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Migizi chosen for Estee Lauder/  
Amanda Gorman WRITING CHANGE



page 3

IAAC comes to TC to increase  
indigenous representation in sports



page 6

Native Americans rally at capitol  
in support of funding bill



page 13

FREE

APRIL 2022 • VOLUME 43, ISSUE 4

FREE

## Tribal rights take giant step forward



A sign along Minnesota Highway 169 marks the borders of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation. (Photo courtesy of Mille Lacs Ojibwe.)

BY LEE EGERSTROM

Minnesota sovereign tribes' rights took giant leaps forward during March with court decisions and local government actions, but following patterns of the last century and longer, these advances remain under legal challenge.

"We won," is how Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin summed up an early March federal court ruling that said the boundaries of the Mille Lacs Reservation, established by treaty in 1855, still exist.

The ruling restores Mille Lacs Band's claim to the original 61,000 acres of land around the south end of Mille Lacs Lake that was identified in that early treaty.

Around the same time Federal Judge Susan Richard Nelson issued her 93-page ruling for Mille Lacs Band, the West Lakeland Township board voted unanimously to not appeal the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) decision that helps Prairie Island Indian Community develop land for housing in a suburban area east of St. Paul.

The BIA had announced it will support Prairie Island by placing the 112 acres of the tribe's purchased land in West Lakeland Township, in suburban Washington County, under federal trust protection. This expansion of tribally owned land for housing and commercial development is to help Prairie Island residents distance themselves from the nuclear power plant and storage of nuclear wastes

(spent rods) that are adjacent to their home reservation base near Red Wing.

Both the Ojibwe and Mdewakanton Dakota communities' rights and land spaces have been constantly under threat since original treaties were signed. Responses from nontribal members to the latest developments were predictable.

Mille Lacs County officials have said they will appeal Judge Nelson's ruling. Three West Lakeland Township residents have already filed notice they are appealing the BIA's decision to include the Prairie Island land purchase into federal trust designation.

How long either of these challenges may take to be resolved was not immediately known. The Mille Lacs Messenger newspaper, however, noted the Mille Lacs County appeal to the Eight Circuit Court could take up to a year, and you can add another year and a half to that if it goes to the U.S., Supreme Court.

But for both the Mille Lacs and Prairie Island entities, the successes marked in the first week of March have been a long time coming.

### The Mille Lacs situation

The Mille Lacs Band and Mille Lacs County have had jurisdictional disputes for much of its history. The Band held its ground sometimes with, and sometimes without, support from the federal government partner in treaty obligations.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 -

## Cohasset City Council stops Natives from testifying on mill

BY WINONA LADUKE

This is a story of how democracy is supposed to work, and how it does not. This is a story about the future of Minnesota, and if a group of white men and a southern corporation, or a Canadian corporation, can control the future, or if the systems of government, between state, federal and tribal nations will actually work. This is about Minnesota today. It is also a plea for a real multi-cultural democracy, and a respect for Indigenous peoples.

Two pictures tell the story of a system built on racism and destruction:

Here's how it works in the deep north. A group of white men shut down testimony by all the Native people who have come to a hearing and approve a project, like Kings. That's what happened in Cohasset recently. In an astonishing display of cronyism and government malfeasance, the Cohasset City Council issued its approval for the Huber OSB Processing facility, hoping to begin construction later this year.

Despite clear state law stating project review should be carried out by state-level agencies without skin in the game and with actual expertise, the Kings of Cohasset claimed

Responsible Government Unit (RGU) status for themselves. After they had wine and dined with Huber (the Southern Corporation) and promised \$18 million in local and county tax subsidies and direct payments, they turned around and told the public they'd handle the "objective" environmental review.

Proposed to be located in the heart of 1855 Treaty Territory, where seven sovereign Anishinaabe Nations have priority water, hunting, fishing and gathering rights, the Huber facility will impact far more Indigenous people than Cohasset

townspeople (approximately 40,000 Anishinaabe people or more live in Northern Minnesota).

The proposed oriented strand board mill will further emaciate the already thin forests of the north, which are now devoid of many of the native species Anishinaabe people have harvested for millenia. The facility will be massive- more than 120 football fields in size, 10 stories tall, and will voraciously consume 400,000 cords of wood annually. To keep costs low and profits high, Huber has said it will cut all of this wood from a 70-100 mile radius (all within 1855 Treaty Territory).

As part of the environmental review process, the City of Cohasset confirmed in writing, several times, that after the period for written comments closed, oral testimony would be taken at a public hearing before a final decision was reached. Turns out, they decided they'd rather have a Huber Huddle pep rally for the Huber corporation instead, complete with matching shirts and hats for hundreds of townspeople. So that's just what they did.

Without notice to Tribes, indigenous people or other organizations, less than 48 hours before the scheduled public hearing, Huber shut it down. Instead of listening to native people, the Kings gave their people a Huber pep talk, then voted unanimously to approve the project, because, in their expert opinion, it did not have the potential to significantly impact the environment.

Red Lake Nation's hydrologist, Joshua Jones, came to the public hearing to submit testimony. A trained hydrologist and tribal member, he was deeply concerned about the lack of assessment of impacts to the connected waters in and around the proposed project site as well as impacts to treaty rights.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 -

4 - Mobile Vaccine program	11 - Political Matters	14 - Book review
10 - Sports: Sean Morrison	12 - Health/Arne Vainio, MD	15 - It Ain't Easy Being Indian



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# Migizi chosen for Estee Lauder/Amanda Gorman WRITING CHANGE

BY HANNAH BROADBENT

“We’ve been ramping up our programming this week to keep our students busy, so our office has been lively,” said Migizi’s Lead Media Specialist, Binesikwe Means, with a small laugh as the sound of teenagers roars in the background of the zoom call.

With the Minneapolis teacher’s strike going strong, Migizi is doing what they do best – adapting and providing for their students.

“It’s been great because our office normally doesn’t come alive until 3 p.m.,” said Executive Director, Kelly Drummer.

Drummer recalls the organization, staff and students’ resiliency of the past two years. Especially after the loss of their building to a fire on May 29, 2020. Three weeks after the fire, Migizi’s summer programs were scheduled to start – and they did. Drummer says their programming never stopped and even at the height of the pandemic they moved online.

“When we didn’t have space Kelly worked hard to make sure we had a place for our students,” Means said. “This last summer it was really important to make sure we continued because as adults we were struggling with working from home so, of course, our students were struggling, too.”

Migizi’s programs include Green Job Pathways, academic support programming, and First Person Productions which allows youth to “develop not only expertise in videography and photography, but also management, digital marketing and interpersonal skills.”

Drummer said the organization’s new

mission is to provide a strong circle of support that nurtures educational, social, economic and cultural development of American Indian Youth.

Migizi’s work, mission and resiliency hasn’t gone unnoticed as proven by their newest grant, WRITING CHANGE, a collaboration between Estee Lauder and Amanda Gorman, the youngest Inaugural Poet in history. WRITING CHANGE is a three-year \$3 million initiative to support grassroots organizations dedicated to literacy and young voices. A total of five organizations nationwide were chosen.

