Native scholars finish fellowships at MHS

Interns in the Native American Undergraduate Museum Fellowship program visit Mille Lacs Lake and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. From left to right, George Growingthunder, Jose Garcia, Taylor Fairbanks, Program specialist Regan Kluver, Gavin Zempel, Eileen Bass, NAI intern August Mentch, and NAI admin assistant Anna Chu. Seated is Jim Kunesh. (Photo by Minnesota Historical Society.)

BY LEE EGERSTROM

The task of compiling research, recovery and recognition materials on Native people, environments and cultures is well underway for six recent undergraduate students who have completed a Native American Museum Fellowship program at the Minnesota Historical Society.

These six, all with direct or distant ties to Minnesota’s tribal nations, now join an alumni of 98 fellows who have gone through the historical society’s training program, said Regan Kluver, program director for the society’s Native American Initiatives Department (NAI).

Undergraduate college students from 53 tribal nations, attending colleges and universities stretching from the Washington, D.C. area to University of California, Berkeley, have availed themselves to the society’s unique program, Kluver said.

A lot of them take on museum positions, become tribal curators or become tribal historical preservation officers, she said. They work in positions to preserve histories predating the creation of state boundaries, more recent tribal histories, with language revitalization, at art galleries, and a various museums and historic centers.

Kluver, who has White Earth and Red Lake ties, said restoring historical information can be complicated. Citing Minnesota examples, she said people and history can be confused by references to people being Anishinaabeg, Chippewa and Ojibwe.

Add to that confusion with Dakota, Lakota and Nakota people and language variations, and uses of the Sioux name.

The Native American Undergraduate Museum Fellowship is a 10-week, paid internship involving three weeks of workshops and seminars and seven weeks of internship work on projects. Or, as MNHS describes it, it is “designed to engage and expose undergraduates to the professional opportunities within the museum, cultural resource, public history, and tribal historic preservation fields."

It is one of several programs of the Native American Initiatives Department. Others include the Our Home: Native Minnesota exhibit at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, the Native American Artist-in-Residence program, the Reconnecting Our Roots program for teenagers, and providing Educational Resources for educators and partner groups.

This extensive NAI programs in Minnesota isn’t surprising. Minnesota Historical Society is the second largest such state association after New York, and programs reflect Minnesota’s growing commitment to undoing damage from past national and state assimilation programs that many would prefer to forget.

Putting that in perspective, Kluver and Amber Annis, director of the Native American Initiatives, said in a joint statement NAI and other Native organizations are a direct results of past harmful public policies.

The late artist Jim Denomie at Mia and beyond

BY ALEX V CIPOLLE/MPR NEWS

In early 2022, Jim Denomie, the internationally acclaimed painter, was in the thick of planning a mid-career exhibition with the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Then, cancer struck. Denomie died two weeks after his diagnosis. He was 66.

That exhibition, “The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie,” opened this summer, transformed into a posthumous survey of the latter half of the famous colorist’s career – a career that skewed mainstream histories and portrayals of injustice, from Fort Snelling to Standing Rock, while championing the joy and resilience of Native communities.

“It’s a very bittersweet exhibition,” says Nicole Soukup, an assistant curator of contemporary art at Mia. Soukup had been planning the show closely with Denomie since 2019, up until the Ojibwe artist’s death in 2022.

“He was so beloved, not only in Minneapolis and St. Paul and Minnesota, but across the country and across the world. Words fail when you talk about somebody with such kindness and generosity and such a clear vision as an artist, and my words have failed me quite a bit in creating this exhibition,” she adds.

Truth-teller

Soukup and Denomie’s community say that the exhibition is just the beginning of building a legacy. As is the Jim Denomie Memorial Scholarship, created to help rising Native artists who embody what Denomie valued: truth and community.

“I hope that he continues to inspire artists to do work that also speaks to what’s going on in the world – artists as truth-tellers,” says author Diane Wilson, Denomie’s wife of several decades. “That’s a lot of what Jim was doing – speaking truth, both historically and in the present, about what has happened to and within Native communities, and that I hope will continue. I hope that’s his legacy”

At the entry of the exhibition, a 2016 video interview with Denomie loops.

“My art reflects my identity and experience as a contemporary Native American male in the 21st century,” he says.

Soukup says it was important to include Denomie’s voice first. To allow Denomie to define himself, his art, in his own terms.

“And also it reflects some of the government campaigns that affected Native culture in Minnesota and around the country to how it ultimately affected me through the assimilation campaign and the Relocation Act,” Denomie continues in the video. “And all of these issues defined or shaped my identity, and it’s my identity that shapes my art.”

Todd Bockley, of the Minneapolis gallery that represents Denomie, says the artist brought to light difficult histories that many would prefer to keep hidden.

“He was both humble and courageous to create and make public his interpretations of significant historical events of the past and present while also depicting his innermost thoughts and fantasies,” Bockley said.

Denomie’s art

Soukup walks the galleries, surrounded by Denomie’s paintings and totem-like sculptures. There are dreamy paintings of him and Wilson relaxing on a couch; of sensual landscapes with anthropomorphized animals on horseback; of spirituality and sexuality; as well as sculptures made from found objects – shells and plastic thingamabobs, feathers, buttons and bones.
The Senior LinkAge Line is a free, statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging in partnership with Minnesota’s area agencies on aging. The Senior LinkAge Line helps older Minnesotans and caregivers find answers and connect to the services and support they need.

We Are Aging

Support services | Housing options | Long-term care planning
Medicare & prescription assistance | Caregiver support

If you have trouble paying for your Medicare, you may be able to get help.

Call Minnesota’s Senior LinkAge Line® to find out more.

800-333-2433

mn.gov/senior-linkage-line
MN Senior Games keeps elders moving and social

BY DAN NINHAM

The National Senior Games Association (NSGA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to motivating active adults to lead a healthy lifestyle through the senior games movement. NSGA Member Organizations hold annual games with qualifying competitions in the year preceding the National Games. Athletes that meet specific criteria while participating in the State Senior Games qualify to participate at the national level.

The Minnesota Senior Games, a 20 plus sport, annual competition for men and women 50 and over, is a statewide competition but also brings in athletes from all over the country. Visit Greater St. Cloud was proud to host the 2023 Minnesota Senior Games August 3-6, 2023.

The MN Native Elder Games organization is an extension of the state and national senior games. According to Diane Grooms (Leech Lake Ojibwe), she is the chair of the MN Native Elder Games. “You could call me the chair because I organize,” said Grooms.

Grooms met Jim Ingle in 2018 and planning began to encourage native elders to participate in physical activities and to compete at the state and national levels. Ingle was the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Fitness Coordinator. Ingle participated in five National Senior Games and was on the board of the Minnesota Senior Games.

“I met with Jim Ingle, who worked with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, back in 2018 about the Senior Games,” said Grooms. “I wanted to participate for myself but our conversation turned to adding other elders. That’s how this all got started.”

The MN Native Elder Games focuses on redefining the quality of life and healthy aging for Native elders in Minnesota through education, fitness, prevention, and healthy fun competition.

“The Native Elder Games was Jim’s vision. And unfortunately, we lost Jim in February 2022 from Covid. We miss him terribly,” added Grooms.

Grooms said, “Our vision is to establish a Native Elders team and program at each of the eleven reservations in Minnesota and have an annual/bi-annual Native Elders Games Day where they can socialize and compete against each other.”

“We hope by providing events to look forward to and participate in that the elders will work on their physical activity on their own time,” said Grooms.

“Our priority for our elders is to have fun, learn about their limitations and their goals, then participate in events, and progress from workshop to Native Elder Games Days, then to the yearly MN Senior Games, and to the bi-yearly National Senior Games,” added Grooms.

“We will encourage and assist with each reservation to have their own Native Elder Games team that will compete in a Native Elder Games Day and other Senior Games events,” said Grooms.

This year Grooms could not participate due to a medical issue. “The upside of this is I got to watch my other teammates because of scheduling of events I would miss being able to be present,” said Grooms.

“I especially enjoyed watching this year because I had some new fresh rookies,” said Grooms. “And of course I am hoping they had a blast and will be returning. It was fun cheering everyone on and just relaxing instead of running between events.”

