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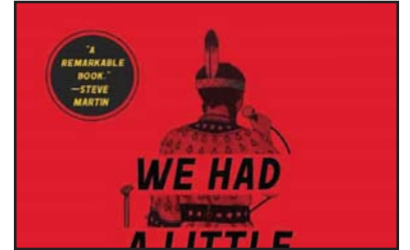
page 4

Supreme Court to consider the
constitutionality of ICWA



page 5

Book review: We Had A Little
Real Estate Problem



page 13

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MARCH 2022 • VOLUME 43, ISSUE 3

FREE

Augsburg launches full tuition scholarships for Natives



Augsburg University announced in mid-February that it is starting an American Indian Recognition Full Tuition Program that will be available for U.S. and Canadian Native and First Nation students.

BY LEE EGERSTROM

Starting this fall with the 2022-23 school year, Native American students will have a first in the nation opportunity to receive full tuition scholarships at a private university.

Augsburg University announced in mid-February that it is starting an American Indian Recognition Full Tuition Program that will be available for U.S. and Canadian Native and First Nation students.

Unlike most Native-oriented scholarship programs that are usually not full tuition, the Augsburg program will be available to enrolled members of federally recognized American Indian tribes, Alaskan Native Village, or Canadian First Nation communities. More than that, it will also be available for direct descendants – children and grandchildren – of enrolled and tribally recognized members.

Native students like all other Americans can receive full tuition scholarships at private colleges and universities all across America. But these are for atypical students such as National Merit Scholars and others who bring special talents and status to the campus.

Augsburg President Paul Pribbenow told *The Circle* that Augsburg's location in Minneapolis plays a role in the university's commitment to Native and Indigenous students.

That includes recognizing "the land we inhabit was stewarded for generations by the

Dakota and Ojibwe peoples; our proximity to the urban core of Native peoples in Minneapolis; our Lutheran Christian faith tradition that calls us to serve our neighbors, and our commitment to ensuring that all deserving students have the means to pursue a higher education to improve their lives and those of the communities from which they come," he said.

Augsburg's location in the Cedar-Riverside area of Minneapolis is close to the American Indian Cultural Corridor and the Minneapolis American Indian Center along Franklin Avenue. Those are cultural ties that Native students at Augsburg appreciate, said Robert Gould, vice president for Strategic Enrollment Management.

Gould said the Augsburg program was developed from listening to students. "They would stop by to talk to me, and tell me their experiences." This listening to students focus, he said, "is where education is going but isn't where it has been."

There are numerous scholarship programs at colleges and universities that strive to bring diversity to campuses and classrooms. What makes Augsburg's new program especially unique is that it is open to Indigenous people from outside Minnesota and includes Canada.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 –

Rising health needs drive U's effort to draw Native students to med school



Dr. Arne Vainio sees a patient at the Min-No-Aya-Win Human Services Clinic on the Fond du lac reservation. (Photo by Ivy Vainio.)

BY DAN KRAKER/MPR NEWS

Medical student Fred Blaisdell has a few months to go before anyone calls him doctor, but the Oneida Nation tribal member has already learned one lesson around the importance of Native physicians serving Native patients. During a recent psychiatry rotation at a Minneapolis clinic, he introduced himself to a patient who lit up when she heard him speak Ojibwe.

"After that, the patient really opened up and started to talk about a lot more things that she hadn't really engaged with us before," recalled Blaisdell, 27, who's from the Detroit area but chose the University of Minnesota's medical school in Duluth for its national reputation training doctors from Native populations.

School leaders say the need for doctors like Blaisdell is huge and growing in an era of COVID-19 and other health worries. It's led the university to launch a new effort to boost the number of Native physicians and other care workers in Minnesota and across the country.

Last year, nearly 21,000 stu-

dents graduated from medical schools in the United States. Only 160 of those new doctors – fewer than 1 percent – were Native American.

"It's not just physicians, right? We don't have enough Native PAs (physician assistants). We don't have enough Native nurses. We don't have enough Native pharmacists," said Dr. Mary Owen, director of the U's Center of American Indian and Minority Health. "We tend to work in teams, so it's hugely important that we develop all these different health professions."

'I talk to newborn babies about medical school'

Owen and others seeking to recruit Native students for medical schools say part of the challenge is to create better pathways between two-year tribal colleges and four-year institutions.

"Students have a history of feeling like the university isn't for them. They doubt that jobs are for them, because they don't see themselves in careers," said Anna Fellegly, vice president for academic affairs at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minn.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 –

3 – News Briefs

10 – Sports: Krisalyn Seelye

12 – Health/Arnie Vainio, MD

5 – Financial aid/Augsburg

11 – Political Matters

15 – It Ain't Easy Being Indian



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TRIBES REACH \$590 MILLION OPIOID SETTLEMENT

Cleveland, OH (AP) – Native American tribes have reached settlements over the toll of opioids totaling \$590 million with drugmaker Johnson & Johnson and the country's three largest drug distribution companies, according to a court filing in U.S. District Court in Cleveland, which lays out the broad terms of the settlements with Johnson & Johnson and distribution companies AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson. Some details are still being hashed out.

All federally recognized tribes in the U.S. will be able to participate in the settlements, even if they did not sue over opioids.

More than 400 tribes and intertribal organizations representing about 80 percent of tribal citizens have sued over opioids. Each tribe could decide whether to participate but would be required to use the money to deal with the opioid epidemic.

The deal would take effect when 95 percent of the tribes with lawsuits against the companies agree to the settlement, said Tara Sutton, a lawyer whose firm is representing 28 tribes.

The drugs, including both prescription drugs such as OxyContin and illicit ones including heroin and fentanyl, have been linked to more than 500,000 deaths in the U.S. in the past two decades.

SERVICE PROVIDERS LACK RESOURCES TO SERVE NATIVE SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Seattle, WA – The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) released a report highlighting the experiences of direct-service providers who work with Native survivors of violence. The report, developed in partnership with the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), highlights available resources and ways programs,

communities, legislators, and funders can better support Native survivors.

The report reveals a number of factors to address and meet the needs of Native survivors, including centering culture as a core part of service; increased access to housing and stability; direct legal representation; improved flexibility of grant funds; expanded LGBTQ2S+ services; and including Native youth and men in community prevention.

The report is accompanied by an Indigenous evaluation framework, which is intended for programs and service providers to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and community-centered practices into their care, and ways to collect more accurate data regarding Native people.

"It is an important time for our communities to have access to these resources," said Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), director of UIHI. "More than 730,000 Native women are impacted by violence every year in the United States. It's going to take action by Native and non-Native groups for our communities to begin healing."

The report comes in light of the bipartisan reintroduction of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which is now in the Senate, and other congressional bills, which would expand resources for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In 2021, Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal introduced the Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA), which would develop national standards around the care for survivors of sexual assault and expand access to sexual assault examination services, including to Native communities.

"As a survivor myself, I am dedicated to ensuring Native communities have access to the resources and services they need," said Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), director of UIHI. "VAWA

and SASCA are great starts, but as our reports highlight, there is a lot more work to do to serve Native survivors of sexual violence. We can and should do more to help our communities heal."

The report can be found at: <https://www.uihi.org/resources/building-the-sacred-an-indigenous-evaluation-framework-for-programs-serving-native-survivors-of-violence>

THOMAS STILLDAY AWARDED 2022 FPF CULTURAL CAPITAL FELLOWSHIP

Bemidji, MN – Watermark Art Center has chosen Master Beader and Exhibiting Artist Thomas Stillday (Red Lake Nation - Obaashing Community) for the 2022 First People's Fund "Cultural Capital Fellowship." The First People's Fund (FPF) fellowships are designed for artists and culture bearers who are deeply rooted in their communities and are committed to passing on ancestral knowledge and cultural practices within their tribal communities. Their work exemplifies the rich cultural diversity and highly sophisticated nature of Indigenous art practices today.

