growing up, as well as my grandma who was a first language speaker, meant I was always around the language and this put me in a good position to be able to become a teacher and be helpful in the language revitalization movement.”

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 –

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Make America beautiful again by voting

BY WINONA LADUKE

Make America beautiful again. That's what I say. I remember those old advertisements of the Indian guy in the canoe, tear and all. And there was all this pollution, burning rivers and garbage. Ugly. I want it beautiful again. But it's not just environmental beauty, no more smokey skies or poisoned rivers, we want beautiful character and ethics in our society and in our government. I want leaders who are not self serving, lying, or serving foreign companies and countries, we want them to take care of the little people, those who need champions. In other words, we want to be decent people. We want to not have hatred, walls, and fear. I plan to be part of making America beautiful again.

I'm not a Democrat or a Republican. I ran two times for the office of Vice President of the United States as a Green Party candidate. That means I don't really have a dog in this fight, neither of those parties likes a woman like me. But this year, I am weighing in. And I am weighing in on the side of decency and for a return to a democratic process. I'm voting for a world with less conflict, youth in detention camps, gutted environmental and civil rights protections, less hatred, no vote stealing, and fewer forest fires.

First, I am going to ask people to vote. We know that voting makes a difference because this last mid term, Peggy Flanagan (Ojibwe) was elected to the position of Minnesota Lieutenant governor. We know voting makes a difference, because a young Puerto Rican woman named Alexandria Ocasio Cortez unseated a seven term New York City Politician Joseph Crowley to become a US Representative. The other side had the money, but people mobilized to turn over power. Her vision and ethics, combined with allies like Deb Haaland, from New Mexico, Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar are changing this country. They are leading the country and challenging business as usual in Washington DC. Now is the time for solutions, and those are not going to come from the folks who got us into this mess. The solutions and a "Moonshot" for a better world, of a new economy are visionary. That's what happens when people vote and organize. Minnesota had the highest turnout in the mid term elections, and we need to do it again.

About 700 young people became eligible to vote on the White Earth reservation for this election – and November 3 is about your future. It is about what jobs there will be, if we will have our wild rice, if we will be in ongoing crises

of climate, police, riots and opioids. It is about ensuring justice, and about having enough for our communities – heat, food, and health. This is a vote during a pandemic, a vote when the world is changing, and we are the country with more cases of COVID than any in the world. This vote is about the future of our country, our water and our people.

How to Vote

If you have an absentee ballot, you can send it in, and you should. Check your mailbox every day. And do it! Because your vote counts, and you don't want to lose chance to vote for future generations.

Vote and register in person: Early voting is open now, and you can vote at your county court house any time during business hours. If you can vote early, that will likely help protect your voting rights. You can register to vote in Minnesota the day that you vote. You will need a formal identification – a drivers license or tribal ID, that has a valid physical address. However, if your tribal ID has a PO Box, bring with you proof of residency indicating housing address / location (it can be a bill of some sort or housing papers).

If you vote on the White Earth reservation you can vote in your township hall, and get a ride there, or it's possible that the White Earth tribe will be able to provide polls for voting in the usual places of tribal elections. The White Earth tribe is working on a pop up voting station with the MN Secretary of State. This will be 7-days starting before election day on November 3rd. That's pretty important, because of a new COVID season, and because people have a right to vote.

Visit IWillVote.com to learn more about registration, register online, absentee ballot requests, early voting and protection laws. It is important you know your rights, and this is a good source Peggy Flanagan promotes. So let's get out there and Vote! Bring your relatives, and friends.

Why vote?

Vote because there are Native people running for senate, house, city councils and county commissioner positions in Minnesota. And those people can bring a Native voice to the state. And yet some of those native people, despite being tribal members do not always represent Native interests. So maybe let's vote on records and merits. Let's remember that change can happen. It's inevitable. It's a question of who controls the change. A surge in Native voting will change the political landscape of the North.

Vote because it matters what kinds of leaders we have. In September, Donald Trump's tax returns became public, and

we found out that he paid \$750 in federal income taxes. And he spent \$70,000 on hair styling and deducted it from his taxes. In the meantime, millions of people are facing evictions, loss of jobs, and incredible despair, struggling to pay bills. There are over 205,000 people dead from COVID as a result of bad leadership, the economy is in ongoing crisis, there are riots in the streets, people getting shot and the west coast is on fire. And Trump has threatened that a transition may not happen.

That's a crisis. In Northern Minnesota, crisis grows as well. We have an opioid crisis, we have a rise in hateful behavior, we have polarized communities, and winter is coming. We are faced with the end of Wiindigo economics, the mines have run out of ore, except for a few pebbles, and the tar sands are collapsing. Enbridge is hiring security forces and promising to bring in more militarization for a pipeline project which has been opposed by the Native people and 68,000 Minnesotans, as well as the Department of Commerce and the Attorney General of the State. This is a pipeline to nowhere. Sadly, many Democratic and tribal politicians lack courage, and are not against the pipeline, only David Suby running for House 2B, against Steve Green opposes Line 3.