“I loved watching Gladys Sandland giggle all through her shuffleboard match,” said Grooms. “She would sit down, put her hand to her mouth and giggle.”

Gladys Sandland (Leech Lake Ojibwe) said, “This was the first time I played shuffleboard in front of people, I didn’t know what to expect, it wasn’t what I expected but I did have fun.”

The senior athletes had a variety of positive highlights participating in this recent past event.

“Traveling to sites, getting to know others that compete, gaining confidence, competing with others my age and being native were positive highlights,” said Debra Rojas (Leech Lake Ojibwe).

“Seeing other people that we see everyday and meeting new people.”

“Seeing all the native athletes from other states, meeting the astronaut who is a senior bowler, seeing all athletes participate in all events – winning a bronze medal in women’s 60-64 doubles cornhole – sightseeing – jazz festival – art fair – so many native elders participate and work on good health and wellness,” said Rojas.

The 11-member team earned 18 medals in St. Cloud this past August. These recent state games is a non-qualifying year for the national’s competition. The qualifying state games are held in odd years and the national games are held in even years. However due to the pandemic, the 2021 national senior games were postponed to July 7-18, 2023 in Pittsburgh, PA. They are back on schedule now.

The 2024 MN Senior Games is a qualifying year and will be in St. Cloud again. The National Senior Games will be in 2025 in Des Moines, IA.

“It’s a good year for new elders to compete and experience the games,” said Grooms.

“We would love to have a big bus full of elders going to Des Moines,” said Grooms. “The events we participate in are archery, bowling, cornhole, shuffleboard, swimming, powerwalk, and track and field.”

The legacy of the late Jim Ingle is continuing to encourage seniors to strive to be their best in the state and national senior games.
Minnesota Native authors have figuratively been on a tear producing new books. That means September would literally be an outstanding time to build or add to your Native books library.

The Minnesota Historical Society Press has six new offerings coming forth in the first week of September delving into Ojibwe and Dakota culture, Anishinaabe humor, and the marvels and beauty of northern Minnesota nature.

Three new titles represent works and teachings from a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe spiritual advisor, Lee Obizaaan Staples, and his co-author Chato Ombishkebines Gonzales, a language teacher for the Mille Lacs Band and an Ojibwe language expert for Rosetta Stone Inc., an American education and language technology software company.

Anishinaabe-Niimi’ding, or Anishinaabe Ceremonial Dance, gives the bilingual background on how a Dakota group presented a Big Drum and ceremonies as a good will offering to Ojibwe in the 19th Century. It tells how Ojibwe have used these cultural gifts over the years to protect their own identity against government efforts to destroy their culture.

“These Anishinabe ceremonial drums were given to all Anishinaabe people,” Staples told the Minnesota Historical Society Press. “I am doing this writing so that the Anishinaabe will be able to get a better understanding of the spiritual depth of what is available when these ceremonial drums are being used.”

Another book, Aanjikin / Changing Worlds, An Anishinaabe Traditional Funeral, explains the Ojibwe funeral ceremony and pre- and post-funeral practices Staples performs at Mille Lacs.

Gaa-izhi-minigoowizid a’aw Anishinaabe, or What We Were Given as Anishinaabe, assembles the different moment that mark important moments in an Ojibwe child’s life. The historical press summarized this as saying it includes everything from pregnancy and childbirth, a child’s first moccasins, naming ceremonies, and when a baby is brought into a ceremonial dance.

“It is written for those who wish to have a greater access to Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, a growing body of resources designed to document the teaching and experience of Indigenous elders,” the press report said. “Families, scholars and Ojibwe language learners can use these teachings to expand their understanding of Ojibwe ways of thinking and speaking.”

Such cultural teachings can also come with a laugh. Larry Amik Smallwood, an Ojibwe language teacher for more than 40 years, storyteller and Anishinaabe culturalist now deceased, and Michael Migizi Sullivan Sr., Native American Studies faculty director at Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University (Hayward, Wis.), teamed together to produce Plums or Nuts, Ojibwe Stories of Anishinaabe Humor.

The two worked together at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Their book contains 25 stories covering humorous experiences from learning to speak English in the first grade to problems with harvesting wild rice and using an old blanket as an invitation to dance.

Sullivan was Smallwood’s language student and assistant. He shares these stories in both Ojibwe and English. To continue helping people with language, he provides an Ojibwe-to-English glossary.

An already released book, Following My Spirit Home by Sam Zimmerman, and Michael Migizi Sullivan Sr., combines paintings and stories. Through his painting art and stories retold from his Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Ojibwe) elders, it parallels his own return home to Duluth, where he has a studio, and Minnesota’s North Shore after living on the East Coast.

The Minnesota Historical Society Press describes this mix of the author/painter’s own journey and discovery of natural beauty this way: “His work features Northland creatures such as moose, loons, wolves and fish as well as the night sky and native flora. Zimmerman preserves the Ojibwe storytelling tradition, reimagining the symbolism of the clan animals in natural North Shore landscapes.”

Finally, another salute to natural beauty – the night sky – will be released in November and is available for preorder from the historical press now.

It is Spirits Dancing, The Night Sky, Indigenous Knowledge, and Living Connections to the Cosmos by Travis Novitsky and Annette S. Lee, combining Novitsky’s photography with Lee’s historical look at sky watching and how Indigenous skywatchers have seen the sky and people’s place with it.

Novitsky is also a member of Grand Portage Band and has a mixture of European ancestry. He lives at Grand Portage and is a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources park manager for Grand Portage State Park. His work was previously featured in Northern Nights, Starry Skies, a film for PBS North and Hamline University’s Center for Global Environmental Education that he narrated and co-produced.

Lee is also complex. She is an artist, science communicator and educator with faculty positions in Australia and California, and she works with Indigenous tribes worldwide – especially here with Ojibwe, Dakota and Lakota people. She is described as a mixed race Native American of Lakota, Chinese and Irish ancestry.

“Both authors write of the wonders of starbathing: sitting quietly under the stars, knowing that humans have always done this, knowing that we literally come from the stars. Working together in this remarkable book, they bring the aurora to readers,” the press said in its announcement.

Copies of these books can be ordered through the Minnesota Historical Society at www.mnhs.org, by local independent bookstores, and anywhere else where books are sold. They can be special ordered for customers when copies are not on shelves.
Native group to digitize Quaker-run Indian boarding school pages

BY AP

A coalition advocating for Native American people traumatized by an oppressive system of boarding schools for Native youths plans to digitize 20,000 archival pages related to schools in that system that were operated by the Quakers.

The Quakers and other faith groups — including Episcopalians, Methodists and Catholics — have in recent years either begun or increased efforts to research and atone for their prior roles in the boarding school system that Native children were forced to attend, and that cut them off from their families, tribes and traditions.

For decades, documents related to Quaker-operated Indian boarding schools have been largely unstudied, as they exist in remote and dispersed collections with limited access, said leaders of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. Now, the coalition, also known as NABS, will make them available to scholars and nonexperts by housing digitized records on a public database.

The records will provide a better understanding of the conditions that children experienced at these schools, and help the compilation of statistics, including how many children went missing and died, said Stephen Curley, director of digital archives for NABS.

“There are hundreds of schools that were operated historically with the sole aim to sever ties between child and family and between child and cultural heritage … so a lot of instances of abuse were administered to these children,” said Curley, a Navajo whose own family was affected by the boarding schools. The records, he said, will be crucial to confirming the anecdotal retelling of their harrowing experiences.

“Not to diminish people speaking up and telling their truths,” Curley said, “but when it comes to providing testimony and having that inform what policy should look like, looking at the records is going to play an integral role to codify what happened next.”

The initiative is funded by a grant of more than $124,000 from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission. It was awarded to NABS to work with Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College and Quaker & Special Collections at Haverford College, both near Philadelphia.

“This is a profound moment because as we have been calling on churches to increase the accessibility of these records for years now, it’s groups like these at these Quaker institutions who have responded to that call,” said Samuel Torres, deputy CEO of NABS, and a member of the Mexica-Nahua Indigenous people.

Partnership leaders said NABS, Swarthmore and Haverford will scan 20,000 pages of enrollment papers, photographs, financial information, correspondence and administrative records this fall.