Stillday has devoted himself to designing, creating, and advancing his skills and visibility for 40 years. His progression as a beading artist began at age 13 with instruction from his grandmother. While he has developed his own distinct and personal style of work, his art honors the traditional beading techniques, designs and concepts given to him by his elders. His commitment to 'making' is important to the collective voice and continuing history of the Ojibwe cultural arts. Beginning March 17 and continuing for 10 weeks, Stillday will lead a drop-in beading circle for all skill levels at Watermark at no charge.

For more information on the First People's Fund Fellowships, see FirstPeoplesFund.org.

For more information on Watermark Art Center or to view Stillday's 2020 exhibit *Wezhichigewaad*, visit WatermarkArtCenter.org.

REBUILDING TOGETHER MN ACCEPTS APPLICATIONS FOR FREE HOME REPAIRS

St. Paul, MN – Qualified homeowners throughout the Twin Cities can receive free home upgrades to help them live safe in their home longer, thanks to Rebuilding Together Minnesota's Safe at Home Program. Applications are now being accepted until April 1, 2022 for work to take place later in the year.

The nonprofit manages the necessary home updates through professional contractors and/or skilled volunteers to prevent accidents such as installing grab bars, handrails, accessibility ramps and motion lighting. In addition, the organization is now offering free roof repairs thanks to new grant money.

"The work our teams do allow homeowners to live safe in their homes for a longer period of time, extending their quality of life and peace-of-mind," said Kathryn Greiner, executive director of Rebuilding Together Minnesota. "Since our start in 1997, we have rehabilitated more than 1,300 area homes, investing more than \$7 million in needed improvements."

To qualify for assistance, applicants must own and reside in their home for at least two years, live at certain household income level and have one household member who is at least 55-years-old or someone living with a disability.

To apply or to learn more, visit www.rtmn.org, click on the "Apply for Help" tab, then "Safe at Home Program" and download an application at the bottom of that page, or call 651-776-4273. Applications can be completed online or completed by hand and mailed by April 1, 2022.

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Director named to lead Missing/Murdered Indigenous Relatives office

The director of Minnesota's new Office of Missing And Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) has been named. Juliet Rudie, a tribal member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community and lifelong Minnesota resident, will lead the first office of its kind in the nation.

The MMIR office will be housed in the Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs (DPS-OJP) and will focus on missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. The office will work with the 11 sovereign tribal nations in Minnesota; federal, state, and local law enforcement; federal and state agencies; and community-based organizations and advocates. Additional staff for the office will be hired as well.

Rudie's career in public safety spans almost 28 years. She began as a patrol officer with the Saint Paul Police Department in 1990, later serving as a sergeant assigned to various divisions including Juvenile Investigations, Missing Persons, and the Director of Training. Rudie joined the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office in 2011, serving as an Inspector, Undersheriff of the Administration Division and Chief Deputy.

"The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office continues the work of addressing the root causes of the epidemic of violence faced by Native women, girls, and two-spirit relatives," said Governor Tim Walz. "Ms. Juliet Rudie brings a wealth of experience to this role and this office to help coordinate the efforts of tribal nations, law enforcement, federal and state agencies, and communities, so we can ultimately end this crisis."

"For far too long, Native women and girls, men and boys, and two-spirit relatives have been disproportionately impacted by violence. It is through generations of advocacy from elders, mothers, sisters, and friends that we are able to launch the first-of-its-kind Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office, now under the leadership of Ms. Juliet Rudie," said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (Ojibwe). "We have made critical strides in the last few years in Minnesota to better address and disrupt these cycles of violence, and I look forward to the MMIR Office making more progress under the direction of Ms. Rudie."

"We need to shine a light on the epidemic of missing and murdered



Juliet Rudie, a tribal member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community and lifelong Minnesota resident, will lead the MMIR office, the first of its kind in the nation.

Indigenous people and seek justice for Native Americans," said DPS Commissioner John Harrington. "Ms. Rudie will lead the work of this new office to promote the empowerment of Native American women and pursue

safeguards for Native American women, relatives, and children. The programs and services will foster safety, equity, healing, civil and human rights of Indigenous peoples and communities in Minnesota."

The first-in-the-nation MMIR office was a recommendation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force, which found that while Native Americans make up 1 percent of Minnesota's population, they account for approximately 9 percent of all murdered girls and women in the state during the last decade. Anywhere from 27 to 54 Indigenous women and girls were missing in Minnesota in any given month from 2012 to 2020.

Legislation to establish the MMIR office was signed into law by Governor Tim Walz in 2021. The office will also help develop and implement future legislation and transformative social justice policies.

Rudie begins her new duties as director of the MMIR Office on Feb. 28.

For more information on the work of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, see: ojp.dps.mn.gov.

DOI Solicits Nominations for Secretary's Tribal Advisory Comm.

In remarks at the National Congress of American Indians 2022 Executive Council Winter Session in February, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced that the Department is requesting nominations for Tribal member representatives for the new Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC).

The STAC, which was announced as part of the 2021 White House Tribal Nations Summit, will ensure Tribal leaders have direct and consistent contact and communication with the current and future Department officials to facilitate robust discussions on intergovernmental responsibilities, exchange views, share information and provide advice and recommendations regarding Departmental programs and funding that impact Tribal nations.

"Tribes deserve a seat at the decision-making table before policies are made that impact their communities. The creation of this new Advisory Committee is a timely and much-needed development that will ensure Tribal leaders can engage at the highest levels of the Department on the issues that matter most to their people," said Secretary Haaland. "I encourage Tribal leaders to

submit their nominations to ensure we have the best representation possible as we begin this new chapter of Tribal engagement at the Department."

The STAC will be composed of a Tribal member representative from each of the 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs Regions, and one alternate member. The members will be appointed on a staggered term for up to two years. The Secretary, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, will designate one member of the STAC to serve as chairperson.

Members should be an elected or designated Tribal official who is qualified to represent the views of the Tribes in the respective BIA Region for which they are being nominated.

The names of each nominated STAC member and alternate must be submitted to the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs via e-mail to oiea@ios.doi.gov in an official letter from the Tribe by Monday, May 9, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

For more info, see their website at: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/iea/tribal-affairs/about-stac/index.html>

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More than financial aid for Natives and Indigenous students at Augsburg

BY LEE EGERSTROM

The launch of the full tuition financial aid program for Native American and Indigenous students at Augsburg University in February (see cover story in this issue) strengthens a circle of support and relevant academic programs at the private university that has been evolving over decades.

"This has been developing for a long time, since the late 1970s and mid-1980s," said Dr. Eric Buffalohead, associate professor and chair of the American Indian, First Nations and Indigenous Studies program.

With the nearby public University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, other University branches around the state, and Minnesota State colleges and universities, private Augsburg helps make Minnesota a core national center and leader in educating Native students, he said.

"Minnesota is really in a good place," he said. "There are Natives all around us. Go in any direction. Minnesota's (11 federally recognized) tribes are surrounded by tribes in Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Iowa, Nebraska, Montana ... anywhere you look."

Buffalohead, a Ponca from Oklahoma with degrees from the University of Minnesota, has been at Augsburg since 1999. Its long-standing American Indian Studies program was expanded a year ago to become American Indian, First Nations and Indigenous Studies to attract more students and enlarge diversity within the program.

