



## NEWS FROM A NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

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Friends will remember John Trudell  
at special music concert



page 2

On-demand transportation service  
links GR to tribal communities



page 12

Long time columnist Kristine  
Shotley "Ricey Wild" passes on



page 13

FREE

NOVEMBER 2025 • VOLUME 46, ISSUE 11

FREE

## Native-run wrestling promoter offers bodyslamming with a purpose



Wrestler JDX poses after winning his match at the MAW Grand Slam VII which was held at North Saint Paul High School on Nov 1, 2025. (Photo by Chris Juhn / Sahar Journal.)

KHALID MOHAMED/SAHAN JOURNAL

*Midwest All-Star Wrestling fills a niche for up-and-coming talent and fans who seek accessible venues. The promoter also cultivates a diverse roster of talent.*

A crowd of 1,000 flooded into the North High School gym on Saturday, some dressed in Halloween costumes and all ready to see pro wrestlers flying off the ropes.

Midwest All-Star Wrestling's Grand Slam VII delivered spectacle — fog machines, mood lights, chokeholds and body slams — but beneath that was a serious purpose.

The annual event is also a fundraiser for Women of Nations, a nonprofit that runs a shelter for Native women in St. Paul.

For David Amitrano, co-owner of the Native-owned wrestling promoter, that marriage of entertainment and service is intentional. Amitrano said he bought 50% of MAW after a successful fundraiser for the St. Paul-based women's shelter, where he is the CFO.

He said MAW has generated over \$175,000 for the shelter since he came on board, money that has helped build a playground at the shelter, support housing for clients, and purchase school and Christmas items for families in need.

"Without wrestling fans helping us raise funds for victims of domestic violence, we wouldn't be able to serve the community," he said at Saturday's Grand Slam event.

MAW books more than 200 pro wrestling events

a year, most in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but the owners have recently added events in North Dakota and Iowa.

The events are primarily at smaller venues, including a match in St. Francis in late September and the Grand Slam in North St. Paul last week. But they have also booked venues as large as the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, which has an arena capacity of 7,200, according to MAW co-owner Brian Sager.

Amitrano, who was born in Ely and is from the Bois Forte Band in Nett Lake, said that MAW also incorporates Native wrestlers into its diverse roster.

Sager said that the wrestling promotion business began in 2017 and is still in its beginning stages despite running for the past eight years and making money. Sager, a teacher and former wrestler, described MAW as a passion project, and that their passion separates them from other wrestling companies in Minnesota.

"I want [fans] to feel like when they come to an MAW show that they get their money's worth and then some," he said.

Sager, who said that events can run from \$1,500 an hour and higher based on show size, said that MAW tries to give back to the community, involve its fanbase and try to be as diverse as possible with promoting events and bringing in wrestlers and fans from different backgrounds.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 —

## Tribal and Native urban communities prepare to lose SNAP benefits

BY MELISSA OLSON/MPR NEWS

Native Americans will be among hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans whose food assistance will be halted as long as Congress remains in a stalemate over passing a federal spending bill.

Red Lake Nation is one of three tribal nations in Minnesota who administers SNAP benefits, according to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Oshkimaajitah-dah, the tribe's human service agency, administers the federal food support program to income-eligible households on Red Lake Nation tribal lands.

The loss of food support could mean households will have to choose between paying their rent and utilities or buying food.

"You have income that you have where, typically, you would pay your rent out of, or you would pay your utilities out of. Now, they have to look at stretching it out. Now they have to pay for food out of that money because of the loss of food support," Tracey Kingbird, the agency's assistant executive director, said.

More than 3,300 Red Lake Nation band members, including children and elderly adults, receive support through SNAP, according to the data collected by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and White Earth Nation also administer SNAP to members of their respective nations, according to the state.

### Alternative option to SNAP

Thousands more Native American families receive SNAP benefits through their local county governments.

Members of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, a tribal

nation in north central Minnesota, apply for assistance across four northern counties — Beltrami, Hubbard, Itasca and Cass counties.

In November, Gov. Tim Walz announced \$4 million in emergency aid will be distributed to local food shelves, including tribal nations.

Claire Chase leads Leech Lake Band's agricultural department, which oversees the tribe's SNAP education, food distribution and food sovereignty programs.

Chase says band members on remote parts of the Leech Lake Reservation can travel as long as 45 minutes one-way to a big box grocery store in Bemidji or Grand Rapids.

"We see this as just deepening this long-term crisis for food security in our community," Chase said.

Longer-than-average travel times to grocery stores is the reason the U.S. Department of Agriculture created the Food Distribution on Indian Reservation Program, or FDPIR, more than a half-century ago to fulfill a much older treaty-based obligation.

Chase says band members eligible for SNAP can apply for food aid through the tribe's FDPIR program, but she says they cannot participate in both programs. Leaders from tribal governments across the state and beyond say they have received the same guidance from the USDA concerning FDPIR programs.

Chase says it's up to people to decide if they want to apply to Leech Lake Band's FDPIR program, emphasizing that it's not mandatory. She cautioned that it would mean that band members would have to withdraw from receiving SNAP benefits.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 —

04 Matrilineal Memory art exhibit

11 Political Matters

06 Guy lands plane on "closed" Red Lake Rez

12. Creator's Place empowers Ojibwe artists

10 Sports: Milkawaadizi Novak

# Friends will remember John Trudell at special music concert

BY K.E. MACPHIE

On November 15th, friends of Native American author, poet, actor, musician, and political activist John Trudell will remember him with a special music concert at The Cedar in Minneapolis, marking ten years since he walked on, and the whole community is invited.