“We are positive and honest, we value innovation and believe our culture projects and strengthens us, so that is how we do our work,” Drummer said. “I believe this grant comes in the innovation piece.”

The grant states that it aims to invest in organizations working hard to advance systemic changes and close the literacy gap by providing equitable access to tools, resources, and programming that are essential to sustained progress.

Drummer said they did not apply for this grant, instead the award-winning writer chose them.

“[Amanda Gorman] Means our work is being seen on a larger scope than we initially imagined and that is really special for our students,” Binesikwe said.

When approached by Estee Lauder, Drummer and Means said they wanted to be sure that this would contribute to their programs and not take away from it like some nation-wide, large grants may do when they ask for a restructure of the organization.

Drummer said the unique thing about the grant is that the other recipients are national organizations and literacy based, but Estee Lauder wants Migizi



Amanda Gorman is the youngest National Poet Laureate and Estée Lauder Global Changemaker. (Photo from [www.elcompanies.com](http://www.elcompanies.com).)

to do it their own way. She said they were able to be really upfront that the work they do is in radio, podcasting, social media, film and many different mediums for media and communication.

“We told them, our body of work is in media and they were receptive to that,” Drummer said. “They looked at our work as a different way of expression.”

Migizi will begin the program for WRITING CHANGE in the fall with a group of 20 girls. Means says there are many ways they can use this grant, but because it is inspired by Amanda Gorman, they will choose to explore literacy through poetry. The pieces will be written or digital and published through a variety of mediums like social media, videos, music, newsletters, and First Person Productions.

“We get the best work out of our students when we spark their creative process,” Binesikwe said.

She says a lot of their students are quiet and reserved but as they attend programming that changes. Though the last two years have been a roller coaster for students, putting dents in education and also their relationships. Migizi has spent the last year working with the kids to get them “back to normal” and finding what normal looks like after the pandemic.

“We know they are struggling, so having a space where they can be open about that and be open about their experiences is important for them,” Binesikwe said. “They are finally coming out of their shells again and having important relationships with each other now.”

In addition to poetry, they will also create a podcast to give their students a chance to talk about how the pandemic has affected them and what their experience has been.

“Think about how stressful this has been for adults, now just imagine what the kids are going through,” Drummer said. “It’s not too often people come to you and say ‘we want to fund you’ and they wanted to fit into our boxes, so we are all empowered through this.”

Migizi also strives to provide life and career skills so, like all of their internships, girls that join WRITING CHANGE will be compensated. The organization is also hoping to have credit options for high schools in Fall 2022.

“One of the reasons our work is so important is because as native people, we are natural born story tellers and First Person came about because we wanted to tell our own stories and that is what this grant is empowering our students to do – to tell their stories in their own way,” Binesikwe said. “That is what makes this so unique.”

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# Mobile vaccine program for children in Hennepin County extended

BY LEE EGERSTROM

**B**lue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota has announced it is continuing funding for Hennepin Healthcare's Pediatric Mobile Clinic that takes vaccines for preventable diseases on the road to children in Hennepin County.

Blue Cross Blue Shield supported Hennepin Healthcare's initial effort in 2020 when it launched the mobile vaccination program aimed at eliminating barriers to care and at improving health equity for families. The new pledge of grant support will help continue the program through 2023.

While this program is open to all in Hennepin County, it is part of Blue Cross Blue Shield's ongoing effort to assist the Native American and other distinct communities in Minnesota gain better, more equitable access to health care, said Sasha Houston Brown, senior communications and advocacy consultant at the insurer's Center for Prevention.

Blue Cross Blue Shield has several programs that reach Indigenous people on Minnesota reservations and in urban settings, she said. This is especially important to Brown. While she grew up



The BCBS Pediatric Mobile Clinic vaccination program is aimed at eliminating barriers to care and at improving health equity for underserved families. (Photo from BCBS video.)

in Minneapolis, she is Mdewakanton Dakota and a member of the Santee Sioux Nation in Nebraska.

Some of the supported and cooperative efforts does involved Native tribes or groups, such as the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the Lower Sioux Indian Community, Brown said.

Other programs involve organizations focused on wellness, health care access

and food security. One of the latter, Brown said, is the Minneapolis-based Dream of Wild Health organization.

Research by various health groups have found health care disparities among ethnic and income groups across the nation. In some cases, the disparities have worsened from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Blue Cross Blue Shield research found that in 2020, the first year of the pandemic, childhood vaccinations for preventable diseases fell by 26 percent. That meant nine million doses of childhood vaccines, such as measles, whooping cough and polio, were missed.

A more recent study by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) determined that "interventions" are needed to catch up on vaccinating children and especially those from population groups that are known to have lesser rates of immunization.

Gaps in health equity have always existed and especially in diverse communities, said Bukata Hayes, vice president of racial and health equity at Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota.

"This mobile immunization program from Hennepin Healthcare is a perfect example of a sustainable solution to bridge these gaps and achieve better health for everyone," he said. "Providing additional funding to keep this work going was an easy decision and will lead to lower overall costs associated with preventable health interventions over the long term."

That makes the Pediatric Mobile Clinic an "intervention" for Hennepin County the American Medical Association has called for in its Journal.

Dr. Dawn Martin, medical director for the mobile clinic at Hennepin Healthcare, said the decline in childhood vaccinations showed "the best course of action was to deliver care to where the patients were."

"The initial funding from Blue Cross allowed us to get this program off the ground and prove that it works," she said. "Now, we are able to continue this important work and improve upon what we've started."

The mobile unit has administered thousands of vaccines to area children, eliminating barriers to care and improving health equity by bringing preventive care directly to families, the Blues said in announcing its continued support.

Plans for the current year will expand the mobile unit's geographical reach, add preventive services and expand COVID-19 vaccinations, improve health screenings and referrals, and add a new and larger vehicle that can better accommodate patient visits.

Hennepin Healthcare said that it works on addressing care gaps, including vaccinations in Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities.

Native American children do experience significant health disparities in these areas that prompts Hennepin Healthcare and others to work on providing some care to their community. However, it hasn't held specific pop-up clinics for this community to date.

The healthcare system is partnered with a community-based Native American organization in an effort to improve vaccine confidence in BIPOC communities. More such efforts are anticipated in the future.

Hennepin Healthcare's parent, Hennepin Healthcare System Inc., is a subsidiary of Hennepin County. It operates the large, 484-bed Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC), an acute care hospital with Level I Adult Trauma Center and Level I Pediatric Trauma Center.

Its system also includes an outpatient Clinic and Specialty Center, clinics in the North Loop and Whittier neighborhoods of Minneapolis, and clinics at suburban locations in Brooklyn Park, Golden Valley, Richfield and St. Anthony Village.

The system also operates a psychiatric care program, home care and hospice, a research institute, a philanthropic foundation and the county's Emergency Medical Services, Hennepin EMS.