In comparison, Steve Green, a tribal member is pro pipeline, and has opposed return of land to the White Earth tribe. Green tells us he "is addressing the nation's energy issues by supporting the drilling of domestic oil, clean burning of coal and nuclear energy." Senator Paul Utke has been in office since 2017, and has introduced 14 bills for the Native community, of which one passed. He is also pro Line 3, while our tribe has opposed the pipeline. That's at a time when the oil industry is dying and renewable energy is surging.

To have a Canadian corporation dictate and influence politics in the US is

a problem. The guns they bring will also be a problem. Hatred is ugly. While tribal governments wield significant economic power, politicians do not always pass bills for the benefit of tribes. Our tribe has spoken and demands clean water and wild rice for the future.

Some of us want peace, security and prosperity. That's the vision of the Green New Deal. That's the vision of renewable energy, healthcare for all, small farmers, funded education, organic agriculture, and justice. That's the vision that needs to be here in northern Minnesota- solutions, not more problems. That's a wave which is moving nationally, and can really change the course of our history. I say ride that wave.

The forces at work in the north country are deep and every vote counts. Trump did not come to Bemidji Minnesota to campaign just to see people with "good genes". He came because what is happening here matters. It matters to our future generations that we care for them being healthy and protecting the world for them. This is vision which is part of the Green New Deal, Just Transition, and needs to come to what we call the Deep North. After all, Trump came to the Deep north because of the long history of Indian hating, and the desperation of the end of the road for late stage capitalism – even the United Nations says that the kind of economics practiced by Enbridge, and RDO Offutt are not sustainable.

This is a time of incredible change and transformation. Statues of confederates and conquistadors are falling and we are in the midst of a global pandemic. There is no return to normal, so let's make this world beautiful. We can be part of the change by voting for courageous and decent people. And this is a chance to vote for the Good life, to vote to be beautiful. That's what we can do on November 3.



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Trump tells federal agencies to end training on 'white privilege'

BY MATTHEW S. SCHWARTZ/MPR NEWS

The Trump administration has instructed federal agencies to end racial sensitivity trainings that address topics like white privilege and critical race theory, calling them "divisive, anti-American propaganda."

In a letter to federal agencies in September, the director of the Office of Management and Budget said the president recently became aware of the racial sensitivity programs, which encourage frank conversations about race in the workplace and discuss potential actions to combat systemic racism.

The memo, issued by OMB Director Russell Vought, reads in part:

"All agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts or other agency spending related to any training on 'critical race theory,' 'white privilege,' or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil."

The memo said agencies "should begin to identify all available avenues within the law to cancel any such contracts and/or to divert Federal dollars away from these un-American propaganda training sessions."

Citing "press reports" of training sessions at which employees were allegedly told "virtually all white people contribute to racism," Vought wrote that these sorts of trainings perpetuate misguided views and contribute to racial division. It was not clear which specific agen-



Trump has ordered the federal government to stop 'critical race theory' training. The order came even after a summer of protests for racial justice across the country. (Photo by Charlie Riedel/AP.)

cies or training sessions he was referring to.

The directive was issued against the backdrop of the ongoing national conversation around police brutality and systemic racism. It's a debate in which Trump has sided with law enforcement over advocates for racial justice and supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement. As demonstrations were at their peak earlier this summer, an NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll found that two-thirds of Americans believed the president has made race relations worse.

Racial sensitivity training has long been conducted on college campuses and across much of corporate

America. It's unclear how long they've been going on at federal agencies. But their existence has gotten more attention in conservative circles in recent months.

One of the more prominent critics, Christopher Rufo, director of the Center on Wealth and Poverty at the conservative Discovery Institute, argued on Fox News that Trump should end the programs immediately.

"It's absolutely astonishing how critical race theory has pervaded every institution in the federal government," Rufo told host Tucker Carlson. "What I have discovered is that critical race theory has become, in essence, the default ideology of the federal bureaucracy and is now being weaponized against the American people."

Trump retweeted Rufo's appearance on Fox, arguing that diversity training is a threat to American unity. In response to a person who wrote that "critical race theory is the greatest threat to western civilization and it's made its way into the US federal government," Trump responded: "Not any more!" In another tweet, Trump called critical race theory "a sickness that cannot be allowed to continue."

While many conservatives applauded the move, others decried the continuing racism that they see pervading many aspects of American society, including the awarding of government contracts.

"If we are going to live up to this nation's promise – 'we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal' – we have to see each other as human beings, and we have to do whatever it takes, including taking whatever classes make that possible," M.E. Hart, an attorney who has run hundreds of diversity training sessions for businesses and the federal government, told The Washington Post. "These classes have been very powerful in allowing people to do that, and we need them more than ever. There's danger here."

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Gatherings Cafe gets new chef and a makeover

BY EDDIE CHUCULATE

T rue to his adaptive nature and agility in the kitchen, chef Brian Yazzie has turned the lemons of the coronavirus pandemic into lemonade. Indigenous lemonade, that is.

