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physical ed for over 30 years



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FREE

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FREE

NIH awards \$12 million grant to study how Indigenous culture can fight substance abuse



Screenshot of the Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health website.

BY LEE EGERSTROM

The Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health has received a five-year, \$12 million grant to work with tribes and urban groups to study how Indigenous culture can be used to support efforts dealing with substance abuse problems.

The award, called a “Center of Excellence” grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was announced in December by its National Institute on Drug Abuse. This research effort is being led by Dr. Melissa Walls, co-director of the Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins health center and director of its Great Lakes Hub regional office in Duluth.

Which American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribes and urban communities will collaborate on the research projects hasn’t been announced. The NIH grant creates a new Center of Excellence that will be known as CIRCLE – short for Community Driven Indigenous Research, Cultural Strengths and Leadership to Advance Equity in Substance Use Outcomes.

In an early announcement, Dr. Walls said substance use is frequently studied in Indigenous public health. But, she added, “Unfortunately, this focus has at times narrowly centered on deficits and risks, perpetuating stigma and stereotypes that bring harm to our communities.”

Walls is a first generation descendant of Couchiching First Nation and Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe. A sociologist, she has worked on health equity research with tribal nations in the U.S. and Canada since 2002 and moved from positions at the University of Minnesota-Duluth to the Johns Hopkins Great Lakes Hub in Duluth in 2019.

The initial announcement of the new NIH grant and formation of CIRCLE said three major studies will be launched with tribal and urban Indian organizations. One of them includes a long-term, follow-up project to study if a culturally tailored, evidence-based early childhood home visiting program reduces substance abuse, suicides and other consequences after Indigenous mothers and their children participate in a program.

Johns Hopkins has a program called Family Spirit. It is described as “an evidence-based and culturally tailored home visiting intervention delivered by Native American paraprofessionals as an Indigenous solution to supporting caregivers during pregnancy and early childhood. Caregivers gain knowledge and skills to achieve optimum development for their children across the domains of physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language learning, and self-help.”

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 –

UofMN fields comments on plan to return Cloquet Forestry Center lands to Fond du Lac band

BY AVA KIAN/MINNPOST

Wayne Dupuis remembers a time when he was hunting with his father on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation and came upon the University of Minnesota’s Forestry Center, which sits on reservation land.

Dupuis hesitated, not sure if the two could be there. “I was under 10-years-old and my dad (and I), we were hunting over here ... and he said, ‘Yeah, we’re gonna go hunting in there,’” he recalled. “They don’t allow us to but we’re gonna go hunting in there anyway because that’s our right. This is our reservation. This is our homeland.”

Dupuis was one of several people who weighed in Tuesday at a listening session in Cloquet over the future of the land and the forestry center, which the university plans to return to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The hearing in the center’s auditorium drew nearly a hundred people who came from Duluth, the reservation and areas of Carlton County.

The university’s decision emerged out of conversations with the tribe, said Karen Diver, the school’s senior advisor to the president for Native American affairs.

Emotions were mixed among the people in the crowd. Some expressed disdain with the university’s choice – specifically mentioning a lack of transparency from the university. Others, like Dupuis, were happy that the university is taking this step.

“We have 100,000 acres that’s been been marked as our homeland,” Dupuis said in reference to the reservation. “This, what you call institution, we call our homeland, is 3% of our home base. You think about millions of acres that we ceded away, and a way of life that we give up.”

A century old research center The University of Minnesota is what critics refer to as a “land grab” institution, meaning that portions of it sit on areas that previously belonged to some of the state’s tribes, like the land of the Cloquet Forestry Center, located about a two-hours drive north of the Twin Cities.

The land was originally set aside by the federal government for the band as part of the La Pointe Treaty of 1854. But federal law allowed the U.S. government to transfer “unallotted” Fond du Lac land to lumber companies for logging, with the understanding that it would go to the university afterward.

In 1909, the Cloquet Forestry Center was established on 2,000 acres. The center continued to expand until 2003 and is currently 3,400 acres. It lies completely within the boundaries of the tribal reservation.

In recent years, the university has been coming to terms with its history as an institution that has benefitted from tribal land.

In 2021, Diver, a former Fond du Lac tribal chairwoman and Obama administration Native American affairs adviser, was hired to strengthen relationships with Minnesota’s tribal nations. She said that in her time as a tribal leader, which ended in 2015, she had asked to get the land back.

In 2020, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council – a governing body that includes tribal chairs from 10 of the state’s 11 tribes – passed a resolution asking for the return of the land.

Diver said that when former University president Joan Gabel began in her position, she started meeting with tribal nations more regularly, around three times a year. She said that the forestry center frequently came up in those conversations.

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USA TODAY NAMED MN LT. GOV. PEGGY FLANNAGAN TO WOMEN OF THE YEAR LIST

AP – USA TODAY's Women of the Year has added Peggy Flanagan to the list which was launched in 2022 as a continuation of Women of the Century, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote.

Minnesota's Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (Ojibwe) is serving her second term as the second in command of the executive branch in Minnesota. She is the highest elected Native American woman in the United States. In December, Flanagan was the chair of the Democratic Lieutenant Governors Association, making history as the first Native American woman to lead a national political party committee.

See more at [womenoftheyear.usatoday.com](https://www.womenoftheyear.usatoday.com).

STRONGHEARTS NATIVE HELPLINE GOING STRONG

Minneapolis, MN – Over the course of seven years, StrongHearts Native Helpline established the first-ever phone and internet-based national helpline for Native Americans impacted by domestic and sexual violence. The need for a national helpline was recognized by The National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) in 2012, realizing that Native Americans were not reaching out for help.

This fact became even more disturbing when a study conducted by the Department of Justice (2016) revealed that Native Americans and Alaska Native women and men suffer violence at alarmingly high rates and predominantly at the hands of non-Natives.

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CANNABIS GROWING FACILITY IS NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE TRIBAL LANDS

Melissa Olson/MPR News – The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe is looking to stake its claim in Minnesota's cannabis cultivation industry. Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, the corporate entity owned by the band, announced they have begun construction on a 50,000 square-foot cannabis growing facility on tribal lands near Onamia.

Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures CEO Joe Nayquonabe, Jr. says that with more tribes and states getting into the cannabis industry, it's important for the Mille Lacs Band to have a presence.

"We leaned on our tribal community to provide insight into this opportunity, paving a clear path into this venture," said Nayquonabe.

A national cannabis law firm, Vicente LLP, estimated the cannabis market in Minnesota could generate as much as \$1.5 billion in annual sales by the end of the decade.

Zach Atherton-Ely is the vice president of strategic growth for Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures. He says Mille Lacs may open a dispensary "eventually," but for now the band will grow cannabis with an eye toward supplying other tribal dispensaries and state-licensed dispensaries once they are up and running.

Atherton-Ely says cultivating cannabis will help the tribe expand beyond their gaming business.