The records from Swarthmore and Haverford range from 1852 to 1945, according to project organizers. They include at least nine Quaker-operated Indian boarding schools in Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania.

After the scanning, project leaders will hold an information session with tribal communities to discuss the findings. The project will include the production of a video with shared oral histories from boarding school survivors and their families.

“Conditional that this impact the oral history component is so important is a lot of the records that we’re going to be dealing with in this project are particularly from an institutional perspective, from the people who ran the boarding schools … rather than from the children who were forced to attend those schools,” said Sarah Horowitz, curator of rare books and manuscripts and head of Quaker & Special Collections at Haverford.

“So it’s really important to get to those documents,” she said. “But it also means that those documents are not necessarily telling you, if you read them at face value, the stories of the communities … people may need to read against the grain … to really get at the stories of the children.”

The digitized records will be made publicly available in spring 2024 on a database called the National Indian Boarding School Digital Archive, which NABS will launch later this year.

“Part of the impact of colonialism is that many written records describing the lives of Indigenous people are stored in archives like ours that are far away from descendant communities,” said Celia Caust-Ellenbogen, associate curator for Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College. She hopes that the partnership opens the way to further discussion of the role those religious institutions had in the operation of the schools.

“These records can be really important for truth-telling processes and acknowledging and supporting the repair of past harms,” she said. “By making these archival records available, by digitizing these records, we can help restore access to communities that were impacted.”

Get Medicare and Medicaid benefits in a $0 plan

No monthly premium. No copays for covered medical, prescription drugs and dental.

Plus, more than 30 extra benefits like these*

• Animatronic pet: dog, cat or bird
• Fresh produce home delivery
• Electronic tablet with well-being tools

HealthPartners® Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) (HMO SNP)

Call 877-778-7898 (TTY 711) to find out if you’re eligible.
Oct. 1 to March 31: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, seven days a week; April 1 to Sept. 30: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday.

HealthPartners® Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) (HMO SNP)

Call 877-778-7898 (TTY 711) to find out if you’re eligible.
Oct. 1 to March 31: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, seven days a week; April 1 to Sept. 30: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday.

877-713-8215 TTY 711
mshosales@healthpartners.com

Discrimination is against the law. HealthPartners will accept all eligible Beneficiaries who select or are assigned to HealthPartners without regard to medical condition, health status, receipt of health care services, claims experience, medical history, genetic information, disability (including mental or physical impairment), marital status, age, sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity), sexual orientation, national origin, race, color, religion, creed or public assistance status.
“The damage during the boarding school era, and the larger assimilation era, created devastating issues today that resulted in a larger absence of our voices in the dominant narrative. Our department seeks to repair those harms caused through the work we do. We advocate for, and celebrate, Native nations and Native people,” they said.

Internships are funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation. This year’s fellows included:

Eileen Bass, an enrolled member of the Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma (with Standing Rock and Muscogee ties), is a student pursuing a double major in Anthropology and English with a minor in creative writing at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

Her project involves digitalizing tribal newspapers from the 1980s and 1990s to make them available in Dakota and Anishinaabe languages for online research.

Taylor Fairbanks, from the White Earth and Ho-Chunk nations, is a Sociology and American Indian Studies major at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She is also studying her Ojibwe language.

She has been working with Rita Walaszek Arndt, program and outreach manager for MHS’s Native American Initiatives department and curator of the Our Home: Native Minnesota, an exhibit at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul.

Kluver said Fairbanks has been “pulling together” materials and data for a research and outreach guide to help people at the White Earth Nation, and for others doing research across Anishinaabe communities.

Some interns’ projects can be tied to areas far off reservation lands.

Jose Garcia, for example, has ties to both the Lower Sioux Indian Community and to White Earth Nation and is a student at St. Paul College. His internship project involves community engagement and worked with A’nia-Nicole Rae, a community engagement manager for the museum, on a St. Paul neighborhood project.

Garcia’s commitment to community started early. He and a brother started a youth-run nonprofit, Isaac’s Blessings Bags, when he was 15 to help feed and care for homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic in St. Paul. This included unsheltered relatives. (Program details can be found at: https://isaacsblessings-bags.com.)

Raymond George Growingthunder, simply know as George, is working with the historical society’s exhibits department on developing skills for putting together community and other historical exhibits.

He is an enrolled member of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes in Montana and a student at the Institute of American Indian Art at Santa Fe, N.M. He has relatives at Cass Lake. Growingthunder works with aluminum, titanium, steel, brass, copper and acrylic materials for use in exhibits and installation. During his internship, he also worked on preparations for a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution called “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)”. It is scheduled to visit the Minnesota History Center from Aug. 31, 2024 to March 16, 2025.

Another museum intern, well-grounded in Minnesota, is Jim Kunesh, a Standing Rock Lakota descendant. He already has a bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from St. Cloud State University and is completing a degree in Geology and Human Services at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Kunesh worked with MHS’ Jim Rankin, director of archeology, in inspecting Native historical sites, including soil testing. Museums, caring people and tribal leaders want information about sacred locations, Kluver said.

This work used drones to get aerial views of sites at Lower Sioux Indian Community and at Jeffers Petroglyphs, the 7,000 to 9,000-year-old historic and sacred site for Dakota people in southwestern Minnesota.

Gavin Zempel is the final intern from the Mellon Foundation. This year’s museum cohort. Also known as Wambdi Waste, or Good Eagle, he is a member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

Zempel is a Native American Studies and Psychology student at the University of Minnesota, Morris, with a minor degree in English. His internship research is in Indigenous language revitalization.

Also working with MNHS’ Walaszek Arndt, his work focused on creating a new research guide for the Lower Sioux community, and especially about the Battle of Birch Coulee that was a fierce battle site in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

He also researched and wrote about the Pipestone Indian Boarding School that was of personal importance. His Lower Sioux ancestors were among young people taken there during its operating years (1892-1953).

“History matters,” Kluver said. “It keeps communities ... so we don’t feel isolated.” The Minnesota Historical Society programs provide the connections.

Information about programs, historical sites, exhibits and goals of the Minnesota Historical Society can be found online at https://www.mnhs.org.

Information about the museum fellowship program is available at https://www.mnhs.org/internships/fellows/native-american.
Happy back-to-school month!

Boozhoo, and happy back-to-school month! A sure sign of summer coming to an end is our Great Minnesota Get Together – the State Fair. Some of my must-do Fair activities include watching the Llama costume contest, riding Ye Old Mill, viewing the crop art, and attending Indigenous People’s Day at the Fair. I am excited for another year spending time at the fair connecting with Minnesotans from across our state, and celebrating the diverse people, lifestyles, and food that make Minnesota the best state to live.

In August, the Governor and I traveled to the Lower Sioux Indian Community for an official government-to-government visit and met with the Tribal Council to hear about their current issues and priorities. The Tribe took us on a tour of the first hempcrete house, where we learned about the opportunities hemp can provide for tribal economies. We also visited the Cansayapi Wicoicage Oti Community for an official government-to-government visit and met with the Tribal Council to hear about the opportunities hemp can provide for tribal economies. We also visited the Cansayapi Wicoicage Oti Tribe for an official government-to-government visit and met with the Tribal Council to hear about the opportunities hemp can provide for tribal economies.

Also in August, payments of up to $1,300 per family began going out to Minnesotans and will continue through the end of September. These direct payments are a crucial way to put money in the pockets of Minnesotans who need it and empower families across the state to meet their needs on their terms. Putting money directly back into the pockets of those who made our economy strong in the first place was a top priority for me and the Governor this year. Based on your 2021 tax return, the legislation provides payments of $260 for single filers making $75,000 or less, $520 for married couples making $150,00 or less, and another $260 for each dependent, up to three dependents. I am grateful for the Minnesota Department of Revenue staff who are ensuring these payments go out on time for back-to-school expenses, taking a weight off millions of Minnesotans’ shoulders this fall.