Yazzie, originally from the northwestern Navajo Reservation town of Dennehotso, Ariz., was recently named new executive chef and manager of the Gatherings Cafe at the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

Yazzie came to the Gatherings Cafe in March at the outset of the pandemic in an effort to generate some income for the cafe, which had been shut down due to the pandemic, and to feed elders in the Minneapolis Native American community, including residents at the Little Earth of United Tribes housing complex and at Bii Di Gain elderly Native housing.

Yazzie was in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul, where his catering business, Intertribal Foodways, was shut down due to the pandemic. Holder of a culinary arts degree from St. Paul College, he had been traveling the United States and abroad teaching about Indigenous food and conducting cooking instructionals.

Yazzie had formed Intertribal Foodways and began traveling extensively across the U.S., to other reservations and Copenhagen, Denmark, Italy and Japan. He'd cater, conduct pop-up and private dinners, and stage food demonstrations.

In America he visited different pueblos

and reservations.

"I realized that some of the reservations, foodwise, are on a third-country world poverty status," Yazzie said. "I've been trying to connect with them and teach more healthy, Indigenous menus and techniques."

Yazzie also started his own YouTube channel, Yazzie the Chef, where he shares his travels, food demos and presentations, and easy-to-make nutritious recipes, staying away from the European standards of pork, beef and chicken.

He plans to expand the show to include one-on-one conversations with Native guests including athletes, writers, politicians and authorities on wellness and nutrition.

But with traveling restrictions in effect due to the virus, a homebound Yazzie found himself itching for something to do related to cooking, and spreading the benefits of his passion: Native American cuisine based on regional game, plants and fruits and berries.

"He was looking for ways to help out the center and help out elders any way he could," said Minneapolis American Indian Center director Mary LaGarde, who had been made aware of the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota's \$15,000 grants.

By midweek the staff at Gatherings Café, along with volunteers including Yazzie, ramped up full-time daily production, assembling 100 daily meals for lunchtime delivery to elders Monday through Friday. They also give seniors word puzzles and sanitizing spray.

Yazzie also tapped into his chef connections to get donations, resulting in a load



of potato hash from the Idaho Potato Commission. He also recruited volunteer Vanessa Casillas (Ho-Chunk/Chicana) for baking and desserts.

During this time, the current Gatherings Cafe chef had notified LaGarde that he intended to leave late this summer. LaGarde didn't have to search far for a replacement, as she had a qualified, experienced chef right under her nose in Yazzie.

LaGarde praised Yazzie's effect on the Native community, "His incorporation of Indigenous foods are in line with the cafe's model of promoting health and wellness within our Native community," LaGarde said in a statement.

"Chef Yazzie continues to provide meals to the elders in the community with plans to reopen and rebrand the Gatherings Cafe when the Center opens to the public."

Not a bad career advancement for a cook, who when he first arrived in Minnesota, was offered a plate of wild rice and walleye at a powwow at MAIC.

"I didn't know what they were," said Yazzie, laughing. "I had to ask, what is wild rice, what is walleye?"

Now Yazzie regularly incorporates those ingredients into his dishes, along with cranberries, cherries, bison, rabbit, wild onions, fresh-tapped maple syrup, pheasant, duck, wild turkey, elk, deer, antelope and his favorite wild rice from Nett Lake and Spirit Lake.

Given the opportunity, he likes to cook with Indigenous ingredients from his native Southwest like small game such as rabbits, and lamb and mutton, corn, squash and chiles.

He's excited to take over operations at the Gatherings Cafe.

"I'm blessed to be able to take on the responsibility of one of the only cafes in the Twin Cities to focus on Indigenous Food," he said. "I've been traveling constantly the last five years so this opportunity to settle down in one establishment, creating menus, is a blessing and an opportunity."

There'll be both a name change and wholesale menu transition at Gatherings Cafe, located at the Minneapolis

American Indian Center at 1530 E. Franklin Av., Yazzie and LaGarde said.

The name change will be revealed within the next month or so, with a grand re-opening in January. The menu will be fluid, changing with the climate.

"The concept will be in line with the four seasons, changing with what proteins and produce are available that month or so," Yazzie said. "It won't be concrete. We'll be bringing in fresh foods focused on the Indigenous food culture of the Americas going back hundreds of years using ancestral knowledge, and cooking in moderation with ancestral ingredients."

Yazzie plans to continue a partnership with Dream of Wild Health, a nonprofit based in Minneapolis with a farm in Hugo, Minnesota, that promotes restoring "health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways."

The cafe also partners with Twin Cities Food Justice, Amish Food Farm, Frontera Farmer Foundation and the DragSmith Farms in Barron, Wis.

"Besides local farms we try to do foraging ourselves," Yazzie said. "In June we went out and gathered some wild onions, which we were able to use, then process and preserve. We work with a couple foragers, people who drop off juneberries, dehydrated cranberries and ground cherries. Local family and friends oftentimes are able to provide fresh ingredients for the faculty here."

The staff is planning regular pop-up menus, available for curbside pickup during the pandemic.