*Information about Blue Cross Blue Shield support and efforts to created healthier communities and advance racial and health equity is available at [bluecrossmn.com/equity](https://www.bluecrossmn.com/equity).*

*A video on the Pediatric Mobile Clinic is online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_k-lyTsa-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_k-lyTsa-Y).*

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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.**



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# IAAC comes to TC to increase indigenous representation in sports

BY DAN NINHAM

The 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) DI Women's Final Four recently came to the big city of Minneapolis. University of South Carolina defeated the University of Connecticut 64-49 on Sunday, April 3rd.

The Indigenous Athletics Advancement Council (IAAC) also came to the big city with several initiatives to meet their goals. According to their website: ([www.indigenousathleticsadvancement.com](http://www.indigenousathleticsadvancement.com)) the IAAC was formed to increase indigenous representation and engagement at the 2022 NCAA Women's Final Four and beyond. The mission "is to educate, promote, empower, and activate indigenous people and communities around movement, physical fitness, and sport."

The IAAC initiative began with former NCAA DI University of Wisconsin, WNBA player, and profession overseas player Jessie Stomski Seim (Muskogee Creek), and General Council for the Prairie Island Indian Community.

The indigenized Final Four event included a powerful halftime show during the first game of eventual national champion University of South Carolina and the



The IAAC held a youth clinic at the Mpls American Indian Center. Organized by Hoop Medicine founder Dominic Tiger-Cortes, it featured several "Legends" including former NCAA DI native women basketball players. (Photo by Roger White.)

University of Louisville. The halftime show included emcee Byron Ninham (Oneida), former NCAA D2 basketball player at the University of Minnesota Duluth, speaking Ojibwe and acknowledging the land; as well as singers and dancers.

The April 3rd events included a youth skills clinic at the Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC). The clinic was organized by Hoop Medicine founder Dominic Tiger-Cortes and featured several "Legends" including former NCAA DI native women basketball players.

The IAAC had a panel session at the Women's Basketball Coaches Association

(WBCA) Clinic. The session title was the theme of the IAAC: "Hoop Dreams in Native America: Why Indigenous athletes are under-represented in the NCAA, and how coaches can recruit and retain talent in Indian Country." Attendees included various levels of NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA coaches.

"As a college coach attending the Women's Final Four Coaching Convention, the IAAC panel was one of the most beneficial programs I attended," said Taylor Harris, head women's basketball coach at NCAA D2 Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. "So many

of my colleagues listened first hand from members of the IAAC about the benefits of welcoming Native student athletes to your program, how to effectively assist them to graduation, and how we can grow our own self cultural awareness."

"I take pride in empowering native student athletes to get an opportunity to go to college, graduate, and go back to their reservation to make a difference in others' lives," said Harris. "The IAAC panel provided me with a much greater insight into the struggles Native athletes can face, and how I as a coach can help empower these amazing athletes to make a difference."

During the NCAA Women's Final Four, there was also a Final Four happening at the Red Lake Nation Humanities Gym. After an eight year absence, the Warrior Challenge was back with men and women brackets that drew 21 teams.

Shaunna Knife is from the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota. She was on the X-Factor team that won the Warrior Challenge on the same day and 250 miles north of the NCAA DI national championship game. "Growing up, there wasn't someone like myself being Native American I could look up to," said Knife. "It was always the typical label that colleges don't go after Native Americans, because they eventually leave. There was hardly any

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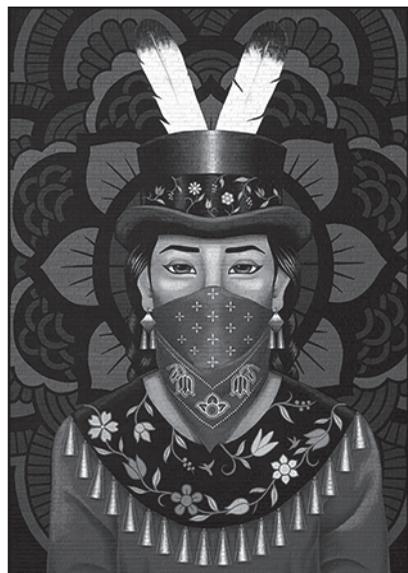
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representation of Native American athletes as there is today here in North Dakota. I believe it is because we are breaking the barriers and making our younger generations know that they belong anywhere. There is a saying that I read not too long ago; 'the rez was never deprived of talent, just resources.'"

Shauna Long, former NCAA D1 basketball player at Lamar University and Warrior Challenge champion talked about the IAAC initiatives: "I think it's amazing to see such an important topic highlighted at a great stage like the Final Four. I do believe lack of exposure contributes to this underrepresentation because like me, not all native kids have the resources to get on the AAU circuit or come from large cities or school districts."

"The information that they share is pivotal in assisting coaches on how they can seek out talent and also retain that talent. We often get placed into boxes of what people think we are, where we come from or the 'benefits' we may receive as being Native American," added Long.

Rob McClain (Muscogee Creek/Red Lake Ojibwe) was the first NCAA D1 recruit from Red Lake High School at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. McClain was on the TMC team that won the men's division of the Warrior Challenge also on the night of the NCAA D1 Women's National Championship game. He said, "Being a former D1 athlete is a huge thing for me and especially where I come from. With being the second D1



The X-Factor team won the 2022 Warrior Challenge Championship. Former NCAA D1 and D2 team members include from left: Angel Goodrich, Shauna Long, Shaunna Knife, and Jenna Plumley. (Photo by Dan Ninham.)

athlete from my rez is a big deal because out of all the great ball players that came before me I was the second one to play D1. The only person that went D1 before was my cousin Grace White and we graduated the same year, so knowing that is even more special."

"So to see the growth firsthand with Natives around my age is huge and I cannot wait to see more of us get the opportunity to represent not only where we come from but Native country as a whole," added McClain.

Justin McCloud (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) played at NCAA D1 Illinois State University. He was the teammate of Rob McClain on the Warrior Challenge cham-

pions as well as with a few others that played at other college levels.

"I think growing up in North Dakota poses challenges in exposure and recruitment in general, but being native adds another layer," said McCloud. "It seems like a good number of talented native athletes do not receive exposure to college coaches unless they play at a higher class school in the state. And the native athletes that do go to college end up back home within the first year or two."

"I do believe more native athletes are getting exposure through organizations like IAAC, social media pages and leaders who advocate for the native youth, but more can still be done."



Justin McCloud (left) and Rob McClain led the TMC team to the 2022 Warrior Challenge Championship. (Photo by Dan Ninham.)

"I think it starts at the local level with programs to help athletes get on AAU teams and sponsoring athletes that have dreams to play at the next level. It is then the responsibility of the athlete and their families to keep working hard to earn opportunities and represent for their respective tribe. It is very important to have a good support system and to figure out how to stick it out even when adversity hits or when it is uncomfortable."

Watch the Women's Final Four National semi-final game during half-time (video by IAAC member Brent Cahwee): <https://www.facebook.com/brent.cahwee.9/videos/375563347773102>.

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Closer to home, the Band has often had to fight against local, non-tribal government bodies such as Mille Lacs County and usually against the state of Minnesota.

The latter has been changing.