As a mom of a fifth grader, the start of a new school year is always a busy and exciting month in our house, but this school year is particularly exciting. For the first time in our state’s history, students in Minnesota will have access to free breakfast and lunch every day at school. Watching Governor Walz sign the Free School Meals bill into law this past session was one of the proudest moments of my career. By providing free breakfast and lunch to all students, we are removing stigma in the lunchroom, helping family pocketbooks, investing in the health and well-being of our children, and ensuring that no student goes hungry.

As we move into a different season of life and gear up for the legislative session, I want to remind you that now is the time to make your voices heard. Don’t hesitate to reach out to our office and your local leaders and legislators to let us know what you want to see in this next session. Every Minnesotan can make a difference, and I’m excited to see where this next season takes us.

Miigwech

Keep your
health insurance

If you or someone you care about have Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, be ready for your renewal

mn.gov/dhs/renewmycoverage
In his most iconoclastic paintings, Denomie, like the 15th-century artist Hieronymus Bosch, packs characters into every inch, collapsing time by pulling them from history, pop culture and current events. Several make repeat appearances: blue bunnies, a recurring motif that Denomie called “protectors,” the Dakota 38+2, American Indian Movement activists, “Wizard of Oz” characters, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, the Mona Lisa and figures representing Minneapolis police officers infamous for abusing two Native men with “rough rides” in the 90s.

All of his paintings swirl with his signature palette: violet, indigo, fuschia, turquoise, lime green, mustard yellow. The vibrant colors disarm, inviting in tough stories like a rainbow Trojan horse. These are Denomie’s correctives to the historical record. Soukup and others have said Denomie paints the “ancestral present.”

“These are paintings that you laugh at, and you also want to cry, you don’t know which way you should react to it, but you’re probably going to react both ways,” Soukup said.

Take “Eminent Domain,” a 10-foot-wide canvas with a sort of pictographic map of the U.S.

“Flying high above the scene in the sky, we have an eagle carrying away a dachshund and right next to them, you see Evel Knievel jumping his bike across the church,” Soukup says. “But directly below that you see depictions of sexual abuse by boarding schools and the Catholic Church; you see a depiction of the Ghost Dance from Wounded Knee, both in the 19th century and in the 1970s.”

Across from it hangs “A Beautiful Hero, Woody Keeble.” Denomie has depicted, on horseback in a mountain range, the World War II and Korean War veteran Woodrow Wilson Keeble of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate. Taking fire at him are anthropomorphized birds and dogs with machine guns, while blue rabbits dot the snow-covered slopes.

“The works in this room are centered around the theme of a beautiful hero and who determines a hero?” Soukup explains. “The question is who gets to write about history, who gets to learn about history, and what can we learn from questioning our sources about history? That is something that Jim did from the moment he started painting.”

A righteous anger

Denomie was an enrolled member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band. Born in Hayward, Wis., he grew up in south Minneapolis. In many interviews and talks, he recalls how he knew he wanted to be an artist since he was a little kid, but he dropped out of high school when a counselor discouraged him from pursuing art.

For decades, he did drywall and fell into a life of what he called “partying and addiction.” He returned to art in the 1990s, as well as American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota.

“I went back to drywall, but it became a vehicle that allowed me to paint what I wanted to paint and not necessarily what I needed to sell,” Denomie says in the video. “And so I was able to develop more challenging, more witty, political, social commentary, which is probably what I’m most known for today.”

He went on to paint with what Wilson calls a righteous anger, rooted in the government’s treatment of Native people. This included his own family—his grandparents were taken and placed in Native boarding schools.

When Jim was sick with cancer the first time, Wilson, their son, and some friends went to the pipeline protests at Standing Rock in South Dakota. Their son, she says, stayed for months, sending home stories to Denomie about the violent treatment of nonviolent activists. Denomie turned these stories into a series of paintings on Standing Rock, depicting ferocious dogs and fire hoses used on protesters in the dead of winter.

In his paintings, that righteous anger mixed with wit and whimsy to create what Denomie called a “metaphorical realism.”
But Denomie’s legacy isn’t only in his art, says Soukup. “His legacy is going to be a lot of things, and things that we won’t even know about, because we’re only 16 months after his passing,” Soukup says. “But hand in hand with all of it is mentorship and care for community, friends, family. The amount of people who have stories, the amount of people who Jim gave undivided attention to, is profound.”

Another longtime friend, mentee and fellow Ojibwe artist Andrea Carlson, agrees. She calls him her “art dad.” They first met when Carlson was an MFA student in the early 2000s and he visited her studio.

“I didn’t know what I was doing, but he was like, ‘Keep doing it,’” says Carlson, who is now based in Grand Marais, Minn. “I feel like I need to do that for other artists who is now based in Grand Marais, Minn. The two would go on to exhibit together at Mia in the 2007 “New Skins” show. And a few of Carlson’s paintings are currently on display at Mia, just around the corner from Denomie’s show.

**Leaving a void**

Denomie’s work held a particular place for Indigenous viewers. “Jim was always saving the last laugh for Native people,” Carlson says. “We have these very hard histories, but he wasn’t going to just replay the hard histories, he was going to reserve healing and joy for Native people in his work.”

Like Carlson, textile artist Maggie Thompson recalls always seeing Denomie show up at exhibition openings, whether the artist was just starting out or established. “I think because of his position in the art world, it was just like really cool to see him show up regardless of who or where,” Thompson says.

Thompson is Ojibwe from the Fond du Lac Band and is based in Minneapolis. She was recently awarded the 2023 Jim Denomie Memorial Scholarship, an award that was created soon after his passing by the Denomie and Wilson Family, and the Minneapolis-based All My Relations Arts, the Native American Community Development Institute, and Bockley Gallery.

Thompson is the second to receive the $10,000 award, after the 2022 inaugural recipient, Duluth artist Jonathan Thunder. She says the award has given her a boost at a moment when she was struggling, both emotionally and financially. “I was feeling a little lost and a little defeated,” Thompson said. “So I felt like receiving the award kind of gave me the motivation and gave me a reminder of why I do what I do.”

Like Denomie, Thompson has demonstrated great commitment to the community. She mentors and employs young artists, both Native and non-Native, and even toured the Denomie exhibition with them. Thompson also often offers her northeast Minneapolis studio for community events.

“I think art can be an important vehicle to keep that momentum and that engagement and give people another place to feel at home and welcome,” she says.

**What’s left behind**

Diane Wilson says his community was shocked at Denomie’s quick passing, which sparked the scholarship. “There was just this outpouring of ‘What can we do? How can we help?’” Wilson says. “That’s why we set up that scholarship, because people needed to do something, so they poured their grief into donations.”

In the wooded hills of Shafer, Minn., Wilson walks the grounds of the home and studios she long shared with Denomie. She points to a line of old carousel horses lying in tall grass.

“He had this idea that eventually he was going to do an installation because he had flying horses in a lot of his paintings,” Wilson says. Behind them is a cut tree stump on a sawhorse. “That was going to be a next sculpture,” Wilson recalls. “He got sick so suddenly, that it’s like he just left in the middle of a lot of projects.”

Denomie’s studio above their garage has remained much the same since his death, save for some paintings and drawings that were removed for the exhibition and archiving.

Every surface is covered with materials and inspirations, from photos of friends and globs of paint to figurines of the California Raisins and the masks he collected from around the world.

Wilson recalls coming up here from her writing studio next door. Music would be blasting – he always had his 60-CD player going while he worked, she says – and they would dance and joke around.

“I wish he was here, but now that some time has passed I’m thinking about, well, how can we continue his legacy?” Wilson says. “I’ve been thinking about his space. It’d be nice to have creative energy in here again.”

Wilson sits in her living room, beneath one of his paintings hanging over the fireplace. She says there will also be more exhibitions to follow – a group show at the University of Minnesota Nash Gallery in early 2024, and Wilson and others are planning another for his recent painting series of the Dakota 38+2 – some of his “best work,” she says.

In the meantime, Wilson wants to return to the Mia exhibition, which she finds “poignant” because “he got to choose what people would see.”

“What lingers really of his spirit in this plane is in his artwork. So when you see Jim’s paintings, that’s still where he resides,” Wilson says.