"We want to be more engaged with our neighbors North and South," he said in reference to Canada's First Nations tribal identities and Indigenous peoples across the Americas. That is because Augsburg can, given its private, Lutheran Church affiliated standing.

Most public, taxpayer-supported institutions have limitations on financial assistance programs for out-of-state residents. State boundaries don't restrain Augsburg.

Financial aid is an enormous hindrance for Native students, Buffalohead said. But money isn't the only barrier for students to get private educations and complete degrees in a timely fashion.

Augsburg has academic programs appealing to Native students and programs especially tailored for future tribal and ethnic leaders. It's Master in arts and leadership program, for instance, has been around for three decades.

At the same time, Augsburg has support programs for Native students in the here and now. American Indian Support Services, created in 1978 to recruit and retain Native students, has

recently expanded with parallel programs for other ethnic and under-served demographic student group.

Augsburg boasts that it is a national model and gives the university one of the highest retention and graduation rates for Indian students in the state.

"I hate seeing good students take eight years to get a four-year degree. I've known too many students try to take full-time (academic) loads while working 35 hours a week," he said.

Such experiences make securing a private education, with smaller class sizes and more person-to-person contact with professors, especially challenging for students from minority and lower-income groups.

These reasons, dramatized by Augsburg's location in the middle of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and surrounded by ethnic neighborhoods on Minneapolis' South side, have prodded Augsburg to respond to these student needs.

The American Indian Support Services help with guidance counseling for admissions, applications, for securing financial aid, and for orientation and registration. Beyond getting in the door, academic advising and career counseling is offered for developing education plans, for choosing coursework, and, when needed, with intervention and crisis counseling.

There is also community and professional referral support as students prepare to graduate and go out the door.

While Native and Indigenous student numbers still remains at only 2.8 percent of Augsburg's enrollment, support services and financial aid have produced success. Augsburg counts more than 200 American Indian students among its graduates and has about 80 students enrolled either full- or part-time most years from more than 20 tribal nations.

That, Buffalohead said, should change in the future. "Our enrollment should go up when we can get past the COVID pandemic. Some of our students want the person-to person contact for our courses and that isn't always possible," he said.

There is nothing unique about that across academia. Nor across the ethnic landscapes where many in Native and Indigenous communities want to retain close, personal ties. The Buffalohead family is no exception.

The Buffaloheads have a blues band, called Blue Dog, which includes Eric as an instrumentalist; his wife, Joni, as lead singer; and daughter Alexandra, an instrumentalist and singer. They and band member companions have a 2019 album, Take a Stand, nominated for the 2021-2022 Native American Music Awards' Best Blues Recording award.

Dr. Joni Buffalohead, a veteran administrator at health-related programs with American Indian groups and supportive organizations in Minnesota, is beginning a new position with the Minnesota Department of Education in March.

Daughter Alex, a former Augsburg basketball player and recent Master of Arts graduate at the University of St. Thomas, is the arts and cultural engagement manager for the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) in the Native American Cultural Corridor, on Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis.

Mother and daughter are enrolled members of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate – two more firm links with the Native community in the Twin Cities and larger Upper Midwest area.

"We really miss the interaction with people because of COVID. It makes it hard to play gigs" and difficult for normal interaction with students at Augsburg, he said.

The academic program for the American Indian, First Nations and Indigenous Studies degree programs, meanwhile, combine understanding of indigenous cultures, history, language and arts, philosophy, religion, political

and social forces or situations, and legal status and sovereignty issues for American Indians.

In addition to courses within the program, related and complimentary courses in anthropology, American Indian history, religion (American Indian Spirituality and Philosophical Thought), and language in Dakota and Ojibwe are available.

Major and minor degrees in the program would be strong pre-professional undergraduate studies for law and other fields. They would be especially helpful for students wanting careers in tribal management or related nonprofit or government positions that work with tribes, Native and Indigenous peoples and groups.

Three upper-level courses for junior and senior students, for example, include Engaging Native Communities, Decolonizing Practices: Reading, Writing Research; and Indigenous Activism and Resistance in the Americas.

To learn more about the American Indian, First Nations, and Indigenous Studies at Augsburg, see: <https://www.augsburg.edu/ais>.

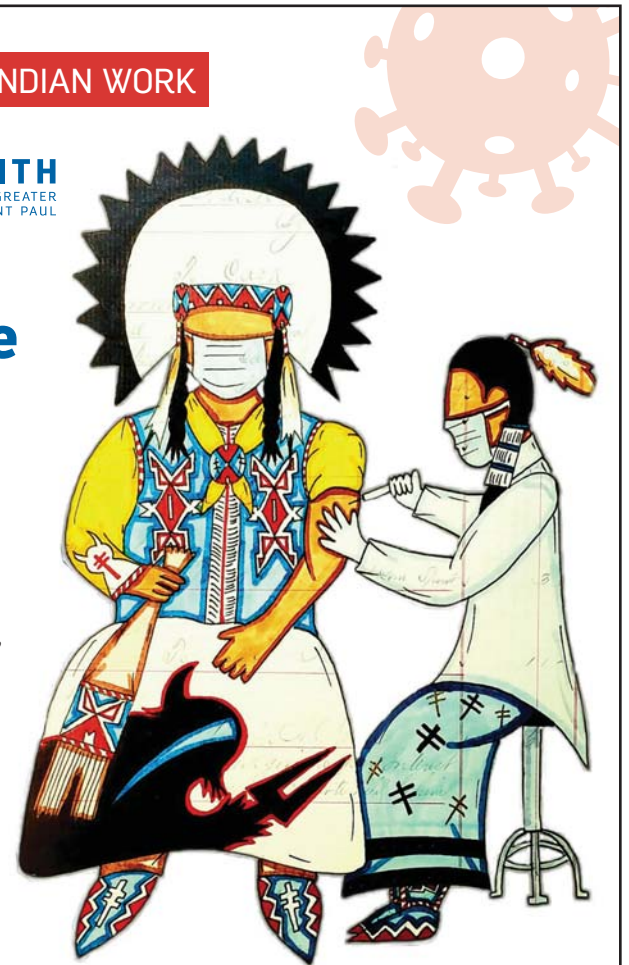
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Supreme Court to consider the constitutionality of ICWA

BY ASSOCIATE PRESS

The Supreme Court has agreed to consider the constitutionality of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) federal law which was created to rectify the displacement of Native American children from Native families and communities.

ICWA was created to stop the practice of removing hundreds of thousands of Native American children from their homes by adoption agencies and placed with White families or in group settings.

Native Americans say the law is essential to them and Native culture, and have pledged to defend it.

“We know the importance of keeping our children connected with their families, communities, and heritage. ICWA has proven itself as the gold standard of child welfare law, which is why both Republican and Democratic administrations, tribes and tribal organizations, and child welfare experts continue to defend it,” Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and three other tribal leaders said in a statement.

“We will never accept a return to a time when our children were forcibly removed from our communities, and look forward to fighting for ICWA before the Court.”



ICWA is being challenged by seven individuals and three states, led by Texas. The plaintiffs contend the law requires state officials to put aside the traditional standard of doing what is best for the child, and they say it violates the Constitution’s promise of equal protection.

“ICWA operates as a unified scheme

that places ‘Indian children’ in a disfavored position, depriving them of a placement decision based on their best interests, and instead requiring placements” based on the child’s biology, the individual plaintiffs told the court in their filing.