"Gaming has been under threat, at times, in Minnesota, and it will continue to be in the future," said Atherton-Ely. "If tribes can find other significant revenue streams like the cannabis industry, then I think it helps provide security."

(Minnesota Public Radio News can be heard on MPR's statewide radio network or online.)

BIDEN TAPS \$366M TO FUND CLEAN ENERGY FOR NATIVE TRIBES/RURAL AREAS

AP/MPR News Staff – The federal government will fund 17 projects across the U.S. to expand access to renewable energy on Native American reservations and in other rural areas, the Biden administration announced on Tuesday.

The \$366 million plan will fund solar, battery storage and hydropower projects in sparsely populated regions where electricity can be costly and unreliable. The money comes from a \$1 trillion infrastructure law President Joe Biden signed in 2021.

About a fifth of homes in the Navajo Nation — located in northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Utah — do not have access to electricity, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates. Nearly a third of homes that have electricity on Native American reservations in the U.S. report monthly outages, according to the Biden administration.

The announcement comes as Native tribes in Nevada and Arizona fight to protect their lands and sacred sites amid the Biden administration's expansion of renewable energy. It also comes days after federal regulators granted Native American tribes more authority to block hydropower projects on their land.

The Biden administration will only secure funding for the 17 projects after negotiating with project applicants, federal officials said. Officials from the

Department of Energy prepared to meet with tribal leaders to discuss clean energy projects at a summit in Southern California.

"President Biden firmly believes that every community should benefit from the nation's historic transition to a clean energy future, especially those in rural and remote areas," U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in a statement.

The projects span across 20 states and involve 30 tribes. They include \$30 million to provide energy derived from plants to wildfire-prone communities in the Sierra Nevada mountains in California and \$32 million to build solar and hydropower to a Native American

tribe in Washington state.

A consortium of rural electric cooperatives will create microgrids in seven rural communities across the country with \$45.2 million. In Minnesota, a project benefiting the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is one of those seven projects that will deploy microgrids as a part of the renewable energy funding.

Another \$27 million will go toward constructing a hydroelectric plant to serve a tribal village in Alaska, while \$57 million will provide solar power and storage for health centers in rural parts of the Southeast, including in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

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The Thunder Sticks lead the Anishinaabe way of life, even in pool

BY DAN NINHAM

The Thunder Sticks pool team is captained by David Goodman, enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, in Vadnais Heights, Minnesota. He said, “I started the Thunder Sticks team in the cities in 2017, prior to that the name Thunder Sticks started in 2010 in White Earth where I lived for 10 years.”

“That team was called the All


Natives Men but I’ve been playing on All Native Men’s Teams since 1994,” added Goodman.

The motivation to play pool at a higher level than only playing in bars drives Goodman with his team. He said, “For me it’s always to be Number 1 and to show these white guys that us Indian boys can shoot some pool while being sober and having fun.”

Goodman has been in organized Pool Leagues including M-8, International Billiards Association, Midwest Pool



The Thunder Sticks pool team includes Patrick Brady, Bob Rice, Mervel LaRose, Greg Goodman and David Goodman. (Photo by Cheryl Goodman.)



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Players Association (MPA), and Northern Amusement. “I’ve won two State Championships with M-8 leagues in 2000 and 2007 and about 25 M-8 Leagues Championships since 1994. I took 1st place in Singles Tournament in White Earth on 11-25-2023 at the MPA Tournament.

“On January 16, 2024 we won the fall 2023 M-8 league Championship and won in 2020 through 2023 and we took ninth place in the Leech Lake MPA Tournament on January 19, 2024 out of 77 teams that entered the tournament,” added Goodman.

The Thunder Sticks were featured in *The Circle* about 25 years ago. Their story not only focused on the pool playing lifestyle but on the team’s sobriety. The team continues to choose living the Anishinaabe way which is the good life in the words “Mino-Bimaadiziwin.”

“I’ve always played with sober family members with my brother, nephew, ‘cuzzins’ and real close friends plus I get to see them on a weekly basis and

for me it’s a family thing,” added Goodman.

Team member Patrick Brady, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, lives in St. Paul, MN and he’s been playing on his uncle’s team since 2018.

“What motivates me to play is to have fun and expand my pool game as a past time of learning and gaining skill,” said Brady. “I’ve been playing on and off ever since I was eight years old at the Eastside Boys and Girls Club or at a bar with family. I started playing leagues around 19 years old for a couple seasons and one season in 2006 I won my first trophy and that was the league/season MVP.”

Competition is also about getting close to being and being a champion. Brady said, “I just missed out on adding a championship along with that one and recently as a Thunder Stick won three season championships and a second MVP title and fourth championship with a different team.”

“It’s a blast to be with the Thunder Sticks as I get to play with family, my

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The Circle: News from a Native American Perspective

<https://thecirclenews.org>

uncles Greg and Dave, cousin Bob Rice and good friend/brother Merv LaRose. We are the core of the team,” Brady added.

Greg Goodman is a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. He lives in South Minneapolis and has been playing pool with his brother David for 20-plus years.

“I have been sober 26 years on March 15,” said Greg Goodman. “In 2000 we won the M8 state championship. It was a proud moment in my life besides having my two kids and being sober.”

“Playing with family on an all sober team. Showing people that all natives are not drunks. I love my teammates,” said Goodman.

Robert Rice is a band member of the



David Goodman looks over his next shot options at the Midwest Poolplayers Association Northern Lights Casino Tournament. (Photo by Dan Ninham.)

White Earth Nation. He said, “I play pool to hang out with friends and family. I have played pool in leagues since 1989 and with the ‘Thunder Sticks’ for

a few years now. I just like to have a little competition and have fun.”

Mervel LaRose is an enrolled member of Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa.

LaRose and his wife live in St. Louis Park, MN and has been playing with the ‘Thunder Sticks’ for a few years now.

“I first started playing pool with my late Grandfather, Harold LaRose Sr.,” said Mervel LaRose. “His work had a pool table down in the basement of the Anishinaabe Long House that was in North Minneapolis. Although I started playing pool at a young age.”

“I started playing with ‘Thunder Sticks’ a few years ago and we ended up having good team chemistry. Hopefully we can achieve another winning season,” added LaRose.



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Navy names ship after White Earth Native James D Fairbanks

BY LEE EGERSTROM

Minnesota state and White Earth Nation officials were on hand Feb. 21 in Washington, D.C. when the U.S. Navy announced it is naming a future ship for James D. Fairbanks, formerly with the Navy and Marines, who born and raised near Pine Point on the White Earth reservation.

Highly decorated during his military career, Fairbanks died at age 59 in 2011 after retiring from the Navy. He had served as the highest ranking enlisted man with the Navy’s Seabees and was their Force Master Chief Petty Officer.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro presided at the naming ceremony at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington. Several family members, including Fairbanks’ wife, Denise; sister Paulette Fairbanks Molin, and White Earth Nation Chairman Michael Fairbanks, a cousin, participated at the ceremony.