Just as federal recognition of sovereign rights changed during the Obama administration, Minnesota state recognition of those rights have had a profound reversal in the last two years. Attorney General Keith Ellison totally turned the tables and backed the Mille Lacs Band in the boundaries dispute. His position was supported by Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan.

Online websites cited at the end of this article show how the tribe and county view the court ruling and what it may mean for non-tribal member property owners within the reservation boundaries. In some published accounts, there may be little change except for local taxation powers and, going forward, how the tribe and area municipalities and the county might cooperate of issues of shared concerns such as policing.

Sore spots involve portions of townships on the south edges of Mille Lacs Lake (Isle Harbor, South Harbor and Kathio townships), plus three islands in the lake. These areas were all part of the 1855 treaty but the county and, often, the state has cited subsequent treaties and laws that tried to whittle away the reservation boundaries.

Unless overturned by higher courts, U.S. District Judge Susan Richard Nelson may have settled this source of confusion. In

her March 4 ruling, she wrote the treaty promised a “permanent home” for the Mille Lacs Band.

She added, “Over the course of more than 160 years, Congress has never clearly expressed an intention to disestablish or diminish the Mille Lacs Reservation.”

Therefore, she said, “The court therefore affirms what the Band has maintained for the better part of two centuries – the Mille Lacs Reservation’s boundaries remain as they were under Article 2 of the Treaty of 1855.”

In a Facebook statement cited by local media, Chief Executive Benjamin offered an olive branch to area nontribal residents. In it, she said:

“It is our sincere hope that this decision will allow us to move beyond the need to fight with Mille Lacs County over our very existence; instead, we invite the county – and all of our local governments – to come alongside us and join with us in the fight for a better future for all our communities for generations to come.”

#### Prairie Island in West Lakeland Township

The whittling away of tribal land efforts at Mille Lacs have a parallel at Prairie Island Indian Community, with potentially dangerous consequences.

Tribal members who are descendants of the Mdewakanton Band of Eastern Dakota have lived along the Mississippi River and its waterways for centuries. They lost most of their southern Minnesota land after the

Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851, but their remaining reservation of a mere 534 acres at Red Wing and Welch was federally recognized in 1934. That didn’t last long.

In 1938, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built Lock and Dam 3 on the down river side of their reservation. That backed up water over burial mounds and created a floodplain reducing livable reservation space to 300 acres.

Then came 1973. Local utility company Northern States Power Co. – now Excel Energy Inc. – built and began operating Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant just 600 yards from Prairie Island homes.

Seasonal floods, nuclear power plant meltdowns and similar problems elsewhere have Prairie Island and nearby nontribal area residents ill at ease. That has grown over the past two decades when Excel and almost all nuclear power plant operators found resistance from local communities over where they might store spent fuels from generating electricity.

Federal regulators have tried to secure locations inside Western mountains to store these nuclear wastes that take thousands of years to effectively dissolve. Not surprising, Western states, local communities and Western tribal nations have shared “not in my backyard” stances in opposing storage.

That leaves nuclear fuel wastes stored at Prairie Island until some future stor-

age place is secured. It also means, tribal and environmental critics point out, the dangerous wastes remain vulnerable to floods or other disasters that are a threat to them and area communities.

These are reasons Prairie Island Indian Community leaders have sought to expand land holdings for residential and commercial development outside the small boundaries spelled out in the 1934 treaty. In addition, there are descendants of the tribe who want to “come home,” but there will need to more space, housing, and safety for them to do it.

For more information: The Mille Lacs Band has a FAQ page online at <https://millelacsband.com/home/faq>.

The Band also posted U.S. Judge Susan Richard Nelson’s complete March 4 federal court order online at <https://millelacsband.com/media/pages/home/d68949293b-1648473572/313-memorandum-opinion-and-order-re-sj-motions.pdf>.

Mille Lacs County says the ruling “increases” the size of the reservation unless overturned on appeal. Its statement is available online at <https://www.millelacs.mn.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=347>.

A Prairie Island Indian Community position paper on the adjacent nuclear power plant, which leads to the purchase on land for development in Washington County, is online at <https://prairieisland.org/policy-positions/nuclear-positions>.

# ARE YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER WORRIED ABOUT THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF BEING OVERWEIGHT AND/OR HAVING DIABETES?

“My passion is helping members of the Native community with issues related to weight loss and endocrine problems, such as diabetes.”

— **Tiffany Beckman, MD, MPH**  
Member of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe



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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.

Many members of Red Lake and White Earth Tribes also have ancestors that lived and were buried on the Leech Lake reservation immediately adjacent to the proposed industrial giant. Joshua, along with representatives from Honor the Earth, the 1855 Treaty Authority, Leech Lake Tribal Government and many tribal members were all denied their previously promised opportunity to testify and put their opposition to the project on record.

Project destruction only begins with massive deforestation, there’s also significant air pollution, endangered species, wild rice, wetland and human health impacts, all of which will directly and negatively affect the Anishinaabe people of Northern Minnesota. Toxic and particulate air emissions known to cause heart and lung diseases and carry a significant risk of premature death will disproportionately impact members of the neighboring Leech Lake and Fond du Lac Tribes living on their tribal reservations.

Honor the Earth’s environmental counsel, Jamie Konopacky, explained that “... it appears that it was only after the City began to fear robust Native testimony that they pulled the plug on the public hearing. Because the written comment period had already closed, and many people had relied on Cohasset’s repeated, written guarantees that there would be opportunity for public testimony, the City deprived a significant number of Tribal Members of their



The Cohasset City Council closed down the public testimony in a room filled with Native people, including Tribal government representatives, and community members seeking to testify. (Photo by Winona LaDuke.)

chance to create a public record of Tribal opposition to the Huber project.” What this local government unit did was likely illegal and Honor the Earth and others intend to file an appeal.

If the Huber project really was just a local town project, it is unlikely that thousands of tribal members and allies would cry foul. But this project threatens far more than localized impacts, it disproportionately threatens tribal members and their federally guaranteed treaty rights. In turn, it threatens the very existence of Anishinaabe people who are the original inhabitants of Northern Minnesota. This existential threat is why

the Leech Lake Band passed a resolution opposing construction of the Huber Frontier project absent avoidance of negative impacts to treaty rights, forests, wetlands, wildlife, and air quality in 2021.

Lawyers, logging companies, environmentalists, and basically anyone familiar with Minnesota Environmental Review law have no doubt that this project requires full assessment through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Huber was actually clear on this point too, which is why, as a last-minute part of the 2021 budget bill, working with Republican legislators, they snuck through a narrow exemption to one EIS requirement.

The problem is, even with their successful legislative maneuver, the project is so massive and threatens so much harm, that they triggered several other mandatory environmental review requirements. But because their pals at the City of Cohasset claimed RGU status, it turned out those other legal requirements just did not matter.

The Deep North has met the Deep South, and it turns out, unsurprisingly, that the alliance does not bode well for protecting the environment or its original caretakers, the Anishinaabe people, in Northern Minnesota.