The first, "Indigenous Barbecue Night," was held on the last Friday of September and featured mesquite smoked pulled bison with wojapi honey sauce and sides of smashed sweet potato or grilled squash wedges; wild rice and cranberry salad of seasonal greens drizzled with toasted walnuts and a sage-balsamic vinaigrette; blue cornbread sweetened with agave; melon seed chia parfait for dessert or grilled peaches with mint sunflower cream and maple sugar dust.

The limited meal kit offerings, \$65 for a family of four or \$110 for eight, sold out before the Friday pickup date.

Sept. 22's regular menu for elders was wild rice pilaf with cauliflower and herb cream; blue corn hominy, turkey, and cubed fresh watermelon with puffed amaranth.

On Sept. 18 Yazzie and team served New Mexico green chile posole with blue corn and rabbit; house salad with watermelon vinaigrette; and fresh fruit parfaits.

Contact Gatherings Cafe at 612-879-1753. Yazzie is available at Yazzie the Chef, www.yazziethethechef.com, or email brian@yazziethethechef.com.

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A photograph of two women, likely of Native descent, working in a garden. The woman on the left, with long brown hair in a braid and wearing a colorful plaid shirt, is looking down at a plant. The woman on the right, with long dark hair and wearing a white patterned shirt and large colorful earrings, is holding a small plant in a biodegradable pot. They are in a garden with a wooden raised bed and lush green foliage in the background.

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"There was a lot of (sex) trafficking issues with our women going on, gunfire and other violence," said Roe, who works for the MIWRC. "Me and (co-worker) Jenny Bjorgo (43, Ojibwe/Wind River) decided to help the campers find a new place to stay."

"I can't really say how it happened, but we ended up at the Wall."

The MIWRC is a Minneapolis nonprofit that provides a range of housing, drug treatment and mental health programs for Indian women and their families.

"As a small nonprofit organization, we have expended resources and countless volunteer hours to provide protection and services to our clients and Relatives at the Wall," said MIWRC President and CEO Marisa Miakonda Cummings (Umonhon/Omaha) in a statement.

"We call upon the city, county and state to find immediate solutions to homelessness and to expend resources to fully realize these solutions."

"It is not the responsibility of the private sector or small nonprofits to do the work and expend resources to fix a systemic problem caused by U.S. policy," said Miakonda Cummings.

In a news release, Minneapolis city officials said they cleared the previous encampment because of health and safety concerns and with help of nonprofit organizations. They were expected to meet with the state and county to talk



Activist Jase Roe and Jenny Bjorgo work to prevent the Wall of Forgotten Natives in Minneapolis from getting out of control.

about how to assist campers who moved back in.

Native leaders, including Clyde Bellecourt, a founder of the American Indian Movement, held a news conference at the beginning of September urging the city, Hennepin County and the state to find suitable, long-term housing for the homeless.

"I feel sorry for them. It's pitiful what we have to do and the effect it has on our community," said Bellecourt. "We



can't just sit around and think about where we're going to put up a camp next."

The Wall, on property owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, is just a narrow strip of land along a highway sound barrier near Hiawatha and Franklin avenues in south Minneapolis not far from the Little Earth housing project, which is considered the nation's only urban housing development dedicated to Indians.

The Wall property had been padlocked for nearly two years by the state after the original encampment disbanded in late 2018.

"I won't say how they (gates) were opened, let's just say they were taken down," said Roe. "We instructed campers to immediately start setting up tents because when you have 10 set up that's considered an encampment, and by the governor's (Democratic Gov. Tim Walz) orders you can't do a sweep and take down an encampment right now due to COVID."

State troopers were soon called to the site and a standoff occurred, spearheaded by Roe.

"Me and Jenny have contacts, connections in the community," Roe said. "I have Jacob's (Minneapolis Mayor Frey) number in my phone and people right under the governor."

"We made some calls and were told to hold our ground. As soon as our relatives were unpacking (from the old encampment) troopers went around telling them to pack back up."

"I told them (troopers) they couldn't do that. We stood our ground. At that point my blood was boiling, we were in it. Who are you, kicking Natives off Native land, I told them. Where are our people supposed to go? I told them you are about to get a call telling you to leave."

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 —

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- ☐ Tell your friends to vote!



Despite this connection between Native peoples and their languages, there are still some that question the benefit of learning them, especially considering that many are endangered or close to extinction.

In regard to the importance of learning our languages, Gresczyk says, "It's a part of who we are as Indigenous people. It's part of our identity and for those of us who are still lucky enough to have the ability to learn what we can, we should take advantage of that. There are some languages that are completely dead and some of them are well on their way towards dying, while others are considered endangered, like the Ojibwe language. So some might ask, what's the point?"

"It brings diversity to the world and it's a part of who you are as a person and your worldview, right? Coming from a Western mindset, English is noun based so you're thinking about materials all the time. Ojibwe is a verb based language, so you're thinking about actions, so it's a different way of seeing and interacting with the world. Consider animacy in Ojibwe – things have power, like a feather or a drum. You get all kinds of culture that's in that language, as well."