Representing the state were Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and another White Earth Nation member, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan.

Fairbanks’ accomplishments and role model career were cited in remarks supplied to media by the Navy and in Governor Walz’s weekly news briefing.

“The names of thousands of indigenous heroes who have served with distinction in our military – and especially our Navy and Marine Corps – echo and inspire us still,” Secretary Del Toro said.

The ship to be named the James D. Fairbanks is what the Navy calls a Navajo-class ship “and will



Governor Tim Walz, Secretary of the U.S. Navy Carlos Del Toro, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, White Earth Nation Chairman Michael Fairbanks alongside family and friends attended a ceremony naming a ship in honor of the late Master Chief James D. Fairbanks in February in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Navy.)

carry his legacy of service forward and symbolize his dedication to the Seabees and our nation,” he said.

That class of ship is used in towing, salvage and rescue operations by the Navy fleet.

White Earth Chairman Michael Fairbanks described his honored relative as an “Ogiichidaa, a Warrior for our People – the Anishinaabeg, and the citizens of the United States.” As reported by Minnesota Public Radio, he added, “Due to his exemplary leadership, he has earned the right to have a ship named after him.”

Governor Walz made the ceremony a salute for all Minnesotans. “We are grateful to celebrate this connection between the U.S. Navy, the White Earth Nation, and the State of Minnesota,” he said. “Sailors who call Minnesota home are standing a little taller today.”

Flanagan called it an honor to participate in this ceremony for her fellow White Earth member.

“Native Americans have long served at the highest per capita rate in the military, and this honor bestowed on Force Master Chief Fairbanks also honors the service and sacrifices made by all Native Americans who serve, and have served in our military,” she said.

Fairbanks initially joined the Marines after graduating from Park Rapids High School, then worked as a welder after that tour of duty was served. He later joined the Navy, again worked as a welder, and then rejoined the Navy to close out his military career.

While serving during the Iraq War (2003-2011), Fairbanks was awarded the Bronze Star among numerous commendation metals.

News media accounts from the Washington ceremony reported Paulette Fairbanks Molin as saying her brother would redirect attention from himself “to others, especially the troops, as well as to the work before us.”

Biographical material would support what she said. Before retiring, Fairbanks served as Command Master Chief, Naval Construction Battalion Center (Seabees) at Gulfport, Miss. While living there with his wife Denise, he helped open a Gulfport Armed Forces Retirement Home in 2010.

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Keith Braveheart, “Buffalo Nation: Creating Community”



Stina Folkebrant, “Migration” series

Okizi (To Heal), is a partner exhibition with the American Swedish Institute (ASI) in response to the traveling exhibition, *Arctic Highways: Unbound Indigenous People*. A common theme of these dual exhibitions is the healing impacts of cultural revitalization. *Okizi* highlights the revitalization efforts that reconnect this generation and future generations to our language, land, and culture as a means of healing from historical and generational trauma.

AMRA hosts Sámi artist Tomas Colbengston and Swedish artist Stina Folkebrant’s *Migration* collaborative works alongside invited and juried American Indian artists Keith Braveheart, Karen Goulet, Courtney Leonard, and others.

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A second study will start an intervention program to protect young AI/AN men from harmful substance use. That will be aimed of men in the 18 to 25 age group. Substance use prevention sciences have largely neglected young men approaching adulthood, the announcement said.

A third team research project will explore how tribal leaders can create harm reduction policies by examining how Indigenous communities can link harm reduction with traditional, community-supported approaches. It will study syringe services programs.

Evidence that Native communities can use help is not new. Research over the years by various public and private groups have documented disproportionate substance abuse problems among AI/AN communities.

West Coast researchers pointed out the need for culturally focused studies and programs in a frequently cited study from 2011. That study, entitled American Indians / Alaska Natives and Substance Abuse Treatment Outcomes: Positive Signs and Continuing Challenges, showed the need and potential for culturally focused programs.

The UCLA researchers and their collaborators documented how AI/AN have the highest rates of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and hallucinogen use disorders among U.S. racial and ethnic groups. They also have the second highest methamphetamine abuse rates behind Native Hawaiians.

Almost as a prelude to what Johns Hopkins and its Great Lakes Hub researchers are doing, the UCLA connected research team made two key points:

"In spite of the high rate of substance abuse among AI/ANs, few studies have comprehensively analyzed the effectiveness of substance abuse treatments currently provided to this population."

They added that given the known health-related disparities among AI/AN with substance abuse problems, there is an emergent need for providers and policymakers to understand the effectiveness of currently provided abuse treatments.

That California-based study pointed out AI/AN substance abuse is not totally a result of neglect. Academic, state health and non-profit organizations throughout North America wrestle with these issues and seek better ways to serve Native health needs.

The federal government's Indian Health Service (IHS) has specific programs targeting these needs. Within its Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention (SASP) program, and its Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment, and Aftercare (SAPTA) program, the health service works with and funds 130 tribal, urban Indian organizations (UIOs) and its own operating units on related programs and projects.

The Bemidji regional office for Indian Health Service for Midwest states lists two such projects.

One is with the Bay Mills Indian Community (Ojibwe) in Michigan that is implementing an Operation Resilience program aimed at protection from substance abuse and alternative services for both its Anishinaabe people and their surrounding community.

Another is the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe plan to serve its community here in Minnesota. IHS said that program is building a referral and collaboration system for improving its care coordination system.

This involves improving current substance use disorder (SUD) efforts by starting a youth-oriented program, starting a referral network aimed at reaching at least 15 more youth clients in need of SUD services, and similar efforts for what it calls its Opportunities for Youth Sober enrichment.

The health service described the Mille Lacs objectives as enabling the band to provide services for adolescents and their families through all stages of recovery.

All such efforts needs research and trained people on the ground.

The announcement of John Hopkins and its Great Lakes Hub plans for the CIRCLE program made that point by stressing it is "seeding Indigenous solutions" from a new crop of scientists. "CIRCLE will also support new and early-stage Indigenous and allied researchers to work on pilot projects to tackle substance use inequities in partnership with Indigenous communities," it said.

Information from the National Library of Medicine story documenting AI/AN substance abuse can be found at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pms/articles/PMC3042549>



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In February 2023, Gabel recommended to the Board of Regents that the university begin the process of returning the land to the band.

The center is not the only university-owned area in the state that previously belonged to tribes. When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act in 1862, large sums of Indigenous lands in the nation were turned into endowments for colleges and universities. In Minnesota, those areas span across 22 counties.

Diver said the return of this particular land is unique and won't set a precedent for other areas because the land is "wholly within the borders of a tribal community."

A new report by the non-profit media outlet Grist shows that since the university's inception, nearly 187,000 acres of land have been acquired from the tribes and that much of the land has been profitable. The report shows that between 2018 and 2022, the University of Minnesota earned nearly \$17.2 million in mineral revenues from the land obtained from the tribes.