Non-Indian adoptive parents end up “last in line to adopt an Indian

child,” the filing said, behind a member of the child’s extended family, other members of the child’s tribe and other families “from any one of the other 573 Indian tribes, regardless of whether the tribe has any connection to the child.”

Texas said in its brief that this was a result of societal factors. “The United States and tribes make no effort,” attorneys for the state wrote in a brief, per *The Times*, “to disprove the common-sense conclusion that today, the high numbers of adoptions and fostering of Indian children are often a sign, not the cause, of the high risk of neglect, violence, gang activity, drug abuse, alcoholism and suicide among Indian children.”

Louisiana and Indiana are also among the challengers to ICWA. The law is being defended by the Biden administration and tribal leaders.

All sides asked the Supreme Court to get involved after the entire U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit delivered a 325-page ruling on the law that split evenly on some issues and included opinions from six judges.

Four cases in the fight over ICWA are being consolidated under *Haaland v. Brackeen*.

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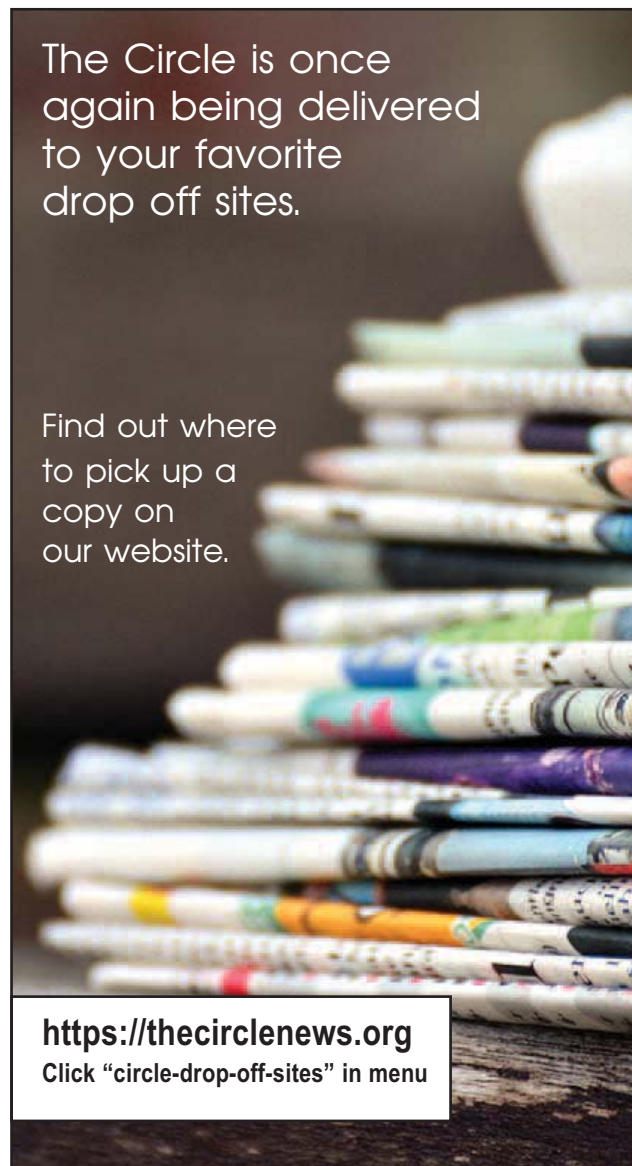
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BRING **HER** HOME

A TWIN CITIES **PBS** ORIGINAL



A New Film from Twin Cities PBS Explores the Epidemic of Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women in the U.S.

At the root of the new Twin Cities PBS film, *Bring Her Home*, is a startling fact: Native women make up less than 1% of the U.S. population, yet face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average. Premiering as part of Women's History programming in March, the documentary explores this little-discussed human rights issue by following the stories of three Native women as they seek justice and honor for their murdered and missing relatives. Artist Angela Two Stars, activist Mysti Babineau and Representative Ruth Buffalo have all experienced and coped with the enduring trauma of colonization in their Indigenous communities. Within the framework of participating in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Rally and March, an annual community event honoring missing Native women, the film tells the stories of how these women have brought attention to the crisis while also providing encouragement to their communities.



Mysti Babineau, Head of Security at 5th Annual Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women March, Minneapolis, MN
Photo by: Anna Jean Williams

According to the film's award-winning director, Leya Hale, Indigenous people continue to suffer from the effects of colonization, systemic oppression, and trauma - and the epidemic of murdered and missing Native women is a direct result of U.S. Federal Indian Policies.

As the fight for social justice continues to accelerate in this country, it is important for Indigenous people and allies to encourage and support Indigenous women like Angela Two Stars, Mysti Babineau and Representative Ruth Buffalo, who are fighting to bring awareness to this ongoing epidemic while reclaiming Indigenous women's strength and status. Although the film is punctuated by stories of pain and loss, Hale, who is from the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and Diné Nations, strives to offer

stories of hope, resilience and healing that suggest a path forward for Indigenous communities roiled in this epidemic.

Many prayers and traditional practices went into the making of *Bring Her Home*. "I have made it my top priority to incorporate traditional medicines into our overall production to protect the wellbeing of participants and to encourage our production team to remain committed to telling these stories with compassion and respect," Hale says.

Watch the premiere of BRING HER HOME locally on TPT 2 on March 21, as well as on PBS stations across the country.



Major funding provided by



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Most public university financial support programs across America are restricted to in-state residents. Most programs at private universities and colleges are not wide open for Indigenous people but rather are directed at students who meet targeted admission criteria.

With Augsburg's new program, Minnesota educational institutions are emerging as a national leader, and probably the nation's leader, for Indigenous educational access. There are important developments on multiple fronts that should open academic doors for Native students.

The University of Minnesota and its campuses announced in November it has started a Native American Promise Tuition Program for first-year and transfer students who are enrolled members of Minnesota's 11 federally recognized tribes.

Starting this fall, students from families earning less than \$75,000 a year will be eligible for a full tuition scholarship. Students from families with incomes up to \$100,000 will have 90 percent of their tuition covered and 80 percent for incomes up to \$125,000.

Given historical ties with government agencies and with Indian education, the University of Minnesota Morris campus has provided 6,000 tuition waivers to Minnesota Native students since 1960.

Augsburg's Gould said he has been contacted by education officials from around the country and here in Minnesota who

want to learn more about the Augsburg program. Minnesota State, the system that operates 37 public universities and colleges on 54 campuses, has several programs of assistance in place for Native students.

The Minnesota State system is the largest provider of higher education for Native students in Minnesota. Some of its enrolled students may well become tuition-free scholarship students at University of Minnesota campuses or at Augsburg.

Noelle Hawton, chief marketing and communications officer for Minnesota State, said there is no system-wide program intended mainly or exclusively for Native American students. However, Minnesota has programs at greatly assist Native students at the Minnesota State campuses.

One is a new program, the Minnesota Future Together grant program, called a "last-dollar-in, full tuition and fee grant program that is available for students at public and tribal institutions of higher education.

The Office of Higher Education (OHE) administers that program in addition to a special Minnesota Indian Scholarship program.

Minnesota State, meanwhile, has a special virtual transfer fair for all college students who may be considering transferring to one of the Minnesota State universities. March 22 is a specific day dedicated to a Tribal College Transfer Fair.

At Augsburg, President Pribbenow said the private university was already providing high levels of support to currently enrolled students. The initial financial aid budget increase will not be great for the full tuition scholarships.