“The Lyrical Art of Jim Denomie” is on view through March 2024 at Mia.
Nakomis Mitchell is the NAIG’23 golf silver medalist

Nakomis Mitchell’s Indian name is Gitigigwaniikwe, meaning Spotted Feather Woman. Mitchell is enrolled with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

Mitchell played on the golf team for Team Mni-Sota in the North American Indigenous Games 2023 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This fall she will be a freshman at Bemidji State University.

Mitchell comes from a family of golfers and that’s where her inspiration comes from. “My brothers Dakota Brunelle and Coltin Mitchell have been my biggest inspiration in the golf world,” said Mitchell. “If it wasn’t for them pushing, encouraging and teaching me I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Mitchell graduated from Cass Lake-Bena High School in the Class of 2023 as an Honor Student. She also graduated the Advanced Ojibwe Language/Culture class and received an eagle feather.

Athletically she received a varsity letter beginning in seventh grade and up to graduation. She was named First Team All-Conference in 2021 and 2022 in golf, Second Team All-Conference in 2023 in golf, and All Conference 2022 in volleyball.

The core values of indigenous athletes often define how they practice and compete. “You have to respect the game and the athletes around you,” said Mitchell. “I find staying humble has really helped me in accomplishing my goals in this sport, and before my meets I offer tobacco to the creator. I am a very proud Indigenous Ikwe, meaning woman.

NAIG’23 provided highlights for most athletes. Mitchell said, “My highlights of the tournament were definitely chipping it in for the first time in an actual tournament on Hole 16, and also winning a sudden death playoff to receive my silver medal.”

NAIG’23 athletes are represented as indigenous people by competing against others. “Representing my tribe Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Team Mni-Sota was a great honor for me,” said Mitchell. “I felt like I had the support of the Leech Lake Reservation with tribal and non-tribal members throughout the state of Minnesota cheering me on as I moved through this three day event.”

“I hope I inspired young and old in the golfing community to be the best that they can be and to work hard to achieve your goals,” said Mitchell.

The Team Mni-Sota golf head coach was Nakomis’ dad Jamie Mitchell and her brother Coltin Mitchell was her assistant coach.

“They were very supportive in helping guide me on some shots that I was unsure of and gave me the confidence to believe I could be a medal winner and helped me keep my head in the game,” said Mitchell.

Coltin Mitchell is Nakomis’ older brother and coach. He said, “One positive attribute Nakomis brought to her round during NAIG was keeping her mental game strong through 54 holes and staying focused on her goal she went out there with. The way she kept her composure, mentally and physically, throughout the three days she played, she’s definitely ready to take the step and play at the next level.”

“She stayed positive, focused and humble throughout her 54 holes of golf,” said dad Jamie Mitchell. “Her goal was to bring home a medal at the start of the games and after playing 54 holes she was tied for the silver or bronze medal. At this point Nakomis knew she had to stay focused and play smart.”

“Her selection of using an iron verses her driver to keep her straight and in the fairway was a smart choice. To watch her tee off and hit a beautiful shot she knew she made the right choice and you could see and feel the confidence she had as we walked down the fairway,” added Coach Jamie.

Coach Jamie continued to talk about his daughter the eventual silver medalist and Team Mni-Sota golfer and said, “She won the silver medal with a par on that hole. It was a pretty special moment for us on the tee box right before she teed off on the sudden death hole. We gave each other a hug and both got a little teary eyed, both knowing that after seven years of coaching her that this was it. My last time standing and walking with her as a coach.”

“Playing on this type of course at NAIG will help her prepare for playing at Bemidji State this fall as the course was tight and you had to be straight,” added Coach Jamie.

Joanne Rae Whiterabbit
August 30, 1963 - August 27, 2023

Joanne Rae Whiterabbit, age 59, of Hudson, WI passed away on August 27, 2023, at her home with family by her side. Joanne was born on August 30, 1963, to parents Ronald and Roberta Whiterabbit. She was a cheerleader at Blaine Senior High (’81) attended Augsburg College and graduated with a degree in business management.

She worked as Executive Director for The Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce for 10 years. Joanne was involved with nonprofits and sat on numerous boards across the American Indian Community. She was one of the most kind, generous, and hilarious people you would ever meet. Her favorite pass times were listening to tunes while boating on the St. Croix River, meeting up with friends at Barkers, pull-tabbing, and watching the Vikings. Her love for her children was one of a kind and she would do anything for them.

She will remain in the hearts of her children Ron and Jae Whiterabbit. Her aunt Charlene Steele, Uncle’s Byron and Dwight Steele, Uncle Forrest (Kathyleen) and Forrest Whiterabbit Jr. Aunt Elaine (Robert), Sharyn (James) Whiterabbit Noonan. Uncle Harvey Helgemo, Cousins Wendy Helgemo and Heidi, Adalina and Dalia Tucker. Nephew Morgan Whiterabbit. Her brother Chad (Nichole) and their children, Lauren, Ryan, Coltan Whiterabbit. Her best friend, Colleen Warner, and Ron Grubner.

She is preceded in death by her parents Ronald (Sharen) and Roberta; sister Renee; Grandparents Murray (Val), Mitchell (Camille), Whiterabbit. Grandparents August (Helen) Wiecki. Aunts Marlene Helgemo and Sharyn Whiterabbit.

A memorial gathering for Joanne was held on August 30 at O’Connell Family Funeral Home in Hudson.

Memorials are preferred to The Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce.
Native issues on film
When I’m not watching “Reservation Dogs” and “Dark Winds,” I watch Native documentaries on cutting-edge issues. (Maybe this column should be called “Film Matters.”)

The following films illuminate Indigenous struggles in North and South America:
- “This Stolen Country of Mine” (2022), streaming on Ovid
  This amazing 93-minute documentary directed by Marc Wiese updates the story of colonization in Ecuador. In this South American nation, the bad actors seeking to extract energy and mineral resources from Indigenous lands are from the People’s Republic of China.

  The film focuses on Paul Jarrin Mosquera, a charismatic leader of the Indigenous resistance to oil exploitation, and journalist Fernando Villavicencio, who gained access to contracts that the Ecuadorian government signed with Chinese firms and became the target of government repression.

  In short, the administration of President Rafael Correa granted oil concessions to Chinese firms that guaranteed energy resources worth 10 times the monetary value of the contracts. When Villavicencio exposed the government’s corrupt dealings with China, paramilitary police raided his family home, forcing him to flee and take refuge in a Native villages in the Andes.

  The Indigenous resistance portrayed in the film features wise and courageous leaders caught up in revolutionary events. The camera travels along when Indigenous fighters burn up a Chinese mining camp.

  Villavicencio, who eventually fled to Spain, returned to Ecuador, against the advice of associates who feared for his life. Past the timeline of the documentary, Villavicencio declared his candidacy for Ecuador’s presidency in May 2023. On Aug. 9, following a campaign rally in Quito, he was assassinated by a gunman.

- “Lakota Nation vs. United States” (2023), in theaters, or rent on Prime Video
  Over close to two hours, this entertaining and stylish documentary, directed by Jesse Short Bull and Laura Tomaselli, chronicles the long struggle to gain back Lakota land.

  Starting with the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties between the U.S. government and the Great Sioux Nation (along with the Arapaho and Cheyenne), the film looks at the pernicious conduct by the U.S. in unilaterally abrogating the terms of the 1868 treaty following the discovery of gold in the Black Hills.

  “Lakota Nation,” which covers a lot of ground – from the protracted legal fight over the Black Hills to Indian boarding schools and the contemporary #LandBack movement – employs clips from cartoons and Hollywood films depicting Indians in stunningly crude, stereotypical and negative images. Layli Long Soldier, one of the film’s writers, reads from her works, including passages about the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 and its tragic aftermath, including the mass hanging of 38 Dakota warriors in Mankato, Minnesota. Her contributions to the film are poetic and moving.

- “Oyate” (2022), streaming on Prime Video, or rent on YouTube
  This 91-minute documentary, directed by Emil Benjamin and Brandon Jackson, looks at the aftermath of the 2016-17 resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. The story of the movement to stop the Black Snake – the pipeline from the Bakken oil patch in North Dakota to a terminal in Patoka, Illinois – is told by those involved in the epochal struggle, including Chase Iron Eyes, Phyllis Young, Tokata Iron Eyes and current Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

  Energy Transfer Partners, the corporation behind the oil pipeline, employed private security firms that conducted surveillance on the activists and, along with law enforcement personnel from around the Midwest (including the Hemepin County Sheriff’s Office), used water hoses, rubber bullets and tear gas against the Water Protectors.