The forestry center has become a hub of knowledge and education. At the listening session, former students and faculty — some dating to the 1970s — shared what the center means to the forestry profession.



Charles Smith was one of several people who weighed in Tuesday at a listening session in Cloquet over the future of the land and the forestry center. (Photo by Ava Kian for MinnPost.)

What's so special about the center?

The center, located three miles west of Cloquet in Carlton County, has been

the primary research and education forest for the University of Minnesota. At the meeting, people talked about how well known it is in the industry.

The center includes large swaths of pine trees – some dating to the 1820s, the local Pine Knot News wrote. It's also been a place for various educational and research projects that have explored wildlife populations and habitats, forest genetics, ecology, entomology, plant pathology and hydrology, as well as the effects of climate change on forest productivity, among other topics.

More than a handful of people at the listening session expressed how important the center has been for research purposes.

"I'm not sure if you or the Board of Regents have any idea how important this decision is to the University of Minnesota, the state and the people," said Al Alm, a former faculty member at the center, to Brian Buhr, the dean of the university's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Science.

Alm recalled an ecology professor in China asking him if he knew anything about the forestry center in Minnesota. To him, and many others, it's globally known. Several others expressed worries about losing the educational value that the forestry center brought to the area.

A common theme among people was that they don't want the research to end — and want the university to find a way to stay involved.

"This seems like a perfect place for

where the reservation has interest and the university has an interest. They seem like they overlap, where both have an interest in the environment and proceeding as we have it now and clean air and teaching the future generations of what can be accomplished and what needs to be done together," said Steve Korby, a Cloquet resident.

At the end of the meeting, Buhr said the university does not plan to gut its forestry research program.

"We have no intention of stopping forest resources," Buhr said. "We intend to keep that moving forward in a successful way and finding ways to do that regardless of what happens here."

Returning the land

Josyaah Budreau, a researcher at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a member of the band, said that while research is important, the return of the land is necessary.

"There's been a lot of talk about the history of this institution and such," he said. "It doesn't reflect the history of this place ... that this community has had to historically deal with and that this land also has history to the people that were here beforehand," he said. "I agree that it (research) needs to continue to be done, but why is it always at the expense of tribal communities — of these communities that have predated these institutions?"

Dupuis, who lives near the area, said that while the land benefited businesses and those getting an education in forestry, it completely excluded the

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tribe right next door.

“It was an incubation for many of the businesses that have grown from here. But for many, many years, you didn’t see anything happening for Fond du Lac,” he said. “That wasn’t the focus.”

There was some interest from people in the crowd for the university to partner with the tribe. In response to those comments, many people shared ways the band has cared for their land.

“Trust the Fond du Lac band. They care deeply about this place, too, just as you do and they know this place. They know their homeland,” said Carl Sack, a teacher at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. “And they do great science, and they have shown a willingness to work with, not against, the current institution.”

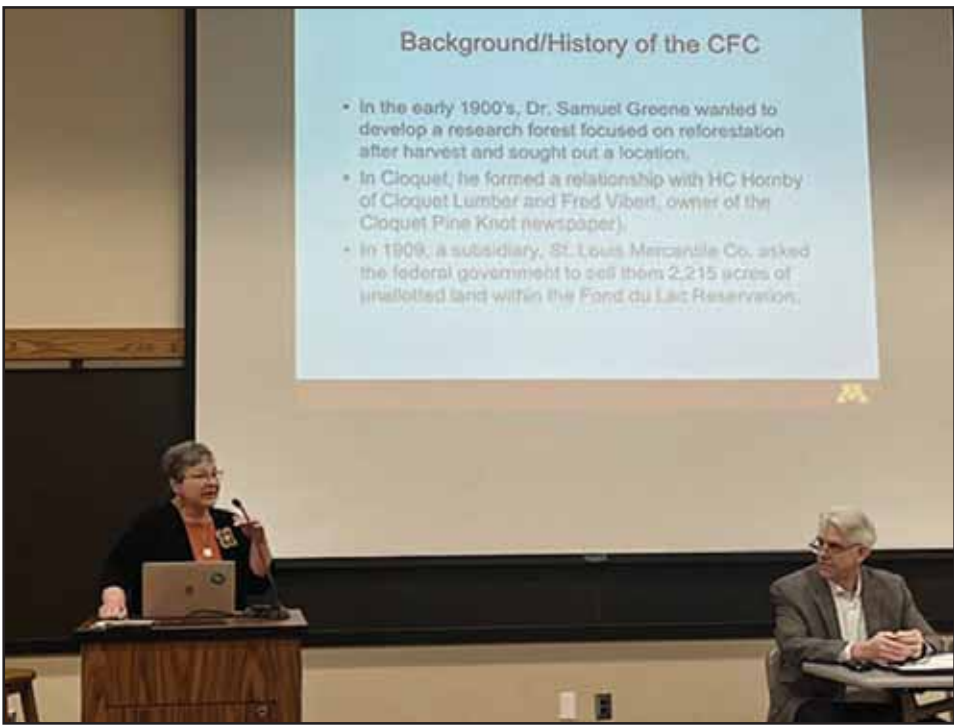
A member of the band talked about the care his people have shown the land — and how it is embedded in their teachings.

“When we do get the land back, we will take good care of it. Our rice lakes are proof of that. We have some of the best rice rice lakes in the area, and we have proven that we can take care of our land and we continue to do so,” said Charles Smith, the tribe’s Ojibwe language program coordinator.

The university said it is seeking alternative locations for a forestry center, but the tribe has come to an agreement to facilitate some of the University’s ongoing research. The extent and duration of this agreement are still being discussed, Diver said.

There was interest among many people — both those who were happy and unhappy with the university’s decision — for the university and tribe to work together.

“I hope we do this in the right way, too. I think that there’s ways that we can partner. But this is our homeland; it isn’t your institution,” Dupuis said.



Karen Diver delivering a presentation at the the University of Minnesota Cloquet Forestry Center. (Photo by Ava Kian for MinnPost.)

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Painting created by local artist Kamille Wilson

Jon DePerry has been teaching physical ed for over 30 years

JonDePerry has been a basketball coach and a physical education teacher in the Twin Cities for over 30 years. He is currently the varsity assistant boys' basketball coach at St. Paul Central High School. He is a member of the Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians. The homelands are located in Red Cliff, Wisconsin on the northern shores of Lake Superior.

DePerry began his boys' basketball coaching career in 1992 and served as the assistant varsity coach at Minneapolis Patrick Henry. In 1997, he became the junior varsity and assistant varsity coach at St. Paul Highland Park. He then coached as a varsity assistant at St. Paul Central during the 2006-09 seasons. Following being the head boys' basketball coach at St. Paul Highland Park during the 2010-2017 seasons, he returned to St. Paul Central in his current position.

"One of my main coaching accomplishments is being a part of the 1999 State Tournament Highland Park Boys basketball program," said Jon DePerry. "I was one of the varsity assistant coaches for the winning year. Highland Park was the first public school in St. Paul to win a state boys basketball championship in 50 years."