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## Sean Morrison Strives to be a leader for the North Woods HS Grizzlies

Sean Morrison will be graduating this year at North Woods HS. He is a member of the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe. Morrison was a member of the successful North Woods HS Grizzlies basketball team this season. As a 6'2" post player he made 71% of his field goals mainly near the basket, including scoring 328 points this season and averaging 6.1 rebounds and 1.2 steals per game.

The North Woods HS Grizzlies ended the season 24-5 losing in the Section 7A semifinal 66-62 to Deer River.

Morrison developed into one of the top basketball big men in the North Country. He is also one of the top students in his senior class.

"One of my best native core values is my work ethic," Sean said. "I have been very resilient."

"I have been the end of the bench player before but have worked and practiced to become a leader and captain on my team," added Sean.

Brandon Benner led the Nett Lake Eagles, a youth basketball travel program, at the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe reservation in northeastern Minnesota. It started at the elementary school level and the team traveled the state and the Midwest. Sean said: "Brandon first

introduced me to this game that I fell in love with. Without him I wouldn't be anywhere near where I am today."

"Sean has always been a team player," said Coach Brandon Benner. "He has always done what was asked of him. He never cared about stats or points and just living in the moment and enjoying the game."

Benner and Sean's dad Travis Morrison spent countless hours and days traveling the Midwest bringing the team to tournaments anywhere from Wisconsin Dells to International Falls beginning in the third grade.

"The Eagles organization always taught school over everything first," said Sean. "They helped me set an example for many others by teaching discipline and respect on and off the court."

The Nett Lake Eagles helped contribute to the North Woods HS success. The program produced some of the best players that ever came out of the North Woods HS Grizzlies.

North Woods HS boys' basketball Head Coach Will Kleppe and his coaching staff have built the Grizzlies into one of the top programs in the state.

"I wasn't sure he was going to emerge as a major varsity contributor until late in his high school career," said Coach



Morrison was a member of the successful North Woods HS Grizzlies basketball team this season. As a 6'2" post player he made 71% of his field goals mainly near the basket, including scoring 328 points this season and averaging 6.1 rebounds and 1.2 steals per game. (Photo courtesy of Sean Morrison.)

Will Kleppe. "In fact, it wasn't until a Breakdown Series Tournament in Cloquet in late July when North Woods went against Duluth East did I become convinced that he was going to be the player we needed to replace graduated senior Darius Goggeleye."

"In that one game I saw he could do battle with the best posts and wasn't going to give any ground to anybody."

Coach Kleppe continued, "He was always content to fill his role. Early in his career that meant very limited minutes. What stood out about Sean was that he made no excuses, he didn't expect more than he had worked for. Sean always had a keen understanding of the bigger picture and he prepared himself well for when the opportunity emerged to break into the starting lineup."

"Sean is also an academic leader in our school. He was instrumental in his team being chosen Section 7A academic

team champions. His teammates respect that he is a good student and is responsible and self-disciplined when it comes to academics. He doesn't drop the ball in the classroom and then expect his fellow students to follow him on the court."

"Sean has always played basketball to have fun," said Travis Morrison. "From elementary school all the way through high school, if the game was not fun he was willing to put the ball down. Because he plays for the fun of the game, he didn't put pressure on himself."

"His patience as an off the bench player shows that he is not going to force things to happen, but his work ethic shows that hard work will pay off and when it does he will be ready. That resiliency will take him a long way in college and in life," said Travis Morrison.

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

editor@ajwnews.com

### Peggy Bellecourt journeys on

A little more than two months after her husband, Clyde Bellecourt, died, Peggy Bellecourt journeyed to the Spirit World on March 16. She was 78.

She was Ish Kway Yawng I Nawbi Quay – “She is looking back for the children coming along behind us,” according to the obituary in the *Red Lake Nation News*. I remember Peggy as welcoming, kindhearted and possessed of a sharp sense of humor.

Along with Clyde and others, Peggy was a co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Although she won't have a lengthy obituary published in *The York Times*, Peggy was committed to Native rights and was in the forefront of the struggle. The *Red Lake Nation News* also mentioned the Peggy was a “first degree of Midewiwin Three Fires Society Lodge, involved with the Trail of Broken Treaties, Heart of the Survival School and Gathering of the Sacred Pipe Sundance, also with Clyde. She loved to garden, gardening with the Elaine M. Stately Peacemaker Center for Indian Youth.”

May Peggy's memory always be a blessing for her children and those who loved her.

### Jim Crow in SoDak

On March 21, I posted a link on Facebook to a Rapid City Journal story about the Grand Gateway Hotel. (I first saw the story via the Native Lives Matter account on Facebook.) According to the newspaper, Connie Uhre, one of the hotel owners, had posted a message on Facebook, saying that she can “not allow a Native American to enter our business including Cheers.” Following a shooting at the hotel, Uhre said she can't tell “who is a bad Native or a good Native.”

Of course, banning Native people from the hotel evokes episodes from this country's long, sad history of racial discrimination; especially, the Jim Crow era in the South, where Black people were legally barred from schools, restaurants, drinking fountains, etc., that were reserved for the use of white people.

Uhre's racist statement on social media also reminds me of historical depredations against American Indians in South Dakota. There was the humiliation and murder of Raymond Yellow Thunder by white thugs in Gordon, Nebraska, in February 1972. He was stripped of his pants and underwear, stuffed in a car trunk, then shoved into an American Legion club, where spectators gawked

at the 51-year-old Oglala Lakota man who worked most of his life as a ranch hand. Yellow Thunder died of his injuries a few days later, and his body was found in a car in a used-car lot.

Les and Pat Hare, the Anglo brothers who beat Yellow Thunder, were later convicted of manslaughter and given relatively short prison sentences – six years and two years – and small fines. These events were protested by the American Indian Movement, and eventually led to the takeover of the village of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation and the famous 71-day government siege.

In a 2009 story for *Native Times* (nativetimes.com), Dr. Dean Chavers recalled the ugly atmosphere underlying the murder of Raymond Yellow Thunder: “Murders of Indians had been going on in South Dakota for a hundred years by that time. Before the Hares, allegedly, no white man had ever been arrested, tried, or convicted for killing an Indian. It was as hard to convict a white man of killing an Indian in South Dakota as it was to convict a KKK member for lynching a Black man in Alabama. The signs in stores, bars, and restaurants that said ‘No Dogs or Indians Allowed’ had started to come down by then. The first time I went to South Dakota in 1966 they were still up. But even though the signs had started to come down, the racist attitudes were still there.”

In 2022, the mood is different in the state, and the Grand Gateway Hotel affair catalyzed large protests. On March 28, the Rapid City Journal reported that tribal leaders “issued a trespassing notice and cease and desist order” to the hotel. The notice was signed by Oglala Lakota Sioux President Kevin Killer, Cheyenne River Sioux Chairman Harold Frazier, Crow Creek Sioux Chairman Peter Lengkeek, Rosebud Sioux President Scott Herman and Standing Rock Sioux Chairwoman Janet Alkire.