"The new program will be folded into our institutional approach to awarding financial aid and also will be a priority for fundraising from alumni and friends..

"We are committed to increasing this support in the years ahead," he said.

Eric Jolly, president of the St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation and a member of Augsburg's Board of Regents, said in an announcement statement that the program "is groundbreaking among private universities nationwide.

"I hope this is just the first of many institutions designing creative and equitable paths to education for Native and First Nation people," he said.

Augsburg is striving to make its financial support programs more visible to prospective students and their families.

Gould, the enrollment vice president, said he doesn't expect a rush of new applicants this fall from the program.

There may be some increase with the start of a new school year this fall, he said. But more will come later when Indigenous students learn they don't have to be a Minnesota resident to qualify for the financial aid.

"It's a word-of-mouth effort" to get word to students still in high school, he said.

There is definitely room for Indigenous enrollment growth at Augsburg with its location in a multicultural neighborhood and close to the American Indian Cultural Corridor. Rachel Farris, director of public relations for Augsburg, said the university currently has 54 Native students enrolled. That represents just 2.8 percent of Augsburg's undergraduate enrollment.

Rueben Kitto Stately, a senior from both the Red Lake and Santee Sioux Nations, said in the announcement that the culture of the campus was a big selling point for his going to Augsburg. And, he added, "This part of the south side (Minneapolis) is the most concentrated urban population in the whole country."

As with most if not all financial aid programs across the nation, the Augsburg program requires applicants to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms each year. Students from families with less than \$125,000 in annual incomes will qualify for free tuition after state and federal financial aid have been applied.

It will also cover 100 percent of tuition and fees above estimated family contributions for students from families with more than \$125,000 in annual income.

Details and eligibility criteria can be found at Augsburg.edu/american-indian-recognition. The deadline to apply for fall enrollment is May 1 and Dec. 1 for next spring enrollment.

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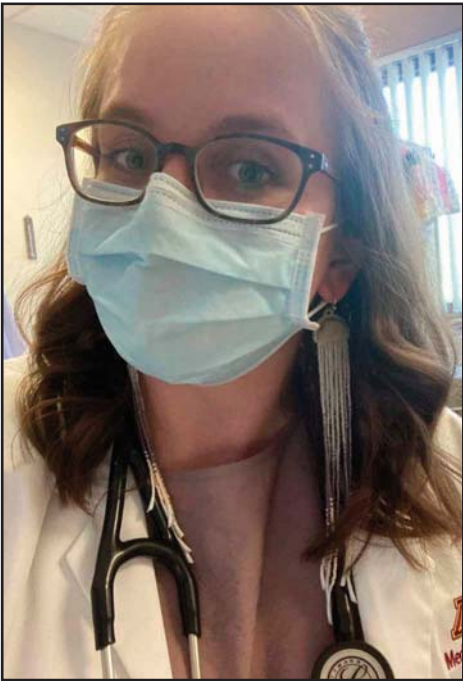
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This project described was supported by Grant Number 90EV0459-02-00 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Left: Fred Blaisdell is a member of the Oneida Nation from the Detroit Area. He received his white coat to start medical school at the University of Minnesota Duluth. (Photo courtesy of Fred Blaisdell.)

Above: Genevieve Bern during a medical school rotation. (Photo courtesy of Genevieve Bern.)

“And so it takes a different type of service to [get] the students to just allay some of that fear,” she said, “take the mystery out of processes and get the ground firmly underneath their feet.”

The work also needs to start much earlier. In Minnesota, only about 56 percent of Native high school students graduate in four years. Dr. Arne Vainio, a member of the Mille

Lacs Band of Ojibwe who has practiced on the Fond du Lac reservation for the past 24 years, said he’s always encouraged young people to pursue careers in medicine but now he starts even earlier.

“I talk to newborn babies about medical school,” he said. “The parents always listen. But I make sure that I’m talking directly to the baby about that. And, you know, let them know they have options. And then when they come in for visits, we talk about that again.”

When young people see him, a Native American doctor, it allows them to envision themselves in the same position, he said, adding that when he was a little kid, a lot of the Native men he saw were truckers. “And that’s all I wanted to be.”

He credits a group of people who always encouraged him and held him accountable. “They’re the ones that derailed my dream of being a truck driver, and I ended up in medical school instead.”

Growing doctors close to home

Owen, 56, said her journey to become a physician began when she was a patient at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, in the late 1980s. “I didn’t see any Native doctors or even Native nurses at that time,” she recalled.

A member of the Tlingit Nation in Alaska, Owen said that played a role in pushing her to go to medical school. “That anger propelled me, actually – anger at our lack of representation.”

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 –

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ALL MY RELATIONS ARTS

Steven Premo Avenues of Creation

February - April 16, 2022



Through his lifelong artistic career, multi-disciplinary artist and designer, Steven Premo (Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe), learned that there are many different avenues for creation, and each requires a particular medium. In his Twin Cities solo exhibition debut, Steve reflects his pride in his Ojibwe heritage through a variety of retrospective works highlighting narratives of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe people and the evolution of Ojibwe art forms.

“My own art is a reminder of our history and the continuation of our existence and expresses our cultural influence across the community and beyond..” -Steven Premo



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Seelye signs with NJCAA Dawson Community College (MT)

Another Cass Lake-Bena HS Panther girls' basketball player is heading out of state to play college basketball. She and her teammates are first looking forward to the 8A section tournament and a second consecutive run to the Minnesota Class A State Tournament.

Krisalyn Seelye is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. She is also a senior at Cass Lake-Bena High School and plays all positions for the 24-2 Panthers.

Seelye's mentors are her parents and her uncle Martin, who is also her head coach.

"My mom is my assistant coach," said Seelye. "She started coaching me and a lot of the girls on our team when we were in the fourth grade. She has been through it all with us. Whenever I have a bad day or bad game, my mom corrects me. She never degrades me for my wrong doings, she helps me fix them. She is my biggest support system, I can run to her for anything."

"Watching her grow on and off the court has been amazing," said mom Kristin Brown. "I got to experience a lot with Krisalyn which I know is a parent's dream."

"She makes me so proud to be her mother and her coach. She will be moving on to play college ball next year. I truly believe she will do great things, and if you know Krisalyn she has goals both in the classroom and on the court and with her determination she will reach them."

Krisalyn also talked about her dad being a mentor: "My dad is another one of my biggest supporters. He never fails to express how proud I make him. He loves



Krisalyn Seelye recently signed her national letter of intent to attend National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Dawson Community College in Glendive, MT next school year. (Photo by Peyton Premo.)

watching us girls play ball, he's also watched us grow from the fourth grade. My dad has advice for any and everything, I am extremely thankful for him."

"Krisalyn has always had the ability to adapt to her surroundings on and off the basketball court," said dad Nathan Seelye. "Along with all of the other

extraordinary qualities that she hold in her possession, Krisalyn is capable of doing so many great things, not only for herself but, for her community and her loved ones as well."

"I believe Krisalyn is a young woman whose name will soon ring across this entire nation for showcasing her accomplishments of hard work and dedication and that right there is what truly makes me proud as a father."

"Uncle Martin just started coaching my sophomore year, our first year, and we had a good season," Seelye said. "Didn't make it to state, but we knew that was the plan for the following year. Last year we made it to state, and I've never seen him so proud. He does a lot for us girls and is truly one of the best coaches out there. He only wants the best for us and he works every day and pushes us to become better athletes and people."

Seelye recently signed her national letter of intent to attend National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Dawson Community College in Glendive, MT next school year. Romeo Lagmay Jr. is the head women's basketball coach.