"Another accomplishment that brings me much joy is having the St. Paul Central program play my high school alma mater, the Bayfield Trollers, in Bayfield Wisconsin," said DePerry. "It occurred this past basketball season, as well as four years ago. It was an opportunity for the people of Bayfield/Red Cliff to see the program I have been a part of for so long. It was also an opportunity for the young men of the Central program to partake in some activities on the Red Cliff reservation."

DePerry grew up in a family with three brothers. Their father was a Marine and construction worker. Their mother was



Jon DePerry has been a basketball coach and a physical education teacher in the Twin Cities for over 30 years. (Photo by Dan Ninham.)

a third grade teacher. He said, "Growing up in Red Cliff, my parents, grandparents, relatives and members of the tribe instilled the value of hard work at an early age. My parents believed that if you wanted to achieve anything, you need not make excuses or complain, but to put in 100% effort and work harder than others."

"I am so proud of being a native," said

DePerry. "Of growing up in Red Cliff. Of being part of the great times and the tough times on the rez. My passion for being an Ojibwa is strong in me. The flag of my tribe hangs in my physical education gym as a reminder to all of these attributes daily. All of these reasons give me the opportunity to teach my players and my students of who I am and where I came from."

Successful people are inspired by others and oftentimes the source is within their family. "Who most inspires me in coaching? I would say my older brother Gary DePerry. My brother Gary and I are 10 and a half months apart, but we were in the same grade growing up. We pushed each other to make ourselves better."

"My brother was also a high school basketball coach in the city of Milwaukee. His 30-plus years of coaching at Milwaukee Hamilton, Milwaukee Vincent, Milwaukee Bradley Tech and Whitefish Bay Dominican earned him a spot in the Wisconsin Coaching Hall of Fame. Every step along the way I followed the way he coached, the way he worked and the way he interacted with players, coaches, officials and parents. His professionalism and caring approach

are what I have tried to instill in my program."

Charles Portis was inducted into the 2023 Minnesota Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He led the Highland Park Scots for 22 seasons including winning the Class 3A state championship. DePerry talked about Coach Portis and said, "When I first met Charles in the gym, every day he taught me about the game of basketball, but what he was also teaching me was about life."

"It was not hard for me to have to figure out that John had a strong love with the game of basketball," said Charles Portis. "He had a very basketball IQ. He didn't talk the game of basketball. He taught the skills of the game of basketball which put him in the top of the coaching class."

"My mother Barb DePerry was a teacher who taught for over 30 years," said DePerry. "My passion for teaching comes from her. She was admired by so many for the hard work and passion she had for teaching. She guided native and non-native students along the way. Not just teaching them, but caring about them."

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 –





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

editor@ajwnews.com

In the desert

The plan earlier this year was to get out of the snow and freezing cold in Minneapolis for a few days. So, I started checking airfares, flights to destinations in warmer climes. Two of my siblings winter in the Greater Palm Springs area, so I checked some dates for MSP-PSP and found a Sun Country roundtrip for \$158.00 – affordable. A few days later, the barebones fare dropped to \$138.00. Of course, there are add-on charges for a checked bag (even for carry-ons) and seat selection.

The best laid plans of mice and men occasionally go awry. In early February, the Twin Cities enjoyed some balmy winter weather; in the California desert it was cool and rainy.

My wife and I settled on economical lodgings for five nights in Desert Hot Springs, a down to earth location away from the glitz of Palm Springs, Palm Desert and the other country club-saturated communities to the south.

There were some nice days, and our first outing was to Tahquitz Canyon, a natural wonder on the land of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. The hike from the Tahquitz Visitor Center up to Tahquitz Falls, a 60-foot waterfall – “a place of power,” according to the brochure – is a two-mile loop. It’s a strenuous hike, with numerous tall stone steps. (My wife now refers to me as the “mountain goat.”) Hikers are required to pack in a quantity of drinking water. We saw a redtail hawk and lots of interesting flora of the desert variety.

According to the Agua Caliente oral tradition, Tahquitz was the “first shaman created by Muskat, the Creator of all things.” Tahquitz was benevolent, at first, then over time, “Tahquitz began to use his power for selfish reasons. He began to use his power to harm the Agua Caliente people,” who became angry and banished him to the canyonland where his spirit resides.

We learned more about the Native people while touring the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, which opened last November in downtown Palm Springs. The interactive exhibits trace the history and lifeways of these desert people over hundreds of years, including periods of struggle against Spanish colonists and then depredations by the Americans.

A 2019 article in American Indian, the magazine of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), clarifies some of the tangled history between the U.S. government and the Agua Caliente people. The article, “Section 14: The Agua Caliente Tribe’s Struggle for Sovereignty in Palm Springs, California” (bit.ly/AC-section14), by

Arewen Nuttall, tied into a 2019 exhibit at NMAI in Washington, DC.

The author briefly describes the popular tourist destination of Palm Springs, located in the Coachella Valley. In the middle of the 20th century, the town became a quiet haven for Hollywood stars and other celebrities. “In the center of this bustling leisure town is Section 14, the 1 square mile that is the heart of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation,” Nuttall writes.

In the way of a thumbnail history, in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico ceded lands that became the state of California. The lands around Palm Springs developed as a patchwork of 6-mile squares called townships, which were further divided into square-mile sections. “Palm Springs straddles eight townships, and Section 14 lies adjacent to the city’s downtown,” as per Nuttall.

The U.S. government allocated substantial plots to the Southern Pacific Railroad; and Pres. Ulysses S. Grant designated about 900 acres as the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation. The reservation was expanded, in 1877, to about 31,000 acres in a “checkerboard pattern of land ownership [that] became the foundation for future assaults on Agua Caliente sovereignty.”

The American Indian magazine article details the varied schemes employed by the city of Palm Springs to wrest land in Section 14 from the Indians. Eventually, the corruption was exposed, and the Agua Caliente Band and the city government arrived at a modus vivendi. Next to the tribe’s museum is a spacious new spa, on the site of Séc-he, the hot springs discovered by the Native people. And across the street is the Agua Caliente Casino.

Not every Indian tribe was fated to reside amid a world-famous tourist destination. Driving through Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Palm Springs, a land of gated communities built on golf courses, one encounters signs proclaiming: “Entering the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation.”

I’ve reached my word quota for this month’s column, but I’ll add that we also visited Joshua Tree National Park. I didn’t realize that this land of wonders in the high desert was the site of jumbo rocks in spectacular arrangements.

Joshua Tree straddles the Colorado Desert, in the eastern part, and the Mojave Desert in the western half. We hiked around the Hall of Horrors and up a one-mile loop to Barker Dam, a remnant of the days when cattle grazing was feasible. I’m looking forward to a return trip to Joshua Tree.