Under the best of circumstances, learning a new language is difficult. Throw in historical trauma and a rela-



Gresczyk is the Indian Education coordinator as well as an Ojibwe language instructor for the Robbinsdale school district, where he's worked for six years.

tive lack of resources compared to more common languages like French and German, and you're left fighting an uphill battle. The most recent addition thrown into this hodgepodge is the COVID-19 pandemic. What use is learning and/or speaking a language that doesn't have many speakers when the world as a whole is struggling to hold on?

To this question, Gresczyk offers the following insights, "Depending on who you talk to and your own personal beliefs are, language does a lot for a per-

son. For some people, speaking Ojibwe is even a prayer, like saying 'I'm Ojibwe' can be a prayer that fosters a healthy state of mind and can create a sense of emotional wellbeing. I'm not saying there's anything that can be done physically by speaking the language, but it definitely helps the other senses, your spirit, emotions."

When asked if there was any advice he could give to those who are still on their language journey, Gresczyk replies, "Don't give up. Try. There's a lot more resources out there. Learn as much as

you can. Take advantage of the internet. Not everybody has access to first language speakers, fluent speakers, or even the internet, but I think some libraries are still operational under pandemic guidelines. If you're not going outside a lot during this time, maybe that's [learning a language] a new skill you could work on."

Being productive during the pandemic is a good mindset to have. The fact that our languages survive today after the onslaught of English during the boarding school era speaks to the resilience of Native people. Both strength and suffering went into this act.

We owe it to those who kept warm the embers of our languages during those tough times to now stoke the flames. If they could do it, why not us?

For info on Native languages, see:

- CLAN (Culture Language and Art Network): <http://www.maicnet.org/project/culture-language-and-arts-network>.
- GLFWC (Great Lakes Fish/Wildlife Commission): <http://www.glifwc-inwe.com/index.html>.
- The Ojibwe People's Dictionary: <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu>.
- Waking Up Ojibwe: <http://www.wakingupojibwe.ca/pathways/families>.

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Lone Eagle preparing for World Powerlifting Competition

Everyone has a place in the world. Some people take their whole lives to find it. Others happen upon it and are guided toward it quicker.

Eddie Lone Eagle, 37, was tired of living the tough life on the streets of Minneapolis as a young man. He wanted to do bigger things in his life by becoming bigger and stronger.

“I had very few people to give me good guidance or show me what it meant to be Ojibwe,” said Lone Eagle. “I was tired of living a tough life. I remember praying to the Creator to give me something positive, give me something that will make a difference in my life.”

Lone Eagle is a proud member of the Red Lake Ojibwe Nation and is Eagle Clan. He is also a descendant of the White Earth Nation. His Ojibwe name is Bebaamaash, The One Who Travels About.

In 2011 he saw a few local powerlifters at the Los Campeones Gym on Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. He knew he wanted to be committed to be one, too.

The owner of the gym encouraged him to sign up for the next meet. He competed in an American Powerlifting Federation (APF) Federation meet two weeks later.



Eddie Lone Eagle lifting weights.

In 2013, Lone Eagle won the International Powerlifting League (IPL) World Powerlifting Championships in the 165 lb. weight class with a 529 lb. squat, 352 lb. bench, and a 551 lb. deadlift, with a 1432 lb. total. He became a

World Champion in the World Affiliate of United States Powerlifting Association (USPA) Federation.

At the 2018 World Powerlifting Congress (WPC) World Championships, his numbers were 881 lb. squat, 507 lb. bench, and 617 lb. deadlift for a 2005 lb. total in the 220 lb. weight class, taking 2nd place in the APF.

“In March 2020, I was invited to lift on Pro Day at the Arnold Sports Festival in Columbus, Ohio,” said Lone Eagle. “My numbers were 925 lb. squat, 535 lb. bench, and 615 lb. deadlift for a qualifying total of 2075 lbs. in the 220 lb. weight class, giving a qualifying total to lift at the World Powerlifting Congress (WPC) World Championships that will be held in Illinois on October 24, 2020.”

“I’m currently in training and my goal for this upcoming competition is to get a 2150+ lb. total meet qualifier that will get me the invitation to lift on Pro Day

at the Arnold Sports Festival 2021,” said Lone Eagle.

“My future and main goal in powerlifting is to be invited to lift at the World Powerlifting Organization (WPO),” said Lone Eagle. “The best of the best lift at the WPO, and the only way you can lift there is to be invited.”

He follows a very specific 12-week powerlifting program and trains four days a week. His diet includes high amounts of protein, veggies, and good carbs.

“Pizza is medicine when you’re a powerlifter,” he added.

“Hitting personal records (PR’s) in the gym helps boost my confidence during training,” said Lone Eagle. “Also, setting my goals helps mentally prepare me for any upcoming meets.”

“I have chosen to keep my hair long and braided,” he said. “I am the only native powerlifter on the national level that has a braid on that lifting platform. My true power comes from the three strands in my braid that represent my past, present, and future. When I walk to that squat rack, I am walking with my ancestors, my family, and my future grandchildren. My braid is the physical representation of my ancestor’s prayers, my family’s prayers, and my prayers.”