The notice addressed to Uhre and the hotel cited the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty between the U.S. and Great Sioux Nation: “In accordance with the treaty and the laws located in the United States of America, and as a consequence of your act, you must permanently cease and desist from the violations charged. You are instructed to vacate and remove your persons and any personal property you deem necessary from the Treaty Territory of the Great Sioux Nation immediately.”

Neither Uhre nor the hotel responded to requests for comment by the Rapid City Journal.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### Eligibility

Native American Undergraduate Museum Fellowship participants are selected through a competitive application process. Eligibility is limited to undergraduates who are currently enrolled in a program for spring 2021 or have graduated within the last year. Students are not required to be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe; however, the considered applicants must be affiliated with an Indigenous community.

The Native American Undergraduate Museum Fellowship at the Minnesota Historical Society is made possible by a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Due to the continuation of the coronavirus pandemic and the Omicron variant, the NAUMF program in Summer 2022 will be a hybrid model with a **3-week virtual seminar** and a **5-week remote internship experience** with a **2-week in-person visit** to St. Paul, Minnesota.

### Fellowship dates & application

Dates of the Fellowship are **June 6-August 12, 2022**.

To apply, submit online application and additional materials here:

[www.mnhs.org/naumf](http://www.mnhs.org/naumf)

For any questions, please contact Amber Annis: [amber.annis@mnhs.org](mailto:amber.annis@mnhs.org)

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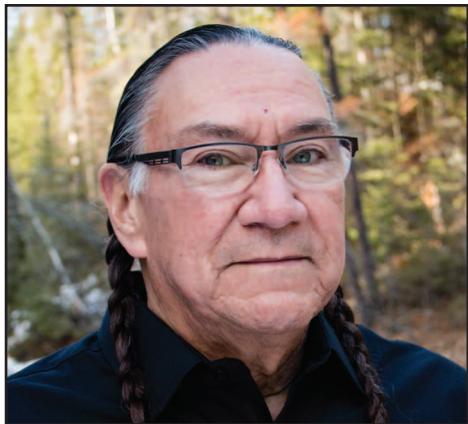


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# Believe that what you have to say is important



BY ARNE VAINIO, MD

(This article was written in 2015. The video mentioned here is no longer online.)

I've been writing this column for a few years and sometimes I get emails in response to them. These can be from someone in a similar situation or someone who cares about someone in a similar situation. The lessons I see in my work resonate with people and often have a profound and life altering effect.

As I travel and speak and show *Walking Into The Unknown* at conferences and gatherings, people come to me and tell me similar stories and sometimes I can tell this is the first time they

have ever talked to anyone about it.

Suicides, strokes, and the heartaches that come with poverty...all of these are issues prevalent in Indian Country. I had a phone call from a man who had been sitting in a trailer house a few days earlier with a gun in his mouth. He'd lost everything and saw shooting himself as his only way out. He was absently flipping through the TV channels as he gathered his nerve when he found *Walking Into The Unknown*, and watched it all the way through. He decided not to go through with it after watching the segment on my father's suicide, and he called and left a message for me at the clinic.

I called him back and we talked through my lunch hour. All the same issues were still there and he knew he had a lot of hard decisions and conversations ahead of him, but he realized what his death would do to his family for eternity and he didn't want to doom them to that.

I tell crazy stories on Facebook and trying to condense what I need to say into a post short enough for my phone to upload makes me choose my words carefully. Everyday events like accidentally buffing my fingernails to a mirror-like sheen when I was messing with my

sister's manicure kit or feeding the chickens or working on the farm are all worth writing about.

My wife Ivy's 80 year-old dad and I raise grass fed beef for our family and the smell of the earth being turned over as he plowed the hayfield with his 1948 Farmall tractor for the first time in decades, or watching the manure spreader slowly cover a snowy field speak to a time that is long past for most of us. I want everyone to know and to feel what it's like to try to fix something under the threat of a storm that can destroy the day's work or even an entire crop. I want everyone to watch the sky with me and feel the itching of the hay chaff as we load the bales on the wagon and unload them in the sweltering heat of the barn.

I have seen the entire world reflected in a single drop of water hanging from a balsam branch after a spring rain. The water molecules in that drop have been around since the earth was new and those molecules don't come apart, they get recycled again and again. They have been water vapor at times, have been part of the ocean at other times, have been in dark clouds heading across the country and have been part of the storms that have ravaged and shaped the earth. Those water molecules have been part of ancient Egypt and part of North America long before recorded history and were part of the iceberg that sunk the Titanic. Humans are mostly water and those molecules have been part of our greatest leaders and our greatest tyrants.

Those water molecules get desecrated by oil spills and by pollution spewing into the air from our cars and our planes and our factories. Those water molecules are part of every newborn baby and are in our elders as they breathe their last. They rise to rejoin the clouds and will travel and fall somewhere far away. Maybe they will return to the ocean for centuries to come or they will rain down on a hayfield on a Minnesota summer day.

Maybe they will be part of the steady cold drizzle that lands on a trailer house in Montana on a gloomy overcast day when all hope seems lost.

I was in the grocery store last night and an old man in his upper eighties recognized me. He has seen *Walking Into The Unknown* every time it's been on public television and he wanted me to know I made a difference to him and I made him think about his place in the world and what he has to pass on. He asked if and hoped I had another film in the works. We actually did shoot some film footage a couple of years ago that would make another equally powerful film, but everyone from the first film has other obligations and I'm not

even certain where all that footage is anymore.

Ojibwe author Jim Northrup (who has now passed on) took me aside at his seventieth birthday party a couple of years ago and told me it was time for me to write a book. He told me when he was starting out as a writer; the well-known poet and author Simon Ortiz pulled him aside:

"This is what he told me and I'm passing this on to you. 'Believe that what you have to say is important. The spelling, commas and punctuation will take care of themselves.'"

"It's time for you to get serious about writing."

Jim was a good friend of mine and writing was his life. I know deep in my heart he was looking to pass that torch one and one time only and I don't take it lightly. Last year an editor for a publishing company contacted me. We met in a basement coffee shop and we sat in the corner and talked as the footsteps clacked and shuffled by on the foggy night sidewalk above us. As a rule, when someone starts out with a book they typically submit it again and again to multiple publishers and the stories of rejection letters abound.

This was a different kind of meeting. Over that cup of coffee we became friends and I came to trust her judgment.