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MN Inclusion grants

The MN Inclusion Initiative, funded through the Department of Human Services, is a grant program dedicated to promoting inclusion efforts for people with disabilities across the state of Minnesota. This grant aims to provide financial support to organizations and individuals who are working towards positive change in their communities. Through this grant program, we hope to empower individuals, strengthen partnerships, and build a more inclusive state for all. For info: see <https://arcminnesota.org/minnesota-inclusion-initiative>.

Call for Native Artists

Native American artists, performers, and culture bearers looking to exhibit, enhance, or share their artistic talents and cultural knowledge are invited to apply to the Cultural Programs offered through THE INDIAN MUSEUM OF NORTH AMERICA® at the

Crazy Horse Memorial in S.D. For info, see: <https://crazyhorsememorial.org/the-museums/cultural-programs-opportunities> or call 605-673-4681, ext. 286.

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. Free. MIA, 2400 3rd Ave S, Minneapolis. For more info, see: <https://new.artsmia.org>.

Thru April 13
Okizi (To Heal)

Okizi (To Heal) is a partner exhibition with the American Swedish Institute and All My Relations Gallery in response to the traveling exhibition, Arctic Highways: Unbound Indigenous People. A common theme of these

exhibitions is the healing impacts of cultural revitalization. While efforts were made to separate Native peoples from their spirituality, language, and cultural knowledge and traditions, Okizi highlights the revitalization efforts that reconnect this generation and future generations to our language, land, and culture as a means of healing from historical and generational trauma. For info, contact Angela Two Stars at: atwostars@nacdi.org.

March 5-12
Writers of Color and Indigenous Writers

We will discuss the fundamentals of preparing to submit your writing, knowing when your work is ready for publication, and strategies for identifying which literary publications would be good homes for your writing. We will familiarize ourselves with literary publications that amplify and center BIPOC, Disabled, and LGBTQ2+ voices. We will have time to workshop pieces you hope to

submit to literary magazines so that, at the end of the class, students will have a solid plan for submitting future works and a polished packet of writing ready to submit. Halee Kirkwood is an emerging Ojibwe poet, teaching artist, and bookseller living. Their work has been published in Poetry Magazine, Poem-A-Day, Water~Stone Review, and others. Kirkwood is the 2022 winner of the James Welch Poetry Prize, forthcoming with Poetry Northwest. The class is offered on a pay what you can basis with the suggested fee of \$40 (\$36 for Loft members). Students may select the "pay what you can" option and enter any amount, including \$0. 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. For info, see: <https://loft.org/classes/writers-color-and-indigenous-writers-finding-community-literary-magazines-loft>.

Thru May 10
Wobliheca - The Energy to Create Exhibit

Hail stones, elk teeth, morning stars, rolling hills, and geometric elements associated with Lakota imagery are featured in Tosa Two Heart's exhibit Wobliheca - The Energy to Create. Through her work, she shares her pride for her Lakota heritage in ways that promote cultural awareness. In addition to exhibiting at Watermark, she will teach a fashion art workshop that will meet for four sessions in March. Watermark Art Center, 505 Bemidji Ave N, Bemidji. For info, see: WatermarkArtCenter.org.

Thru May 26
Moments of Memory Exhibit

Plein air painting is the art of capturing outdoor

scenes from life. Named from the French for "open air," this form of painting from life moves artists out of the studio to study real landscapes, focusing on how light and shadow interact with things in particular places. Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. For info, see: <https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/moments-of-memory-minnesota-landscapes-painted-from-life>.

Thru May 27
Reimagining Native/American Art

What happens when Native American and American art is seen together, rather than in separate places? What stories and connections emerge from this new way of being together? These are some of the questions that guided a collaboratively reimagined suite of galleries. This Indigenous-led, consensus-based curatorial experiment is based on Dakota philosophies and ways of being. It includes thematic installations that center "place", honor the living land, explore the power of relationality and ends with a reflection, inviting visitors to join us in imagining the future we wish to have. Galleries 301-304. Free. For info, see: <https://new.artsmia.org/exhibition/reimagining-native-american-art>.

Thru Oct 2025
Reframing Our Stories

From a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians," came the idea for a powerful new exhibit. Inside the box were dozens of pictures of Native community members, organizations, activities, and events that are relevant today. As part of the Our Home: Native Minnesota

exhibit, Reframing Our Stories showcases the strength and resilience of Native people and inspires audiences to learn about the past, present, and future of these communities. Native community members get in free. Minnesota Historical Society, 345 W Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul. For info, see: <https://www.mnhs.org/historycenter/activities/museum/our-home/reframing-our-stories>.

March 7, 8, 9
Bear Grease

Featuring an all-Indigenous cast, this hilarious twist on the 1978 classic, Grease, reimagines the beloved musical as culturally relevant with Indigenous humor and pride. Bear Grease is the brainchild of Crystle Lightning (Cree) and MC RedCloud (Huichol), a husband-and-wife hip-hop duo who go by the name LightningCloud. Pay-what-you-can with a suggested price of \$35. Gremlin Theatre, Annex Building, 550 Vandalia St, #177, St Paul. For info, see: www.newnativetheatre.org

March 12
Indian Boarding School Survivor Healing Circle

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition invite all Indian Boarding School survivors to join Survivor Healing Circle. This gathering aims to provide a supportive and empowering space for those who have experienced the trauma associated with Indian Boarding Schools to connect with each other. 6-9pm. Facilitated by Nelda Goodman and Sandy White Hawk. If you have any questions, dietary restrictions, or need transportation assistance, contact ebeck@nabshc.org or

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**March 13
DIW Prenatal Group**

Are you pregnant? Build community, get support and learn together. Prenatl group starts March 13. Wednesdays from 4:30 to 7:30pm. Division of Indian Work, 1001 Lake St, Minneapolis. For info and to register, call Amy at 612-644-9726 or amyarndtbuzzard@yahoo.com.

**March 15
IHB Women's Health Day**

The Indian Health Board is holding Women's Health Day. Mammograms start at age 40 and should be done annually. Pap-tests start at age 21 and should be done every 3 to 5 years. Appontments available to pre-existing IHB patients. To seched-ule an appointment call Vicky at 612-721-9853. IHB, 1315 E 24th St, Mpls.

**March 19
Talk of the Stacks with Tommy Orange**

In conversation with Louise Erdrich /Event Partner: Birchbark Books. Presented in collaboration with Talk of the Stacks, we are proud to welcome award-winning author Tommy Orange. In 2019, the author published his debut novel, There, There, to widespread critical acclaim. A winner of the PEN Award and the American Book Award, as well as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, the break-out bestseller follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. In his new work, Wandering Stars, Orange traces the legacies of the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School through three generations of a family in a story that is by turns shattering and wondrous. The in-person registration is full, but there will be a stand-by queue should any seats become available. The event will be livestreamed and recorded. 6:30pm. Minneapolis Central Library - Pohlad Hall, 2nd Floor - Registration required. Free Registration- Zoom

livestream. For info, see: <https://www.supportth-club.org/talk-stacks>

**March 20
IHB Elders Brain Health Day**

The Indian Health Board will hold a Elders' Brain Health Day. Brain health refers to your thinking, understanding, processing, and memory abilities. It also can refer to the things you to do keep your brain healthy and active, like staying physically active and following a healthy diet Held at the East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center, 2307 S 17th Ave, Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://www.indian-healthboard.com>.