“Powerlifting gave me a way to channel my anger and a positive way to use it,” said Lone Eagle. “There is nothing like being under that squat rack and squatting 900+ pounds.”

“I have always used my lifting to inspire Native kids to live a healthy, active, and positive life,” said Lone Eagle. “Powerlifting saved my life and I hope if there is a Native kid out there just like me, that they can save their own life too.”

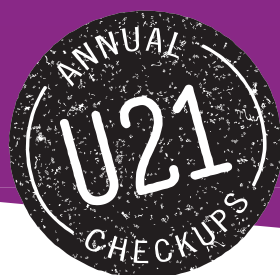
To view the video of his Arnold Classic 2020 Pro Day performances, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvihrsqGSo&feature=share>.

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Books encourage resilience and confidence when facing adversity

BY DEBORAH LOCKE

Two children's books aimed at different age groups encourage resilience and confidence when facing adversity. In each book, American Indian parents play key roles in supporting their children, and preparing them for an adulthood where they can flourish. The books are "The Range Eternal" by Louise Erdrich (University of Minnesota Press, Oct. 2020), a picture book reprint, and "The Boy From Pickerel Lake: A Dakota Story" (Black Bears/Blueberries Publishing 2020).

The stronger message about overcoming adversity, fear and bigotry is in "The Boy From Pickerel Lake," which is based on the true story of a superior student basketball player set in the 1930s. Throughout his life, author Steve Barse (Kiowa-Wichita-Dakota) heard stories from his father, Harold Barse, about Harold's love and talent for basketball. Later Steve did research on his dad and grandparents, which was published as this fictionalized biography. In the book, the protagonist is named Bill Sheldon who was raised in a large family on the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota.

The plot will be recognized by American Indian readers who have or had family members who were forced to attend boarding schools. Two Flandreau boarding school employees showed up at the Sheldon home with news that the three youngest Sheldon children would soon be placed in a boarding school.

Bill was the youngest child, and recently discovered his athletic ability while attending a white public school in Waubay, South Dakota. The family moved to Waubay, hoping that attendance at the non-reservation school meant the children would not be forced to attend boarding school. It didn't work. Bill had good grades and strong encouragement from the Waubay basketball coach to pursue his talent, but neither mattered. With great reluctance, he traveled to Flandreau with his siblings. Once at the school, the children were separated and not permitted to speak Dakota.

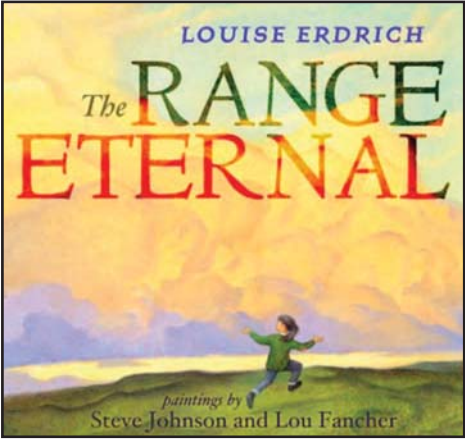
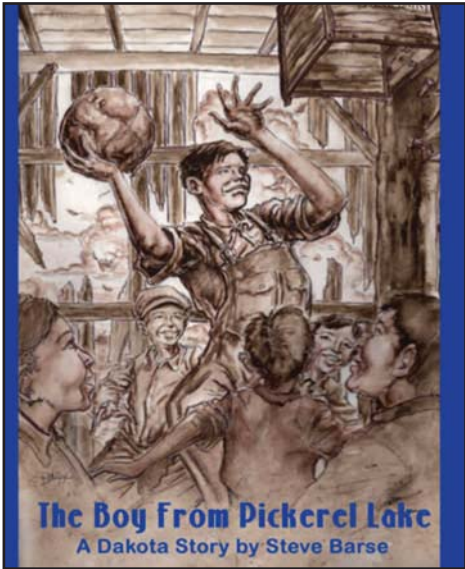
Nonetheless, Bill's natural athletic ability and good looks made him popular. Envious boys beat Bill up and he grew to be constantly on guard against a fight. With the first opportunity, he caught a ride home and vowed to never return to Flandreau. His father defended that

decision after hearing of his son's struggles. Bill re-enrolled at the Waubay school, again earned superior grades and excelled on the team. Again, his teammates were jealous and he had to endure racial slurs and violence, but he led the team to championship wins and may have changed a few minds about the ability and character of American Indian student athletes.

"The Range Eternal" is for very young children. Its artwork by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher is every bit as much for adults. Gorgeous pictures accompany the story of a wood-burning stove in a Turtle Mountain home, and an imaginative little girl. In the cold winter, the stove is the heart of the home, heating the long winter nights, cooking the delicious soups, bread and oatmeal made by Mama, and providing a window into a magical place of wildlife. This lyrical story mentions Windigo, the ice monster, who cannot harm the family thanks to the wood-burning warmth of the Range Eternal.