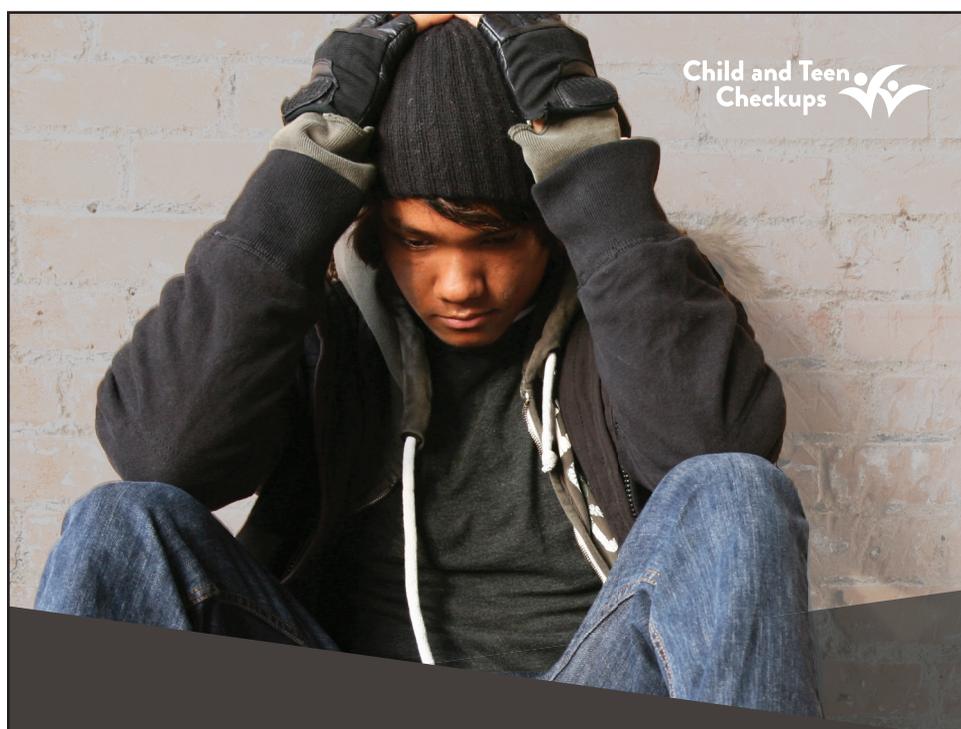
"When are you going to write a book? I'm telling you right now, if you write it, we will publish it. You have so much to teach and you have a perspective few others have."

I think it's time.

I have given myself forty-five weeks to write what I need to write. This means I will be up early on weekends and late at night. The stories come unbidden to me as families and individuals, as triumphs and tragedies. They come as new life and they come at the end and they come at that unpredictable part known as the middle, where most of us live. They come from my memories and from those of my grandparents and they come out of the tears and the laughter and the bonding that come with the bad luck of being born into poverty.

I watch our children grow and I ask them what they are going to be. One day I hope to be able to pull one of them aside and deliver the message Jim Northrup delivered to me: "Believe that what you have to say is important. The spelling, commas and punctuation will take care of themselves."

*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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FOR THOSE UNDER 21

# Native Americans rally at capitol in support of funding bill

Sixteen Twin Cities American Indian organizations and their supporters filled the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda in St. Paul on March 25 to highlight a bold, “all in” proposal to construct 12 new, capacity-building facilities.

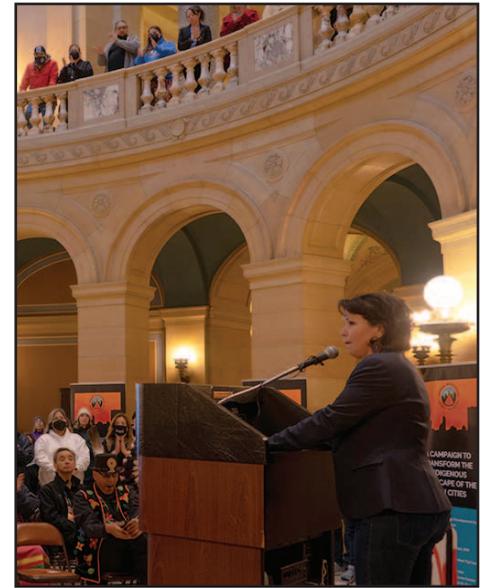
“The community’s needs are great, but so too are the state’s resources,” said Dr. Joe Hobot, president and CEO of American Indian OIC. “We call on legislators to join us on this.”

The COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest of the past two years have highlighted the disparities that continue to burden the urban Indigenous community. American Indian employment, for example, is down 13.7 percent since 2019, and American Indians have the highest COVID-19 death rates per 100,000 than any other group in the state.

“We stand today, strong together and united in advocating for the resources needed in our communities,” said Marisa Miakonda Cummings, president and CEO of the Minnesota Indigenous Women’s Resource Center. Passage of the Clyde Bellecourt Urban Indigenous Legacy Initiative (SF 3648/HF 3918) also will allow the organizations to “honor the trailblazers who went before us,” she noted.



The Urban Indigenous Legacy Initiative rally was held at the Capitol in support of the \$83.9 million equity-focused proposal that addresses persistent disparities. (Photos courtesy of the Urban Indigenous Legacy Initiative.)



Sen. Mary Kunesh, DFL-New Brighton, speaking on behalf of the bill at the State Capitol Building Rotunda.

Sen. Mary Kunesh, DFL-New Brighton, urged support for the legislation, which expands capacity on issues ranging from housing to healthcare, workforce development to food security. “This is an investment that is important for the future ... of all Minnesotans.”

Speaking at a press conference earlier in the day, Rep. Hodan Hassan, DFL-Minneapolis, noted that each of the 16 organizations plays a vital role in our

community. “I stand with you today, and I will fight for this,” she said.

The Urban Indigenous Legacy Initiative is a collective of 16 American Indian nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities, including: Ain Dah Yung Center, American Indian Community Development Corporation, American Indian Family Center, American Indian OIC, Department of Indian Work: Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul,

Division of Indian Work, Indigenous Peoples Taskforce, Little Earth of United Tribes, Lower Phalen Creek Project – Wakan Tipi Center, MIGIZI, Minneapolis American Indian Center, Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, Montessori American Indian Childcare Center of St. Paul, Native American Community Clinic, Native American Community Development Institute, and New Native Theatre.

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- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
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# Dakota Voices and the Importance of Storytelling

REVIEW BY DEBORAH LOCKE

“Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers” features five generations of stories from a family living at Minnesota’s Upper Sioux Community near Granite Falls. The stories tell the impact on individual family members of big historical events like war and migration, and they give insight into the less dramatic details of a life, like making moccasins or corn soup.

For those well-versed students of Dakota and American Indian history, the book will make a nice addition to your bookshelf. It gives unusual details of accounts not often discussed, like the fierce and bloody battles between sworn enemies the Dakota, Crow and Ojibwe.

For those only starting to learn American Indian history in Minnesota, the book is a good introduction to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and federal policies like relocation, as well as examples of day-to-day Dakota life. What I liked best were the nuggets of wisdom, humor and humanity from storytellers/authors Teresa Peterson and Walter “Super” LaBatte, Jr.

Peterson (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota) is an educator and tribal planner from Upper Sioux Community, and her uncle, Super LaBatte Jr., (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota) is an artist, hide tanner, retired carpenter and maker of drums, beads and moccasins. Also, he’s a graduate of St. Paul’s Macalester College with a degree in German, and like his niece, is an Upper Sioux Community member.

The book chronicles stories told and heard over generations of time in their family, including the 1910s when Fred Pearsall took notes on stories from Dakota elders and retold the stories in 1950s letters to his daughters and to his grandson, Super LaBatte. Many of the contemporary stories originate with Super, the son of a Presbyterian church elder, who explains the important role the Presbyterian church played in his life. The book takes on a memoir-like flavor at times as Super relays his battle with alcohol addiction and how he overcame it, or the magical moments of entering a powwow arena in dance regalia for the Grand Entry.