**March 25 (deadline)
Harvard Three-Year American Indian Law School Scholarship**

Thanks to a \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor, the American Indian College Fund is awarding its third American Indian Law School Scholarship for a student entering Harvard Law School in the fall of 2024. The scholarship covers tuition and all costs of attendance for an American Indian or

Alaska Native law student enrolled in Harvard Law School's three-year course of study. The scholarship goal is to eliminate financial hurdles to earning a Juris Doctor degree at Harvard Law School. Applications are open to American Indian or Alaska Natives who are enrolled tribal members or lineal descendants of an enrolled parent or grandparent. Interested students should complete the application at <https://webportalapp.com/webform/americanindianlawscholarship>.

**April 1 (deadline)
2024 Artist in Residence**

Pipestone National Monument will be hosting an Artist-in-Residence program this summer. Four artists will be chosen; one for each month of May, June, July, and August. Indigenous artists are encouraged to apply. All artistic mediums are welcome and each residency will last 7 days. Lodging will be provided in the town of Pipestone at no expense to the artists. At the end of each residency, artists will receive a \$1,000 honorarium to cover the costs incurred by supplies, transporta-

tion, and food. Deadline is April 1st. Residency dates are the following: May 25th - 31st, June 15th - 21st, July 1st - 7th, August 19th - 25th For info: call 507-825-5464 ext. 214, or email PIPE_Interpretation@nps.gov. Or see: <https://www.nps.gov/pip e/learn/news/index.htm>

**April 1 (deadline)
Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Leadership Summit**

Applications are open for the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative's tenth annual Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Leadership Summit. The Youth Summit (held July 15 - 23) brings participants from across Indian Country to the University of Arkansas to spend a week creating lifelong memories and fostering professional and academic skills development. The program has impacted more than 500 Native youth since its inception. Agricultural policy and production areas covered during Youth Summit include agricultural business and finance, land stewardship and conservation, agricultural law and policy, nutrition and

health, and animal science. Applications are open to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian youth ages 18-25, including recently graduated high school seniors. All travel and lodging expenses are covered for accepted applicants. Deadline is April 1. Apply at indigenous-foodandag.com.

**April 19
Native American Indigenous Historical Trauma**

In this workshop, attendees will receive a general overview of historical and intergenerational trauma experienced by Native American/Indigenous people in the United States, including colonization, treaties, relocation, genocide, boarding schools, civil rights, blood quantum, and cultural appropriation of sports teams, and create a response piece to information presented. Center of Belonging, 3501 Alderich Ave S., Minneapolis. For info, see: <https://www.centerofbelonging.org>

**Notice of Comment Period on the Reappointment of
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The U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota invites comments from members of the bar and public as to whether incumbent U.S. Magistrate Judge David T. Schultz should be recommended for reappointment.

Comments should be received by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on
Thursday, March 14, 2024, and may be directed to:

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Tonight he travels without me

BY ARNE VAINIO, MD

(Editors note: this article was written in written 2016.)

George Earth and I traveled across Minnesota and then across South Dakota so I could speak at a conference a couple of years ago. I was supposed to fly, but George told me he always wanted to see the Black Hills and at 79 years old, he didn't think he had many chances left.

We took turns driving and spent the better part of a day in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We crossed the big sky country of Wyoming on the way to the Wind River Mountains and George told me stories about growing up, about boarding school when he was young and being released from school to pick potatoes with his parents in the huge potato fields of North Dakota. He told me stories of traveling all day on muddy roads with his dad's Model T and his mother holding a kerosene lantern for heat and for the lights for the car. His dad put tire patches over other tire patches and even as a kid George was good at helping change tires. A good used inner tube was four dollars and one with only a few patches was two dollars.

His dad always got the two dollar one. "The old people used to tell stories when the sun went down in the winter. It was still early and the kids would be in bed and the elders would tell creation stories in Ojibwe and they never spoke English when they told those stories. They could only be told in Ojibwe."

One time he worked as a lumberjack on an island for a whole summer and he got paid over three hundred dollars and he bought a black Ford convertible with a white top. He and a friend got all dressed up and drove to a town close to

the Canadian border. "Some girls started flirting with us and they got into the car and we were riding around. Some of the guys in that town didn't like that and they followed us and I turned into an alley and I couldn't turn around. There were too many of them and they beat us up. When I came to, the tires on my car were slashed and all the spark plug wires were gone and I didn't have enough money to fix the car. I had to leave the car at a garage and we agreed to go into another logging camp and I had to cut wood for 3 months again before I had enough money to fix that car."

He spent years drinking and working off and on. He and a friend lived in an old abandoned car for over a year in St. Paul and they would go to the shelter at the church every day to have breakfast and take showers and try to find work for the day.

He forgot about his traditions and his drinking spiraled out of control.

"One day I was drinking with everyone else in the park by Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis and I decided that was enough. I took all the beer and wine out of the trunk of my car and I put it on the picnic table in front of them and I told them I was done and they laughed at me."

Someone in recovery gave him a vest and a bustle to wear and he started dancing as a traditional dancer at powwows. "It took me a long time to remember some of the things those old people tried to tell me and finding my traditions again saved me." George has been a traditional dancer since then and his dance outfit was given to him over time by friends and sometimes by dancers who were too old to keep dancing and wanted their regalia to stay in the powwow circle. "When I dance, every step is a prayer for healing for all Indian people."

He had a guitar with nylon strings and "Man, I could really sing! I used to play at weddings, even. I played everything from Johnny Cash to Merle Haggard and people would really like it when I brought out that guitar."

Last summer he was supposed to travel with me to the Association of American Indian Physicians annual meeting just north of Seattle. He was really excited about seeing hundreds of Native American doctors and medical students and health professionals and he would have much to teach in return.

He was too short of breath to make the trip and his breathing problems were getting rapidly worse. He saw a lung specialist and it wasn't long before he was on oxygen. He had more and more difficulty traveling and last spring he danced at a powwow and realized he couldn't make it all the way around the circle. At the end of the summer he passed all of his dance regalia to me and I danced for the first time at the Cha Cha Bah Ning traditional powwow in Inger, Minnesota wearing George's dance regalia as George watched from a chair under the trees at the edge of the circle. A young grass dancer and I became friends and we were dancing together and I watched George slowly make his way across the ring and he sat at one of the drums. I could see his arm rising and falling in unison with the other singers and I tried to separate out his voice from the others, but I couldn't. His voice blended in perfectly with the song and with the wind blowing through the trees.