Dawson CC recently lost to North Dakota State College of Science in the NJCAA Region XIII tournament to end their season at 20-12.

Dawson Coach Lagmay Jr. said about Krisalyn's signing, "Krisalyn is a hooper. Her game is displayed in a variety of ways. She can attack and score beyond the arc, drive and finish on a pass or layup, play very good tenacious defense, and has solid court vision. Knowing that she comes from a winning program and mentality, Krisalyn will fit right in with our style of play and environment."

"I am from the small town of Cass Lake, MN," said Seelye. "We all act as one big family and we all support each other in whatever we choose to do. It really is a beautiful thing and I am so thankful to have grown up around such supporting people. My rez will forever be my home."

"Yes, I am going off to college in another state, but I want to continue to make my community proud. My goal is to show our youth that it is possible to make it out. Hard work and dedication is all it takes."

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

editor@ajwnews.com

Jim Denomie walks on

I was sad to learn that Jim Denomie, a very talented Anishinaabe artist, died March 1. He was from Lac Courte Oreilles (Wisc.).

Jim was a friendly, approachable guy; and his art meditated on Native history and depicted contemporary struggles, such as the resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. His paintings were bursting with color and many reflected his sly sense of humor.

A series of paintings, “They Sing Their Death Song,” depicts the mass hanging of 38 Dakota men in Mankato, Minn., on December 26, 1862, and the hanging of Shakopee and Medicine Bottle at Fort Snelling, three years after the end of the U.S.-Dakota War. Regarding this series, Robert Cozzolino, a curator at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, said, “They are powerful history paintings of our time, made with the knowledge that past and present speak to one another, talk back, argue, and ultimately strive for a future.”

Over recent years, Jim’s visionary art received greater recognition, with exhibitions in museums and galleries across the U.S. and abroad. May his memory always be a blessing for his loved ones.

Putin’s war in Ukraine

At the end of February, I turned to online periodicals and social media to follow the increasingly disturbing news from Ukraine. At this writing, the Russian dictator has unleashed artillery shells and missiles across the country, and launched a full-scale invasion.

Apart from his rhetoric about hitting military targets, Putin’s troops are targeting Ukrainian civilians – a war crime. And a few days into the conflict raging in Eastern Europe, the Ukrainians are putting up a valiant resistance to the invaders. Also, anti-war demonstrations have popped up in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other Russian cities; cops have arrested some 2,000 people.

The Irish writer James Joyce once said something like “America is the sweepings of all nations” – i.e., apart from the Native people, along with Black people whose ancestors survived the transatlantic slave trade, we’re here in the U.S. mainly because our forebears didn’t want to starve in the Old World or become cannon fodder in some insane imperial war.

With the press focus on Ukraine, I recently retrieved the original copy of my maternal grandmother’s Soviet passport – she lived in Kyiv and the

document is actually from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Some of the writing on the document is in both Ukrainian and Russian. Her name was Rebecca Levenberg, and she was 22 when she came to America in 1923. She lived through the Russian revolution, civil war and anti-Jewish pogroms (mass killings) by Cossack militia men. I should clarify that I’m not Ukrainian; my Jewish grandparents fled the killing fields of Ukraine about 100 years ago.

My grandmother’s passport has myriad immigration stamps: apparently, her escape route included Riga, Latvia; London; and Halifax, Nova Scotia. I’ll have to look again to see if there’s a U.S. immigration stamp. My paternal grandfather, Benjamin Spektor, served in the czar’s army in Siberia. He told me a little about that time when I was very young. When his father died, Ben the soldier was allowed to travel back to his hometown, Tiraspol, which is now in Moldova, for the funeral. He kept going and made his way to Canada, then entered the U.S. illegally. He was never a U.S. citizen.

While some elements of the Republican Party openly support Putin in his aggression against Ukraine – Trump called it “very savvy” and a “genius” move – another line of attack faults Biden for ostensibly weakening this country’s gas and oil production. (Some deluded folks on social media seem to think that Biden goes into the Oval Office each morning and dials up the price on gas pumps across the country.)

In fact, Putin’s war machine floats on a sea of fossil fuels, oil and natural gas, which power Western Europe and other nations. The same goes for tyrants in the oil-rich Middle East that kill political opponents and chop up their bodies.

Groups like the American Petroleum Institute are seizing on the Ukraine crisis to make a pitch for increasing oil and gas production. Of course, Native people have been resisting energy projects like the Dakota Access Pipeline, Enbridge Line 3 tar sands pipeline and other boondoggles for years. In addition to exacerbating the climate crisis and destroying our natural environment, we can see the untallied cost of fossil fuels in the depraved behavior of Vladimir Putin. The energy hard path is killing Mother Earth and all of us that depend the planet’s bounty.

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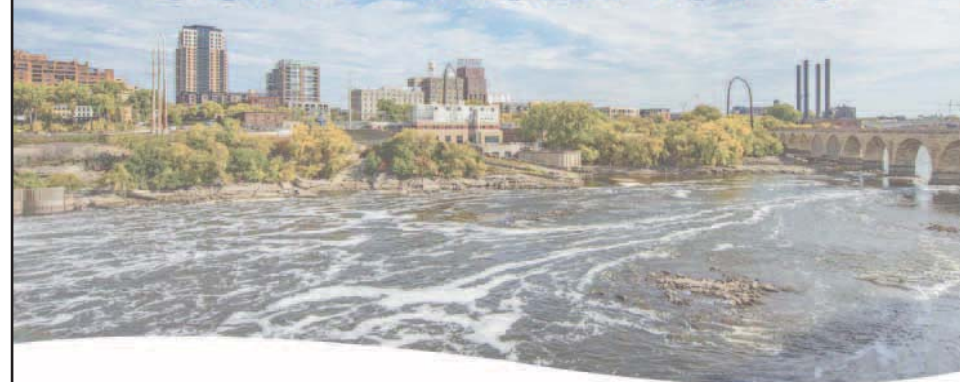
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What does it take to become a physician?



BY ARNE VAINIO, MD

I will be talking to the first year medical students at the University of Minnesota, Duluth School of Medicine. I never really know for certain what I will tell them. I get to do this every year and usually in October. I generally start by showing “Walking into the Unknown” and use that as a launching point for further discussion.

I vividly remember being a first year medical student and sitting in the front row, second seat from the right. When I first started medical school, I wasn’t even certain what each of the four years of schooling consisted of and much of it came as a surprise to me. It seemed all the other med students had a pre-existing knowledge of what was coming next and I didn’t want to show my ignorance by asking questions about things that seemed obvious to everyone else.

It occurs to me that other students may have some of the same questions and it doesn’t seem like there’s always an easy place to get answers. This is a general overview of what it takes to become a physician:

School through high school, then four years of college. The high school and college classes should have a heavy focus on writing, math and the sciences because they are preparation

for the MCAT. This is the Medical College Admission Test and the scores from this test are sent to all the medical schools applied to. The MCAT is a one day standardized test and there are four sections overall. The test is very secure and the testing center needs photo ID, takes a digital photo, takes fingerprints and only allows pencils and scratch paper they supply. The scores from the test are one of the major criteria for being accepted into medical school. College transcripts are also important as is any previous experience related to medicine in some way.

Another important part of the application is the personal statement. This is a written statement by the applicant and it tells their story and why they should be considered for admission. Reference letters are another part of the application and strong letters are important.