"The stove was constant, saving me," Erdrich wrote. "The monster's snow fingers could not grasp through its heat."

Both books focus on family support and love, overcoming fear, and growth.



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POLITICAL MATTERS: Native Issues in the Halls of Government – by Mordecai Specktor

editor@ajwnews.com

Election chaos

Did you watch the Sept. 29 presidential debate? Why are people surprised that a debate involving the Orange Hitler would descend into vituperation and chaos? Didn't folks know going in that Trump would lie about everything? He's an ignoramus in every area of public policy; and his record as president now includes more than 200,000 Americans dead from COVID-19 (he admitted to publicly downplaying the threat from the lethal virus) and the U.S. economy in shambles.

Of course, Pres. Dumbass didn't forthrightly condemn white supremacy when the question was put to him by debate moderator Chris Wallace. The White Power faction is Trump's base, and he's counting on heavily armed racists and bigots across the land to intimidate people showing up at the polls on Election Day.

Long story short: Trump is promoting civil war. He seems to think that social strife serves his reelection campaign, which, in this moment of activism for racial justice, stresses "law and order," i.e., heightened police repression.

Trump, as he did in 2016, asserts without any evidence that the election will be "rigged" and that he won't necessarily accept the results.

"Well, we're going to have to see what happens," Trump said at a White House press conference, on Sept. 23. "You know that I've been complaining very strongly about the ballots, and the ballots are a disaster."

Trump, who himself votes absentee, continued: "We'll want to have – get rid of the ballots and you'll have a very – we'll have a very peaceful – there won't be a transfer, frankly. There'll be a continuation."

And in early September, Trump told his supporters in North Carolina to vote twice – mail in a ballot and then try to cast a vote in person on election day. The election board in North Carolina was compelled to release a statement the following day, pointing out that "it is illegal to vote twice in an election" and that state law "makes it a Class 1 felony," according to The New York Times.

The Times reported: "Elections officials in North Carolina also hinted that the president himself could have committed a crime, stating that 'attempting to vote twice in an election or soliciting someone to do so also is a violation of North Carolina law.'"

The Republican game plan

The Republican game plan in 2020 is voter suppression. In 2016 and 2018,

I wrote columns about attempts to suppress the vote in Indian Country. In my February 2016 "Political Matters" column, I talked with an attorney for the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), who was involved in a lawsuit trying to overturn North Dakota's 2013 and 2015 voter ID laws. The laws established in NoDak specified that only certain types of IDs are acceptable at polling places; and in many cases, tribal members do not possess IDs that meet the strict standards imposed by the new laws.

On June 4, 2020, the Native American Voting Right Coalition, which was founded by NARF, released a report, "Obstacle at Every Turn: Barriers to Political Participation Faced by Native American Voters." The report was based testimony taken at nine public hearings held in 2017 and 2018, which attempted "to better understand how Native American are systematically and culturally kept from fully exercising their franchise."

The 176-page report provides "detailed evidence that Native people face obstacles at every turn in the electoral process: from registering to vote, to casting votes, to having votes counted. Some of these findings affect non-Natives as well. Many are particular to the Indian Country experience in 2020. Some were put in place specifically to suppress turnout."

You can find the complete report at: bit.ly/narf-obstacles.

The introduction and summary of the report explains that the approximately 6.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States today (likely an undercount) are a small segment of the total U.S. population, but "they are increasing in population, and they are often concentrated in communities that make them a political force. In fact, Native American voters have made a difference in elections for both political parties in numerous states. They are regularly determinative in the Dakotas, Alaska, and parts of the Southwest. They are determinative in Congressional districts in an even greater number of states. Perhaps this ability to 'swing' elections has made them the target of voter suppression tactics in communities that are not used to Native Americans flexing their political power."

I encourage the beautiful and intelligent readers of "Political Matters" to vote by Nov. 3, and kick out the scoundrel in the Oval Office, along with those who have enabled this sorry state of affairs.



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"We stood our ground for a good three hours, and eventually they all left," Roe said.

In a stunning reversal in mid-September, state troopers and Hennepin County sheriff's deputies were patrolling the encampment, keeping out an undesirable element of drug use and sales and sex-trafficking attempts, Roe said.

Roe said Bjorgo has a roster of people from the original encampment near MIWRC who belong at the Wall. Others are discouraged from coming, Roe said.

"Once we got started and got services coming in, medical and people with housing and other advocates, and regular meals, security, we started getting calls from other agencies asking if we had more space.

"I was like, you have GOT to be kidding me."

The current Wall contained around 125 people at its maximum population, Roe said. It's down to around 30-40 clients, now, he said.

He's determined to keep it from becoming a media sideshow and the homeless hot spot it became in 2018, where at least two people died, several cases of the staph infection MRSA were recorded due to the cramped side-by-side conditions of over 300 people, and rampant, open heroin and opioid use was common, along with fights and other disruption including disputes over who was in charge.

At that camp, social services advocates weren't welcome, and even threatened, Roe said. At this one, they are more than welcome, and encouraged.