  In 2017, The Intercept (theintercept.com) published reports on the nefarious activities of TigerSwan, the security firm employed by Energy Transfer, to disrupt the movement of Water Protectors, which was originated and led by women and Native youth.

  The Intercept found that TigerSwan, over a span of nine months, conducted “surveillance of activists through aerial technology, social media monitoring, and direct infiltration, as well as attempts to shift public opinion through a counterinformation campaign. The company, made up largely of special operations military veterans, was formed during the war in Iraq and incorporated its counterinsurgency tactics into its effort to suppress an indigenous-led movement centered around protection of water.”

  The #NoDAPL movement inspired Indian Country’s resistance to colonial exploitation of energy resources. However, the threats continue, from Ecuador to the Arrowhead region of Minnesota, as corporations probe for situations where they can exploit craven elected leaders and weak regulatory structures.
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ONGOING
American Indian Group Prenatal
Expecting American Indian moms, come join us for a culturally focused prenatal care and education group at the Indian Health Board Administrative Office (2020 Minnehaha Ave S.) every Tuesday from 5 to 5:30 pm. Referrals will be provided, as well, as a gift card for every class attended. Choose from Oct. 17 - Dec. 28. Enrollment is open. Contact Amy at 612-644-9726 or email amyandtzbuzzard@yahoo.com.

Thru March ’24
The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie
The Minneapolis Institute of Art will survey Jim Denomie’s expansive artistic career in The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie. This exhibition surveys the artist’s singular vision and signature style over the second half of the artist’s career, from 2007 to 2022. Jim Denomie (Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe, 1955–2022) drew inspiration from lived experiences, pop culture, Anishinaabe traditions, and American histories to tell compelling narratives that depict his future generations to follow their hope is their stories may inspire. For more info, see: https://www.naiahf.org.

Sept 7, 14, 21
Four Sisters Farmers Market
The Four Sisters Farmers Market is an Indigenous-focused farmers market centered on providing increased access to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate local foods within the American Indian Cultural Corridor. Located on East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. All are welcome. 11am–3pm. Native American Community Development Institute, 1414 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis.

For info, see: www.nacdi.org.

Sept 9
Owamniyomni Site Visit
Join Dakota tribal members for a visit to Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) and Wita Wayaapi (Spirit Island) in Minneapolis. These sacred spaces have been heavily altered, but the look at the Falls is now closed to commercial boat traffic, and there is an opportunity to reconnect with the river and restore this place in meaningful ways. The visit will include a presentation by Shelley Buck, president of Friends of the Falls and vice-president of Prairie Island Indian Community, as well as a short walking tour of the area. Food & drink provided. Check the times. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/owlarniymni-site-visit-tickets-703425232807.

Sept 10
Conference on Native American Nutrition 2023
Devoted to the food and nutrition of Indigenous Peoples. The conference on Native American Nutrition will bring together tribal and community leaders, nutrition and wellness educators, researchers and students, health practitioners, government officials, funders, and others to discuss the current state of both Indigenous and academic scientific knowledge about Native food systems, food sovereignty, nutrition, and health, and will identify new areas of work. The most cutting-edge information will be presented, and networking, community building, and the formation of new collaborations among the attendees will be encouraged and facilitated. Tickets from $50 – $125. Virtual attendance also available. Presented by the University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute and the Oklahoma State University Center for Indigenous Health Research and Policy. If you need any assistance - please send us an email at james@stagetimeproductions.com. Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, 2400 Mystic Lake Blvd NW, Prior Lake, MN. For info, see: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/60th-annual-conference-on-native-americanismutrition-2023-tickets-636693464237.

Sept 14
MAICC Golf Tournament
The 30th Annual MN American Indian Chamber of Commerce’s annual fundraiser Golf Tournament will be held at Mount Frontenac Golf Course, 32420 Ski Rd, Frontenac. To registration, see: https://maicc30th-annual-golf-tournament.perfectgolftourney.com.

Sept 15 – 17
Makȟáta Traditional Pow-Wow
51st Annual Traditional Makȟáta Wacipi Honoring the 38 Dakota. Every September, Native Americans from a variety of tribes congregate in Mankato’s Land of Memories Park, where the Dakota people held numerous ceremonies and gatherings prior to the 1862 US-Dakota War. MJ Jerry Dearly and Bill Taylor. Arena Director: Lendl Seaboy. Host drum: Maza Kute. Grand Entries: Friday at 7pm, Saturday at 1 and 7 pm, and Sunday at 1 pm. The three-day event features beautiful dancing, traditional music, delicious foods, and handmade crafts. Land of Memories Park, 100 Amos Owen Lane, Mankato, MN (High 169).

Weekend entry: $7. Children 12 and under are free. Senior 60+ free. For info, see: https://www.mahkataowamniyomni.com.

Sept 20
Patricia Ningewance
Welcome Patricia Ningewance to our new events space, the Birchbank Bistro, for a wonderful conversation to celebrate her new handbook, Gaagigadodaa. Patricia is the author of Survival Ojibwe, Reclaiming our Territory Word by Word, Ojibwemowin, and many others. Patricia has spent her life teaching languages both among loved ones and in the classroom. Gaagigadodaa is a handbook designed for students and teachers to immerse themselves in the Ojibwe language. Limited to the first 60 registrants. Birchbank Bistro, 1629 Hennepin Ave #275, Minneapolis. https://birchbankbooks.com.

Sept 23
Star Seeds: We Are The Star Nation

The installation centers on Arapaho, Dakota, and Anishinaabe cultures and their star knowledge, determination of human life cycles, and relationship to the natural world. Whiteman has spent a decade studying the stories and protocols necessary to share these treasured pieces of culture with a broader community, though her focus is for Native people to first be enriched with a representation of themselves and their cosmic mystery. The Bell Museum offers free admission to all indigenous people. 7:30-10pm. Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. For info, see: https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/event/after-hours-star-seeds.

Sept 23
Pawwow for Hope

Sept 23
We Are Cedar-Riverside: Native American Cultural Immersion Workshop
As part of We Are Cedar-Riverside, an affordable independent living community for seniors 55+ coming to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood in Minneapolis, The Theodore welcomes seniors earning 30-50% of the Hennepin County Area Median Income (AMI).

Theodore Wirth Woods
The Theodore Wirth Woods
The Theodore Wirth Woods
The Theodore Wirth Woods
The Theodore Wirth Woods

Community Calendar listings are FREE
To have your event listed, email them to: thecirelenews@gmail.com by the 20th of the month.

NOW TAKING RESERVATIONS!
Call to schedule an appointment at our leasing office.

An affordable independent living community for seniors 55+ coming to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood in Minneapolis, The Theodore welcomes seniors earning 30-50% of the Hennepin County Area Median Income (AMI).

• Located next to Theodore Wirth Park and Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden
• Fitness center, walking paths, gardens, greenhouse, and underground parking
• Beautifully appointed apartments

SCAN QR CODE OR CALL TO LEARN MORE

TheTheodoreApts.com | 612-448-3636
VISIT OUR LEASING OFFICE: 1515 Glenwood Ave. | Minneapolis, MN

© 2023 Ecumen. All rights reserved.
event series, the Brian Coley Community Center provides this unique opportunity to learn about the rich heritage of Minnesota’s Native American community and their contributions to our communities today. There will be time throughout the program to ask and answer questions, as well as food. This workshop is the third of three workshops. 1-4 pm. Brian Coley Neighborhood Center, Pillsbury United Communities, 420 15th Ave S, Minneapolis.

Sept 25
Marcie Rendon
Join us for a special event with award-winning author and poet Marcie Rendon. This is a rare chance to hear directly from an author who has made a significant impact on the world of literature. 1-3 pm. There is no cost for the event, but you must reserve your spot at northwoodsarts.org. The Congregational Church 401 Lake Ave, Hackensack, MN. For info: see: https://www.exploremn.org/eventafternoonmarcie-rendon/30829.