Most students will apply to multiple medical schools to increase their chances of an interview. Schools can easily have over a thousand applications for a relatively few seats each year and they review the applications carefully. Being invited for an interview is a major step in the right direction. Some schools have multiple interviewers at the same time and some do the interviews one on one. My interviews were one on one.

This is the opportunity to sell yourself as a future physician and this can be a difficult process for some students, especially if they come from a background where humility is a virtue.

Once in medical school, the overall structure is four years, with the first two years almost entirely in the classroom. The courses are grueling and the credit load is usually 30 credits or more. At the end of the second year of medical school is the first USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Exam) board exam and

passing this is necessary to go on to the 3rd and 4th years of medical school.

The 3rd and 4th years are doing required medical rotations in the hospitals and also in exploring specialty rotations. There is some classroom time, but much of the time is actually spent learning medicine from a practical standpoint. At the end of the 4th year is the second USMLE examination and passing this is necessary to go on to residency after graduating from medical school.

Applying to a residency program is a difficult process and it starts sometime in the 4th year of medical school. Residency is a minimum of 3 years and can be several more depending on specialties chosen. Residency programs applied to will want medical school transcripts, USMLE scores, a personal statement, letters of recommendation, medical school performance evaluations and a resume.

Residency is actually working in the hospitals and the intern is a first year resident. Usually a 3rd or 4th year resident will be in charge of the team overall. Shifts can be 24 hours long and 80-hour workweeks are not uncommon in residency. Residents get paid, but mostly just enough to live on.

On my very first day as a resident in Seattle, I was on a surgery rotation and at the end of the day; a quick game of rock, paper and scissors decided I was the resident to stay in the hospital. We had 33 patients on our service and I was constantly running up the stairwell from the Emergency Room to the post surgical ward on the sixth floor of the hospital. I took the stairs because waiting for the elevator simply took too long and there was too much work to do. I was wearing four pagers and all of them were going off constantly. I remember running up the stairs to the sixth floor to assess a post-operative patient with shortness of breath and my Emergency Room pager went off. I was totally overwhelmed, it was 3:30 AM and I remember thinking I know why people jump out of windows.

Residency includes lots of clinic work and I saw patients at the Seattle Indian Health Board. I loved working there and I quickly developed strong ties to my patients and everyone I worked with. The second and 3rd

years of residency bring more responsibility and are not as grueling as the first year. At the end of residency is the third and final USMLE exam. Passing that exam means it’s time to apply for a Physician’s license in the state of choice.

Being a new physician is just like starting over and each step of the way felt the same way to me. As I was finishing my residency, I started to get calls and letters from recruiters. It was flattering to think so many places wanted me to work for them and the Seattle Indian Health Board very much wanted me to stay on as a physician. As tempting as that was, I had made a promise to an elder to come back to Minnesota and work for my people. I did that just a bit over eighteen years ago and I’ve been working on the Fond du Lac reservation ever since.

I’ve never looked back and I’ve never wished for anything else. Every single day I work with the smartest, most compassionate and caring people I’ve ever known. I come home almost every day knowing I changed something for almost every person who walked through our doors.

I get to teach medical students and I get to guide students aiming for medical school in the right direction. Right now I’m working with five students who want to get into medical school. All of them are sincere and are looking at medicine for all the right reasons. I have had students come to spend time with me just long enough to get a letter of recommendation and I can spot those students from a mile away.

What will I tell the first year medical school class tomorrow?

Medicine has always been a calling and true happiness comes from a life of service. Watch out for those who want to do what you do, they won’t always announce themselves.

Out of tragedy springs hope. As physicians, we are often the lighthouses in a sea of tragedy. We are trusted because we walk in the footsteps of those who came before us and others will one day walk in ours.

Leave a clear trail.

Arne Vainio, M.D. is an enrolled member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and is a family practice physician on the Fond du Lac reservation in Cloquet, Minnesota. He can be contacted at a-vainio@hotmail.com.

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Nesteroff superbly blends Native comedic voices with historical record

REVIEW BY DEBORAH LOCKE

We Had a Little Real Estate Problem by Kliph Nesteroff (Simon & Schuster, 2021) examines the evolution of American Indian comedy, the many obstacles in its way, and its influence on popular culture.

Nesteroff does this by weaving first person stories of contemporary comics (including a few from Minnesota) with the country's earliest examples of comic performance, the traveling vaudeville shows.

Standout comics Will Rogers (Cherokee, 1879-1935) and Charlie Hill (Oneida, 1951-2013) are featured prominently, as well as the 1491 comedy troupe, Jonny Roberts (Ojibwe, Red Lake), the Williams and Ree comedy act, and Kiowa-Apache comic Adrienne Chalepah.

This compelling, thorough story of Indians in comedy is told in non-linear fashion about the way American Indians tore away obstacles in their quest to do standup comedy, destroy stereotypes, and forge a path for new talent.

Many of the most harmful stereotypes held by North Americans about Indians got a foothold in the film and television industry. Film producers hired non-Indian actors who then dunked their faces into buckets of red clay and water to achieve the desired look. The terms "redskin," and "squaw" were common in movie plots that presented Indians as ignorant, grammar-challenged savages.

Early television portrayals weren't much better. Nesteroff reported that during tv's early years, stations needed content and turned to B westerns for vacant time slots. The movies were popular, so Hollywood started to crank out tv westerns by the dozen. "Hopalong Cassidy," "The Cisco Kid," "The Lone Ranger," and "Davy Crockett," entertained a generation of Baby Boomers

who believed that feathers grew out of the heads of Indians. Television-watching children "hoarded coonskin hats as they enthusiastically re-created genocide during recess."

Indian parents weren't indifferent to these false and harmful stereotypes. In 1961, a Dakota mom told a reporter that she had a son, 3, who loved animated cartoons about Indians. She said that when the cartoons end, he "runs through the house pointing his cap gun and shouting, 'Bang-bang! I'm killing Indians.' It can be very embarrassing when we have visitors."

Charlie Hill, who grew up in Detroit, watched the television stereotypes with his dad, who yelled at the screen. "Those aren't Indians! Look how dumb they are! Indians – they're not like this."

Hill became critical of Native stereotypes on tv, and later of comedy teams like Allen and Rossi who were on "The Ed Sullivan Show." He decided if they could be on tv, so could he. Hill arrived in Los Angeles in 1974, performed a set with the Garden Theater Festival, joining other fledgling performers like Minnesota's Al Franken. He thought that comedy was just getting up on a stage and talking.

"But I found out right away why they call it an act," he said. "It was frightening – staring at the microphone and seeing all those strange people drinking and staring at me."

No one laughed at Hill that day. He bombed. Nesteroff shows how bombing is just a part of comic training. No one is born knowing comedy, and the road to success was not lucrative.

He wrote that new comedians paid dues in "roughshod bars, trying to entertain chain-smoking degenerates, most of whom had just lost it all at the tables. In these venues it didn't matter how well-polished your jokes, how perfect your tuxedo, how wide your grin – inevitably some devastated soul would throw a shot glass at your head."