Signs are up prohibiting pictures of the campers and media swarms.

Even the tipi that became the symbol of the 2018 camp and which was erected at this encampment, too, is no longer welcome, Roe said.

"People were in there shooting up. We told the people who put it up it was OK if they stayed with it and guarded it, but, no, they left. We told them we want it taken down."

Roe became emotional when describing the current situation.

"These campers, these are people from the neighborhood with families. Grandmothers who are mothers of mothers with babies. Whole families," he said.

Roe said he's grateful to people like American Indian Movement activist Mike Forcia (Bad River Ojibwe), and Michael Goze (Ho-Chunk) director of the American Indian Housing Development Corporation in Minneapolis, and their crews, for providing security and safety at this encampment.

Through a partnership with the Red Lake Ojibwe Nation and social services agency Avivo, 63 people have been moved to a hotel in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, a suburb 20 miles north for a three-month stay.

"We go by with our master list every time more beds become available and

ask if they're ready to go," Roe said. "Our goal is to get them out of here, and not let it get out of hand like in 2018. It's not ideal, I don't like taking our people out of the city, out of their home, to the outskirts like that, where if you don't have transportation, which most people don't, you're stuck. But it beats this."

Roe wishes more Natives would become involved with helping the Native homeless population.

"To the doctors, lawyers and other successful business people, people like that who have made it to the other side, get involved with the community. We've got to take care of ourselves."

Roe was touched by the contributions of a Somali woman who has been donating 100 home-cooked meals daily.

"She doesn't want any recognition. She comes from a community herself

that has been down and profiled, getting the short end of the stick, a lot of stigma. For a community member to do that is really touching. We had a guy come and drop off a whole cord of wood.

"This is hard work coming out here every day," said Roe, who quarantined at home a few days before testing negative for the coronavirus. "This runs totally on volunteers. Most of us have regular 9-5 Monday through Friday jobs and come out here when we can. Some of our women and other vulnerable relatives can still come under attack at night. That's when we need people."

And unlike 2018, when the Wall and its problems only multiplied over months, the aim now is the opposite.

"Our ultimate goal is to close this camp. I'd like to see it gone within two weeks," Roe said.

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IHB launches programs on Sexual Health and Education

BY HANNAH BROADBENT

If you've been at any bus stops, light rail stations or any high-traffic area in South Minneapolis you've probably noticed Indian Health Board (IHB) sponsored flyers that read "Honor Your Body and Your Culture". These flyers are part of a much larger effort to normalize the conversation around sex.

"Through boarding schools and assimilation our ideas of sexuality were influenced by Christianity and colonization and many stories and teachings have been lost," said Community Health Educator for IHB, Delilah Robb, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

She said sexual health and education includes a wide array of topics like body image, gender identity, sexual orientation, reproductive health, love and affection.

"Honor Your Body and Culture' means by protecting yourself you are honoring your body and self which aligns with American Indian cultural values," Robb said.

IHB held listening sessions and interviewed 13 community members, including adults and children, to find common

themes around the perception of sexual health in the Indian Community. IHB stated their goal is to bring sexual health awareness to the American Indian Community in a way that is not intimidating or shameful. Robb says that with that awareness IHB hopes to provide more education and to increase sexual healthcare services like STD testing and birth control.

There were two listening sessions, one with youth and one with adults, where the attendees were asked questions around sexual health. Some questions like "How would you like to get information around sexual health?" prompted the same answer from both groups, "traditional stories" and "clinic". Other questions about barriers in communication varied from parents to youth.

Robb said the listening sessions helped her, as the Community Health Educator, understand the community's sexual healthcare needs and opinions. She said community driven health promotion and prevention should be the heartbeat of all community work especially when working with the American Indian community.

"We are incorporating what we learned from the listening session into



Delilah Robb is the Community Health Educator for the IHB in Minneapolis.

practice by incorporating cultural activities and teachings into lessons and by holding space to talk openly about sexual health and all related topics," Robb said.

The initial goal was to share the listening session findings, print campaign and videos at an event in April at a community even in April but Covid-19 forced Robb to release the information digitally. Despite the initial setback, IHB will still be hosting online education classes for parents and youth.

Youth Circle will be held once a

month throughout the 2020-2021 school year for 11 to 17-year-olds. Parent Circle will be held twice a month October-December and will help parents and caregivers learn and share ideas about how to navigate and teach sexual health education to their children. Both groups will be lead by Robb.

"Sexuality is a part of each one of us and it's not something to feel ashamed about," Robb said. "Traditional stories and teachings give us lessons on how to be in harmony with ourselves and others, but they also teach respect and truth. I try to incorporate traditional knowledge and teaching as much as possible in my groups."

To register for Youth Circle, see: <https://forms.gle/jAAmnNVrgSLr4y696>

For the Parent Circle, see: <https://forms.gle/dC8d3TPiRQh2pA398>.

For more information about education groups and classes, contact Delilah Robb at 612-721-9879 or Delilah.Robb@indianhealthboard.com

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