Sept 26
Campus Club of the U of MN for BIPOC/AI
Please join us for our annual BIPOC/AI Faculty and Staff Welcome and Reception! The reception will be a social gathering for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and American Indian faculty and staff at the School of Public Health to connect, network, and be in community while also being recognized for important contributions to the school. 4-7 pm. Registration is required to attend. RSVP by September 23. 300 Washington Avenue Southeast Cowman Memorial Union, 4th Floor, Minneapolis. For info: see: https://www.sph.umn.edu/event/bi poc-ai-faculty-and-staff-welcome-reception.

Sept 26
St. Paul – Fall Metro Indian Education Gathering
Join us for the Metro Indian Education Gathering hosted at the Minnesota Humanities Center. Anyone connected to American Indian Education and/or American Indian students are welcome to attend. Luncheon will be served potluck style. A main dish will be provided. Please register so we can plan accordingly and bring a side dish or dessert to share! 11 am - 1:30 pm. For registration and questions: registration@mnhum.org. For info: see: https://www.mnhum.org/event/fall-metro-indian-education-gathering.

Sept 27
An Evening with James Vukelich Kaagegaabaw
An evening with James Vukelich Kaagegaabaw, author of The Seven Generations and The Seven Grandfather Teachings. Join us for an evening with James Vukelich Kaagegaabaw, who will discuss the inspiration behind his new book and will do a short reading and answer audience questions. Birch bark Books and Native Arts 7:30 - 9pm. Birch Bark Bivoua, 1629 Hervepin Ave, #275, Minneapolis. For info: see: https://birchbarkbooks.com.

Sept 29
Night of Remembrance, Honoring, Encouragement, and Acknowledgement
We invite you to join us in offering song, dance, and prayer to remember, honor, and encourage Indian boarding school survivors and those who never came home. We will gather from 6:30 pm at Anishinabe Academy. There is free parking on site. If you are a boarding school survivor, we invite you to come be honored by the community. Anishinabe Academy, 3100 E 28th St, Minneapolis MN. For info: see: www.boardingschooleating.org or email: info@anhsb.org or 612-354-7700.

Sept 29 – Oct 1
Winona Dakota Gathering Homecoming & Powwow
Homecoming & Powwow is an annual event for families of indigenous and local populations around the region. It is held in Unity Park at the East end of Lake Winona. The Winona Dakota Gathering Homecoming & Powwow will feature a Grandfather Teachings. Join us for an evening with James Vukelich Kaagegaabaw, who will discuss the inspiration behind his new book and will do a short reading and answer audience questions. Birch bark Books and Native Arts 7:30 - 9pm. Birch Bark Bivoua, 1629 Hervepin Ave, #275, Minneapolis. For info: see: https://winonadakota-tyantaliance.org.

Oct 1 (deadline)
Democracy is Indigenous Call for Artists
The NUIUC is thrilled to announce the return of our Democracy is Indigenous Call for Artists as we search for the next piece of artwork that elevates the urban Native Voice! We are looking for submissions of digital artwork which capture the essence of “Democracy is Indigenous” and that can be featured nationally in marketing materials and shared with our cohort of urban Indian nonprofits. The contest winner will receive a cash prize of $3,000. Submit a piece of digital artwork by October 1st. Artists may submit up to three pieces of art. For more info, email: Rif@nufc.org.

Oct 1
Robert Mirabal
Robert Mirabal The Cedar Presents An Evening with ROBERT MIRABAL, RARE TRIBAL MOB TRIO. Robert Mirabal is an internationally respected Pueblo musician and Native American flute player. Doors open: 7pm, Showtime: 7:30pm. All Ages. $22 Advance, $27 Day of Show. This is a seated show with general admission, first-come-first-served seating. The Cedar is happy to reserve seats for patrons who require special seating accommodations. General Admission tickets are available online. The Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave S, Minneapolis. For info: see: https://www.thecedar.org/listing.

Oct 10
UROC Community Day 2023
Celebrate University-community partnerships at UROC’s annual Community Day open house with engaging displays, live music, food by local chefs, official UROC swag, and more. Visit with UROC’s University researchers and their community partners, meet Goldy Gopher, and engage in live storytelling with local artists. The event is free and open to the public. 10-7pm. Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Ave N, Minneapolis. For info: see: https://uroc.umn.edu/news/ events/uroc-community-day-2023-3-7-tuesday-october-10.

Oct 12
Anishinaabe Museum of Treaties and Culture Opening
The Anishinaabe Museum of Treaties and Culture is taking form in downtown Park Rapids, Minn. in the old Carnegie Library, which also was the former site of the Enbridge office for the Line 3 tar sands pipeline project. The museum will open two years after the controversial Line 3 went into operation in the heart of ceded Treaty territory. Giwedindong’s permanent features include Anishinaabe treaties with Indigenous nations and colonial nations, from the One Dish One Spoon Treaty to the 1867 Treaty with the Anishinaabe. The museum’s grand opening will feature a prominent Water Protector exhibit with numerous photos, plus stories and narratives from the Water Protector movement. Anishinaabe Museum of Treaties and Culture, 101 2nd Street W, Park Rapids MN.

Oct 16
Native American College Fair
The Native American College Fair provides a setting that allows students to have meaningful conversation with representatives about college, life, admission & financial aid. As of 2021 all colleges & universities participating in the Native American College Fair must offer Native American specific supports on their campus. Limiting the schools who participate will provide future Native American college students with information regarding schools currently offering supports specifically for them. 7 am – 12pm. Minnesota History Center, 345 W Kellogg Blvd, St Paul. For info: see: https://tinyurl.com/26cmh4u or email: nativeness-collegefair@gmail.com.

2023 ELECTION DATES
Sept 22: Vote by mail or in person from Sept. 22 through Nov. 6.
Oct 17: Register in advance by Oct. 17 to save time on Election Day
Nov 7: Election Day, Vote.
Find out important voting information for your precinct by entering your address into the Polling Place Finder at: https://pollfinder.sos.mn.gov.
I want you to remember me

BY ARNE VAINIO, MD

I was looking for an old truck someone had told me about and I thought I had the right place. She slowly stepped out of the house into the hot summer sun. She was thin and pale and I didn’t recognize her until she spoke.

“I heard you’re going to medical school. I always thought there was more to you than you let on.”

As I was growing up I had worked lots of jobs that I liked, but they didn’t really lead anywhere. I was a skidder operator for years and worked dragging trees out of the woods so they could be loaded onto trucks and brought to the saw mills. I worked on a saw mill and I was used to hard and dangerous work with very little pay. There was no health insurance offered and going to see doctors was not anything anyone routinely did. I was in my late twenties and any thoughts of mortality were distant and didn’t apply to me.

I pushed deep into her belly and I knew he was a mean drunk when he was alive. Her husband drank himself to death and I knew easily a generation older than me. Her husband was and I hadn’t seen her in a very long time. She knew my mother and she was easily a generation older than me. Her husband drank himself to death and I knew he was a mean drunk when he was alive.

When I made the decision to go to medical school, I was a professional firefighter and a paramedic and I loved what I did.

Every time the truck or the ambulance went out, someone was in trouble and we had a chance to save another life. Most of the time we did.

I sometimes saw death and most of the time it came out of the blue.

She leaned against her cane and I could tell even that was an effort and she spoke in short sentences.

“I could tell you didn’t recognize me. I was getting sick and I couldn’t eat and I was constipated all the time. I tried drinking warm water and I ate prunes and that didn’t help. I went to see a doctor and he did some blood tests and said he didn’t see anything and I didn’t go back for a long time.”

I didn’t know what to say and we were both silent. She took a deep breath and went on. “I remember when you were a little kid. You used to read those science fiction books when everyone else would rather watch TV. Do you still read them?”

“I do.” I answered.

“I always liked that you did that.” She said. “I like to read and my husband and my kids thought it was such a waste of time. I always wanted to go to a tropical island somewhere and I wanted to swim in the ocean and watch the sunset from the beach.”