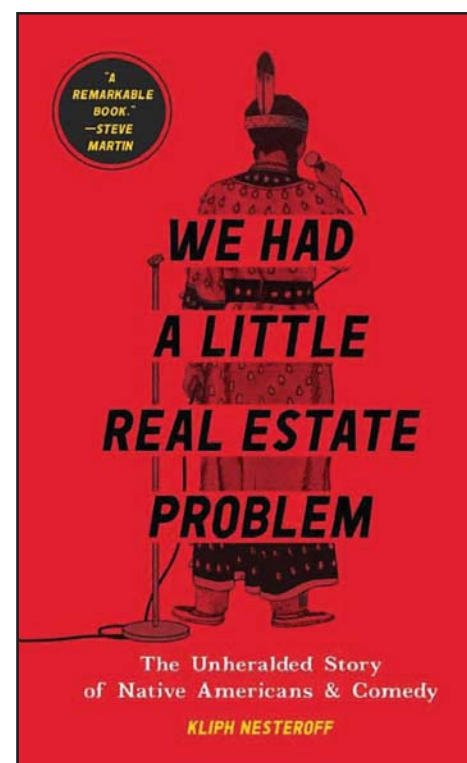
The book shows Hill's climb to the

top as the first American Indian stand-up comedian, starting with an appearance on "The Richard Prior Show." One of his signature jokes became: "I'm Charlie Hill. My people are from Wisconsin. We used to be from New York. We had a little real estate problem." Hence, the book title.

Nesteroff starts and ends the book with Jonny Roberts, a Red Lake Nation member and father of 10 children who drives five hours to Minneapolis to perform a seven minute set each month. Roberts, a former social worker on the reservation, knows he needs more experience, but he takes what he can get.

He performs at the Laugh Factory in Hollywood on a night featuring all American Indians including Will Spottedbear, Lakota. The two men walk a few blocks to the Comedy Store, where they perform. When the evening ends, they see a signed photograph of Charlie Hill on the way, the guy who forged the path they now walk. Seeing that photo was magic.

Reading this rich, powerful book casts a kind of magic spell of its own. Nesteroff does a superb job of blending comedic voices with historical record, and the result will change the way you consume popular culture.



We Had a Little Real Estate Problem
By Kliph Nesteroff
Simon & Schuster
February 16, 2021
336 pages
\$27

Boozhoo, I'm Eugene Sommers and you may remember me from the 2019 primary election where I ran for Tribal Chairman. Once again I am asking for your support. On April 5th, I will be on the ballot for the District 2 Representative position. In 2019 White Earth made changes that devastated our membership, resulting in major leadership changes in departments and the displacement of tribal employees. Transparency has always been an issue and if elected I will bring forward proposals that protect our tribal employees and hold our elected officials accountable. See more info on my candidacy at Facebook page (Eugene Sommers for D.II) and at eugenessommers.squarespace.com.

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She went on to earn her medical degree from the University of Minnesota. She then returned to Alaska to serve her tribal community. She came back to the University of Minnesota in 2014 in part to address the same issue she recognized 30 years ago.

Last year, Owen assembled hundreds of Native American health professionals for a summit on the issue. That led to the creation of regional hubs that are working to grow the number of Native health care professionals in specific areas around the country.

That's critical because some areas have more severe shortages than others. For example, she says Indian Health Service facilities in the Upper Midwest have a nearly 50 percent vacancy rate for physicians.

"I think if we can grow, if we can get more Native students from this area, through school, into practice, they're more likely to serve and stay in this

area," said Owen, who's also board president of the Association of American Indian Physicians. "We know that Native students like to go to school in areas closer to their homes."

That includes University of Minnesota medical student Genevieve Bern, who counts Vainio as a mentor. Watching how he interacts with his young patients has inspired her to also encourage young patients to pursue careers in health care.

"That's something that I hope someday I'll be able to have those conversations with Native youth," she said.

Bern, 28, grew up in Worthington, Minn. She's Native Alaskan, but she said her culture wasn't a big part of her childhood growing up. She's since enrolled in her tribe and started to learn the language, and when she graduates, she plans to work in some way with Native people.

"It's part of who I am," she said, "and it just has always felt like it's like what I'm supposed to give to my community."



Fred Blaisdell and fellow medical student Genevieve Bern volunteer at a powwow near Duluth. (Photo courtesy of Genevieve Bern.)

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A photograph showing a stack of newspapers or magazines, with the top one being 'The Circle'. The stack is on a wooden surface.

14

March 2022

The Circle: News from a Native American Perspective

<https://thecirclenews.org>



What in the bison snorts and loon shrieking is going on now? I'm rather puzzled going into WWIII without knowing how to navigate it. When it comes down to it, I am only useful as a doorstop, but I will do it with pride. We all have our parts to do to defend what is known as democracy.

My Ancestors already figured out how this can be accomplished: Let the Women Lead. And back then, they did. The males are all like, "Did you just look at me funny?" and then conflict ensues, usually ending up with the Rezberry Riders who show up only to cuff up their first cousin. Good times...good times.

Well, I am still soaking up global news even though I cut off my satellite service. Online, I can always get depressed anyway with political slurry. I wanted to be a Buddhist nun before I even understood anything. I like praying. So I told that to my last supervisor (he despises me) and he laughed and laughed.

No, I did not take offense because had I said that to my younger self I would have scoffed, too. Prolly would have laughed harder than he did. Writing this is touchy for me to share. My life has been a bacchanalia of earthly pleasures and I celebrate all of it. I really miss dancing at the clubs, hair flying, high heels and music. At least I had that before my shut-in existence to look back on and smile (or cringe) at. O Mani Pad Me Hum!

My nom de plume is "Ricey Wild" for a reason, just not a season. The odd thing is I share my world in public print but I'm still a private person. Gemini much? This is not the first time the paradox has occurred to me. Actually it took me a while to comprehend that my existence, which is questionable, means anything?

Welp! Here I am in my own little spot in Rezberry trying to figure out the entire world's problems. LOL! Not in this lifetime! First of all, no one asked me. So I say be spiritual like His

Holiness the Great XIV Dalai Lama who said no one needs religion, just be kind and loving. Hugs & Love Y'all!

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia brought up some unhealed blood trauma, visions of what was wrought upon Indigenous people around the world. All the evil of genocide, colonization and barely surviving it. You know the horrors. I feel for the citizens of Ukraine but they are standing united. The children who are fleeing while men ages 18-60 are staying to fight. Yes, I pray for them all.

Well, it took me a few days into the conflict to realize that these are white people killing white people! Now, if I was an awful person I would say, "Who cares?" White on white crime, ennit? Despite what some may say, I'm not a jerk. I have white friends and they're okay. Ayy!!! I had to get that in here.

One Native person who passes for white said I was a racist. I was all like, MOI??? Hahahhahahhaaaaa!!!! He's ignorant, poor fella, but he still takes the per-cap the tribe sends out. Hypocritical and clueless. To emphasize: The oppressed cannot be racists or the aggressors because the colonists rule the world as it is now.

Really think about it. Just recently in Canada a motley crew of pink belligerent truckers took over Ottawa to protest

vaccine mandates. Did the military come in to disperse them or jail them in dog kennels? Did the police spray them with mace or other chemical agents and dogs? Nope.

Yet in 2016 U.S. military and police, along with private companies with attack dogs, tried to evict peaceful, unarmed protesters who stood for clean water in Standing Rock, North Dakota. One may ask, what were the skin tones of the people who came from all over the globe? It was everyone, all skin colors, who knew how dire the threat was of DAPL spilling and poisoning water that millions, not just the Indigenous population, depends upon. And for what? Money.

I'm talking about natural resources. Pootin can jaw all he wants about restoring the former Soviet Union but the real deal is the land and what may be under it. Gads, I'm sick of old white men and their unending greed. What y'all gonna do with all the stolen riches you acquired? Live forever?! Hah!

Are there going to be any powwows this year? I'm really looking forward to seeing brown faces and greezy smiles at the Indian Taco stand.

I am so very lonesome for all of you and am anxiously waiting for the moment we can hug again. And dance and sing and laugh.



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