He made his last trip here a month or so ago and, "I brought something I want you to have." His breathing has been getting steadily worse and on this last trip he didn't get out of the van to come into the house. He watched me open the guitar case on the driveway next to the van. Inside was his guitar from a long time ago and it hadn't been opened or played in decades.

"It's beautiful, but I don't know how to play a guitar, George."
"You'll learn. I did."

We've been talking almost every day on the phone and sometimes I call him late at night. I go outside and I listen to the night and I tell him what I see and what I hear. We've heard the first frogs together and we've heard geese migrating together and one night last spring I was sitting in the darkness and I could hear a steady, but quiet popping sound everywhere in the woods and it sounded like a gentle rain, but the sky was clear. It took me a long time to realize it was the new spring grass slowly growing and as it pushed on the leaves, a leaf would fall to the side and make a small, singular sound. Multiplied by all those blades of grass and leaves and the sound was steady and only at night when the wind



was gone. It would have sounded crazy to tell anyone but George I was listening to the grass grow. He understood it fully and he stayed on the phone as I described it to him in detail.

Today George got sick really fast and was having a hard time breathing. I got a call as I was finishing clinic that he had pneumonia and they were thinking he might need to be on a ventilator. On the way home I got another call that his blood pressure was really low and he had an infection in his blood. By the time I got home he was getting CPR in the hospital and they were unable to save him and he died.

I started a fire outside and we made a spirit dish with the food from our meal and some of the traditional tobacco I make. In Ojibwe, I thanked the spirits who watch over us and I invited all of them to share this meal with us. After our meal, I took the spirit dish with the food and I burned it in the fire with the tobacco.

I've been watching that fire all night and it's almost 6 AM. The sun will be coming up soon. All night I've been tending the fire and I sit next to it and I listen to the night for awhile, then I come in and write for awhile, then I go back outside to tend and sit by the fire. The frogs just started singing in the past few nights and I've had plenty of opportunity to sit and listen to the night and I can hear the gentle popping sound everywhere in the woods and it sounds like a gentle rain.

The grass is growing.
Giigawaabamin, George. I will dance your regalia and I will remember every step is a prayer. I will try to learn some Johnny Cash songs.
And I will see you again.

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 Ojibwe reservation in Cloquet, Minnesota. He can be contacted at: a-vainio@hotmail.com.

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Wild Doritos and Diamonds

Did I get your attention? Okay, so I add coffee toffee crunch ice cream and pain patches plus protein supplements, chocolate flavored and a myriad of other band-aids for a shut-in. I never saw this existence coming at all. I'm just grateful I got to be healthy and active when I could and also act up. I was in jail only twice. Good times....

Because I have a lot of time to scroll and browse, I do so. I done told yooz long ago I am a news junkie and I sort it out in my own mind, not being swayed this way or the wrong way. What I see and hear is a bunch of immigrants fight-

ing over lands that are not theirs, nor will ever be. Even my favorite shows rarely if ever acknowledge our Indigenous rights.

The invaders still deny our presence as if their genocidal attempts were successful. Um, nope! Creator put us here and here we shall stay, and begin to thrive leaving colonization in the dark, bloody past. The undeniable fact that we still hold some homelands despite racist hatred fills me with happiness and pride in our ancestors' will to fight on for we who are still here.

We dance, we laugh, we love, we practice and hold our ancestral traditions, celebrate our survival and thrive despite all their attempts to wipe us out. We win. Think about it! Read about your history, all of yooz, not just we Indigenous People.

Non-indigenous people are living on and fighting for lands that are not theirs at all. Oops! I repeat myself. I've been reading about Neandertals and how their DNA is in most European bloodlines citing why they have blue eyes. I snorted in superiority because I have brown eyes, only to recall I have French ancestry and I was humbled.

The voyageurs and fur traders who came from Canada married Anishinabe women here with my surnames of

Charette and Chatelaine. I have done research on my family line and one goes back to the 1500's written on birchbark scrolls in Madeline Island and back to Brittany in France. Basically, we're all just mutts. I'm okay with that.

My Gramma Rose used to joke which part of her will be going back to France if we send all the illegal immigrants back to their home countries? We laughed. If someone is a pureblood, good for you. You could perhaps be related to Sasquatch, who really knows? I, myself, am part of what we call aliens. Not such a surprise ennit? I had no choice in the matter. .

Election season is upon us Indians up here in Rezberry. *eye roll* I already know who I'm voting for but it is somewhat amusing to see the candidates jockey for position no matter their inexperience or blatant incompetence. Of course, I think who runs and is elected by the most relatives is important. Like, who does one have to plead for leniency about how many broke-butt cars they have in their yard? My neighbors look like a graveyard for rez vehicles. She must be related to a committee member. I would complain but I really don't care.

So back to doritos and diamonds. When I was a mere girl, I loved playing with my Barbies and made them clothes from

old socks, when I got older they danced in Powwows, one in a wedding dress. It was mostly great being a kid, miigwech Mom. Then you had to go and have my sister... but I digress. Because of my maternal grandparents I felt safe and loved, I still do.

Since I've had 13+surgeries I am now disabled and a shut-in, as I wrote before. Sigh. That does not mean I can shut out all the drama because it finds me just walking in the door. Despite my efforts it still occurs. I feel like a magnet for disturbances and I'm so done! Whatever time I have left to annoy people while I'm still around is waning.

Even though I am depressed, have severe anxiety, and PTSD I have no thoughts of checking out before my natural time. I can stoodis. My aches and pains which are 24/7 I refuse to give them the satisfaction of seeing my ashes.

With my unexpected windfall (that I mentioned in last month's column) I bought a tiny pair of diamond earrings I put in my second piercing and a whole buncha cheap earrings to wear if I ever, well, when I go outside again. As for the doritos I am an adult, sort of, and ate them for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

If yooz care, I'm doing okay. Hugs & Kitty Kisses!

– SPORTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10 –

“For 33 years, I have used the same passion that she had with her students that I have with mine. I got into teaching to not be the norm, but more than that. Like the saying goes, ‘It’s not work if you love it’,” added DePerry.

DePerry played college baseball at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. He still plays baseball today at the age of 59.

“My passion for the game of baseball goes back to growing up in Red Cliff and my dad teaching me the game along the way. Like my dad before me, I taught my son the love of sports, especially the love of baseball. My son and I have had the pleasure of going to every major league baseball stadium over the years,” added DePerry.

Son Skyler Hawk DePerry, a graduate

of Iowa State University, lives in the Twin Cities. “I have the pleasure of playing men’s league basketball and softball with him,” said DePerry.

Empowered coaches have words of wisdom for those who want to go on a journey in athletics. He shared, “To those of you who have aspirations to play sports after high school: Be a quality student first. The word student always comes before athlete (student athlete). Get your house in order in the classroom. Those students that do and know what hard work is in the classroom will push themselves then on the court/ball diamond.”

“Also, make sure you love the game. Sports in college will take up almost the entire college year. Go into it loving the sport not just liking it,” added DePerry.

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