“Did you ever get to do that?” I asked. “I never did.” She replied. “My husband never wanted to travel and said everything we needed was right here. Now I’ll never get to go.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“I went back to the doctor.” She replied. “They took me to surgery to see what was causing my stomach problems. They found out I’m all full of cancer and there’s nothing they can do. They closed my back up and told me I have less than 6 months and they sent me back home. My kids are going to take turns staying with me for as long as I can stay here.”

“I’m so sorry to hear that.” I replied. She took my hand and said, “I want you to feel my belly. All that cancer is inside there and I want you to know what it feels like so you never miss this.” She put my hand over her stomach and she pushed it down hard and she moved it to different parts of her abdomen and she kept pushing. I could feel multiple hard areas throughout her abdomen and I was worried her pushing so hard was going to hurt her. She could tell I was trying to hold back and she pushed my hand down harder and said, “I know you’re worried about hurting me and I want you to feel this deep inside. I’m an old woman and I don’t have anything left to pass on to anyone. My opportunity to leave something permanent is gone. I want to know the first time you ever recognized cancer was here. You’re going to feel this again and you’re going to have to tell someone what it is. You need to know what this feels like so you catch it earlier than they did with me. If you’re going to be a doctor, you can’t be afraid.”

I pushed deep into her belly and I knew where the major structures in her abdomen were. I followed along her large intestine, past her left kidney and up to her spleen in her left upper quadrant. I followed her transverse colon past her stomach and her pancreas and over to her liver in her right upper quadrant and her gall bladder under that. I followed her colon down past her right kidney and down to her appendix and over to the center of her abdomen by her umbilicus. All along I kept finding hard nodules and masses with softer, normal areas between. She winced occasionally as I palpated and she finally spoke again.

“You’re a reader. You know there’s a whole big world out there I will never see. All those beaches and sunsets will have to live in my imagination. I can picture them and I can smell the ocean and I can feel the breeze on my face if I just close my eyes. I know you get that and I know you can close your eyes and be by the ocean or on Mars or anywhere you’ve ever read about. You and I have that in common and you’re the only one who understands me.”

She was quiet again and then she spoke.

“I want you to be a good doctor. I want you to travel and I want you to dream. I want you to not listen when someone says you can’t do something or that something you desire doesn’t make sense. I want you to never miss anyone’s cancer. Someday when you’re watching the sunset with the ocean breeze on your face you want to close your eyes and remember me.”

Arne Vainio, M.D. (Mille Lacs Ojibwe), a family practice physician on the Fond du Lac reservation in Cloquet, Minnesota. He can be contacted at a-vainio@hotmail.com.
Mercury retrograde is in full effect until the 15th of this month. I have experienced it many times now, with my debit card not working, to people flying off the handle in emotional pain. Most people who don’t follow astrology will scoff at this, but think about it! Write events down and you may ‘get it’; the patterns I mean. Don’t take this lightly is all I am saying. Stay sane. For me and all who love you.

I don’t know if you read your daily/monthly... horrorscopes. The stars and their alignment have been scientifically calculated by most ancient peoples since time immemorial. Think of the Old Ones, they knew how to interpret the galaxy, like the Mayan Empire did and they, as far as is known, did not have telescopes.

The most important thing to me in the news lately is that the U.S.A. of Denial are holding congressional hearings regarding the UFO/UAP phenomenon. Heheheheee! Mmm, oh ya, the vehicles and their pilots have been observing and testing on humanity for millennia. My favorite theory is that we, who are sure that we are the pinnacle of civilization, apex predators are merely test bunnies of an Alien ant farm. Think of the animals who have been tortured for ‘science.’ The space brethren still do that to us.

That is us; a failed experiment for being too warlike and unreliable. There was a story about how GOD (Christian god) made some cookies and the first batch was burnt so HE tried again. Those cookies were pale and undercooked so HE made another batch. This time they came out golden brown and were perfect! LOL! I totally bought it and love my complexion. Now don’t get all het up about the story, but I liked it when I was a kid. Umm...still do. My people are all beautiful, spiritual and still here.

I have had many experiences with the Star Beings who are our ancestors and who still visit us. Many Indigenous creation stories begin with them putting us here on Earth. They showed us how to live with Earth and take care of our Mother amongst other teachings of how to be a true human being. That is why so many nations here on Turtle Island refer to them as “The People Who Came From the Stars”. Look it up.

Back here this twisted dimension of life is not easy for most. In Rezberry, it’s been a strange, hazy summer, maybe because of the wild fires. The sun, and therefore the heat, has not gone above 90F but that’s okay. I’ve acclimatized to cooler weather but I enjoy not having to crank about the heat like I did in Minneapolis.

But wait! Republicans have stated over and over in mindless, soulless babble that there is no climate change or global warming. If they were honest (Bwahahahaha!!! As if?) and cared about their children’s children, instead of power and money, simply by watching news they would take steps to slow the catastrophes we are currently experiencing.

Instead they have plans to mess up other planets after they throw this one out like garbage in a landfill. Good luck with that.

I tried to not mention Ol’ Pee Stain #45 but am unable to do so. My bad. But just when I didn’t think IT could be any worse, IT manages to outdo everything prior to its previous bald-headed lies and treasonous machinations. Wow. Just WOW!!! My consolation is that IT has finally been indicted for his nefarious crime spree and after trial may face jail and/or prison, where I hope IT will stay.

I’m still mad that IT will never go away in the minds of people and in history but after this I will no longer pay attention to anything IT does or says. IT has done irreparable damage that in time may change for the better. No, I am not so naive that I believe any one political party or nation has all the answers but I do feel that the generations coming up will do their collective best to save what is left of this Mother we share.

Last month I left you with some not-so-secretive clues about my reality. Not that I ever lied, I just wanted some anonymity regarding the stories I have shared with you for all these years that some of you all may have identified with. Ricey Wild is a real person, me, and I have enjoyed writing and sharing my confounding life with you.

I love to laugh but sometimes I cry too. It is all a part of the human experience that we have been born into. I love you!!!
SUPPORT THE CIRCLE!

The Circle is a non-profit newspaper that has been covering the Native community of Minnesota for over 42 years. With your help we will continue to provide coverage of Native news, culture and events. Donate today. It's tax-deductible.

- I have enclosed a check in the amount of $________ to support the good work The Circle does to cover the Native community.
- Please charge my credit card $__________:
  - Visa
  - Mastercard
  - American Express
  - Discover

Card#   Expiration

Name on card

Signature

Name

Address

City     State     Zip

Phone     Email

YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

SEND TO: THE CIRCLE, 3045 BLOOMINGTON AVENUE, BOX 7506, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55407-9998.

THE CIRCLE IS A NON-PROFIT 501(c)3 ORGANIZATION.  •  PHONE: 612-722-3686  •  WEBSITE: https://thecirclenews.org  •  E-MAIL: thecirclenews@gmail.com

---

BULK MAILING

The Circle

If you would like to receive monthly bulk mailings for your school, office, or organization, please fill out the form below and send in with your payment. Price includes postage and handling. You will receive The Circle every month right to your doorstep.

The Circle – The Native American Newspaper of Minnesota - has covered Native American issues in Minnesota and nationally for over 40 years. We are the most trusted news source for Native issues, arts, and culture in Minnesota.

If you would like to receive monthly bulk mailings for your school, office, or organization, please fill out the form below and send in with your payment. Price includes postage and handling. You will receive The Circle every month right to your doorstep.

The Circle – The Native American Newspaper of Minnesota - has covered Native American issues in Minnesota and nationally for over 40 years. We are the most trusted news source for Native issues, arts, and culture in Minnesota.

Name

Address

City     State     Zip

Phone

I have enclosed $__________ FOR A ____________________ BULK SUBSCRIPTION

- Visa
- Mastercard
- American Express
- Discover

Card#   Exp. Date   Signature

Send to: The Circle, 3045 Bloomington Ave, Box 7506, Minneapolis, MN 55407

ALL BULK SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE SEND VIA UPS GROUND.

RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ONE YR</th>
<th>TWO YRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 PAPERS/PER MTH</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 PAPER/PER MTH</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTING ORGS</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(INCLUDES 100 PAPERS PER MTH)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIBAL GOVRMT</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(INCLUDES 200 PAPER PER MTH)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR YOUR CHOICE ABOVE.