Super, who speaks fluent German, wrote that it wasn’t unusual to see

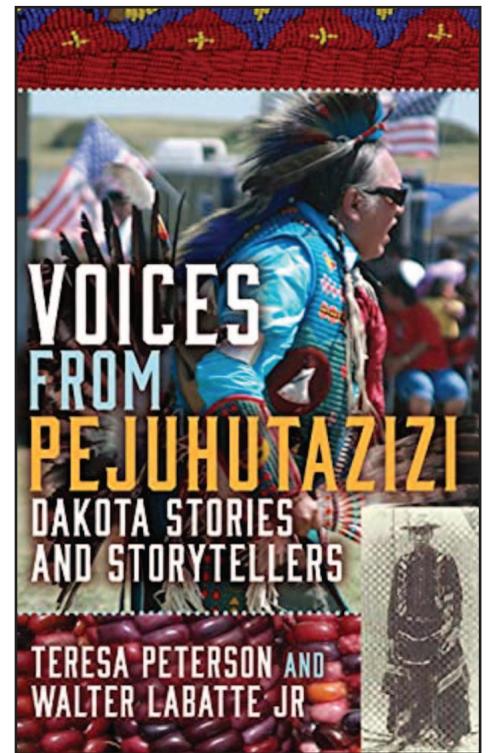
Germans at the summer powwows. He could identify them by their German accents while speaking English. He wrote that he would approach the German powwow spectators in his dance regalia and in German, asked if they were from Germany.

“At first there is this stunned second or two of silence, and I can see that their eyes and their ears are in conflict. There is no recognition of what is happening. So, I continue in German, saying, ‘Oh, it only appears that I am an Indian, but I am really German.’ Another stunned silence of disbelief.”

After another pause, the German visitors finally realized the truth, that Super was an Indian who spoke German. He wrote that the next time this happens at a powwow, he will turn to the visitors from Europe and ask if he can take their picture, a reversal of the norm.

Early in the book seven core Dakota values are listed, that remind the people “how to live and be with each other.” The values are compassion, respect, wisdom, courage, patience, generosity, and humility. Examples of each are cited, as well as others, like the value of working hard. Super’s wisdom shines when he points out that not all American Indian traditional spiritual practices were prohibited by U.S. government officials. Certainly that didn’t happen at the Upper Sioux Agency, where stories of the sweat lodge were common. Super wrote that his people may call themselves Dakota, they may call themselves American Indians, but the people do not have the same belief systems, don’t follow the same protocols, don’t have identical cultural and spiritual ways. He wrote:

“So it takes a small mind to criticize others for not following your ways. After the diaspora, (the period when



**Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers**  
by Teresa Peterson and Walter LaBatte, Jr.  
Minnesota Historical Society Press  
January 2022  
202 pages  
\$18.95

the Dakota were forced out of Minnesota and scattered), we were all raised in unique geographic areas, different eras; and were taught different ways from our parents. The answer is acceptance, in order to maintain peace and serenity.”

It’s the excerpts like the above, among stories about bears, skunks, drums, hymns and skirmishes that makes this book stand out. The approach is gentle, and universal, with reminders that we all have stories to remember and share, and that when we know our own stories, “no matter where you go, you belong. Stories have roots to the past that lead all the way back to the source of all things... stories shape future realities.”

## Notice of Comment Period on the Reappointment of Part-Time U.S. Magistrate Judge Jon T. Huseby

The U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota invites comments from members of the bar and public as to whether incumbent Part-time U.S. Magistrate Judge Jon T. Huseby should be recommended for reappointment.

Comments should be received by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on **Monday, May 9, 2022**, and may be directed to:

U.S. District Court Clerk’s Office  
ATTN: Deborah Morse, Human Resources and Development Manager  
300 South Fourth Street, Room 360  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
meritselectionpanel@mnd.uscourts.gov

To view the full public notice, visit the Court’s website at <https://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/employment>

## Oak Terrace

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tivals, parades, foods, powwows and dances. There I grew up and this was my home.

I met many talented people of all the arts, plus activists and journalists who were on top of the flow of current events. The electricity was palpable in the air and at no time was I ever bored. In the springtime my son and I would take 'Lilac walks' on the way to Loring Park, inhaling the sweetness all the way. My favorite time of year.

I did all of this while going around being an Indian woman. As a single mom I went to college full-time, had a part-time job, and to release stress I danced at First Avenue on Funk Night, even by myself cuz I didn't care. Long hair flying in high heels and never falling down. (Well there was that one time during the Great Halloween Blizzard, but it was outside. I was unhurt.) My apartment was beautiful and I never had an issue with keeping it tidy.

The last job I had in the city was with Native American Journalists Association (NAJA). I was the Office Manager and I loved it. To say it was intense is an understatement but my work was also gratifying. As Indigenous People our words needed to reach more people, who, in some cases, thought we were extinct. Brown people of the past who were wiped out by western greed

for natural resources in fact; in theory they came to save us from ourselves and if we refused to comply? They murdered us.

So I was more than happy to assist with this noble cause and I threw myself into it. This is when I met Mark Anthony Rolo who was the editor of *The Circle* at the time. Their office was near mine and the staff was actively involved with the annual conference to recruit new Indigenous journalists. Mark asked me to submit a piece for his insert in 1998 named, "10 Little Indian Myths" that he asked only Indian women for.

I ended up writing three, and that, my dear ones, is how this column began. The next editor, Sue, wondered why there were no Indian women writing a column, so she asked me for a sample. That was in November 1998. Yes, IKR? It's been that long except for a few deadlines I didn't make because I wanted to be dead. Depression.

I ask myself every day, "why oh why did I move to Rezberry when I was on the brink of a brilliant career?" It was because of a death bed vow to my Ole G-Paw. I promised I would look after his wife, my beloved Gramma Rose, when she needed me. For longtime readers, I know I've written this multiple times but the point is I did it. Gram had

her son and grandson but I knew she needed me too.

Packed up, my son and I moved to a racist town below Rezberry. I was given an \$8 an hour crap job on the Rez and lived in a former mortuary that was converted into apartments, with no car. So yeah. Woo-Hoo!!! AGH! Lots of emotion with one. What-ifs have turned into WTH?!

Even as I question myself I would not have changed my mind. A blood oath is a blood oath. My grandparents took me in and gave me a good life with them. Because I moved here I had the best times with my Gramma and can still feel her loving eyes. Because I moved here I have my own home, warm and comfortable.

What kind of place would I have afforded in the city on my sad income, now that I am disabled? Ya, well, I may have been able to afford a tricked-out shopping cart from the dollar store. I'm good and very grateful to be right where I am. Got my Fuzz-butts for a support system and everything I need.

In exciting news I am being interviewed live by Indian Country Today March 28 at 10:30 am. I'm pretty sure I'll mess it up but Ima do it anywayz. Nothing to lose now.

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