John Trudell was a poet, recording artist, actor and speaker whose international following reflects the universal language of his words, work, and message.

Annie Humphrey, an artist with Fire in the Village and host of this concert, remembers him this way: “John was my friend and mentor. When he knew he was returning to the Star Nation, he was asked how he wanted to be remembered. He would say, ‘Remember me as you remember me.’” It is in this spirit that this night of artistic expression will honor John Trudell, who will be remembered by those who knew him.

“I wanted to have this concert as an excuse to gather and remember John in a real way. I wasn’t the only one who held him in my heart. Many people knew him...he had a circle in Minneapolis. John encouraged me, supported me,



Fire in the Village is a collective of artists and cultural organizers making space to let people create and grow, with a focus on the Anishinaabe territories and rural towns in Northern Minnesota. (All photos by K.E. MacPhie.)

inspired me, and reminded me of my power. He has done that for others,” said Annie Humphrey, who describes how the evening will reflect John’s spirit.

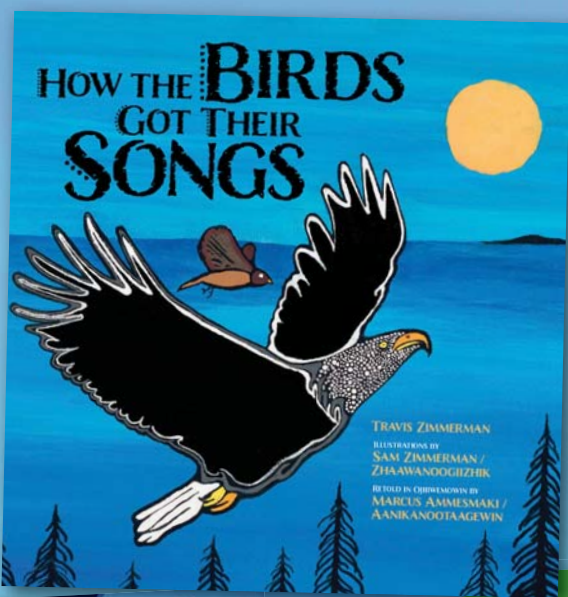
“There is a ceremony involved in gathering together on November 15th. We

will drive towards The Cedar. Once we arrive, we will see a fire to offer tobacco. We will smoke an American Spirit and visit as we smoke. Then we will enter the lobby of the Cedar and make a fabric patch containing images and quotes by

John. You will hear his voice throughout the lobby and in the main room. You may stop, close your eyes, listen, and walk through your own memories of him. His last record and his last book will be available to read or buy.



# MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS



HOW THE BIRDS GOT THEIR SONGS

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ZHA-AWANOOGIIZHIK  
REPRODUCED IN OJIBWEMOWIN BY  
MARCUS AMMESMAKI /  
AANIKANOOTAGIWIN

If you’ve ever wondered why the loveliest birdsong is heard only in the deepest woods, *How the Birds Got Their Songs* by Travis Zimmerman provides an answer as it celebrates the uniqueness of every bird species.

Featuring original acrylic paintings by Sam Zimmerman / Zhaawanoogiizhik, this narrative is presented in both English and Ojibwemowin, and commemorates traditional knowledge from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Translation by Marcus Ammesmaki / Aanikanootagewin.



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The songs I write are all influenced by the essence of John. Come and let's remember and be coherent together."

The concert will feature a special video performance by musicians Quiltman and Mark Shark, who were part of John's band, Bad Dog, from the beginning.

"I was unable to raise enough funds to bring The Boys out to Minnesota, but a generous friend donated money to get Shark and Quilt into a studio together with a sound engineer and videographer. I asked them to banter (which they are very good at) and play some of their favorite songs. They will be the headliners."

Keith Secola and Annie Humphrey, with amazingly cool musicians, Sean Carey (Bon Iver, Bizhiki) and Minneapolis guitarist Jeremy Ylvisaker will provide the live music portion of the evening.

This concert is the final event in Fire in the Village's annual fall art and music tour. Check it out all around the state before they hibernate. Fire in the Village is a collective of artists and cultural organizers, led by Annie Humphrey, making space to let people create and grow, with a focus on the Anishinaabe territories and rural towns in Northern Minnesota.

Their Fall 2025 Music and Art Tour is in its second year with a format that works: art workshops and community meals during the day, followed by more art, storytelling, and music in the evenings. Tickets are by suggested donation, but no one is turned away.

The theme this year is Warriors and the Powerless, based on Humphrey's quote that "If you are ever feeling powerless, remember that power is just a thought away." Creating art is power. Telling stories and being heard is power. Music is always power. Art feeds off the energy of the people creating it, and that will change in every room and every stop to be what the people need.

The leader of this vision is artist and musician Annie Humphrey. Humphrey grew up on the Leech Lake Reservation with parents who taught her art and survival.

Co-founder, Shanai Matteson, is an arts organizer from rural Aitkin County and is the organizer for the Fire In The Village, as well as being a visual artist in her own right. She has dedicated her time, talent and spirit for community events, which is a perfect fit and great balance to the musical art of the partner.

In addition to their tour, Fire in the Village hosts local events every Wednesday in Grand Rapids at their Homeroom 203 (10 NW 5th St. Grand Rapids). In November, those events include a youth-centered art space, movie viewing (they are showing Thunder Heart), block printing, a writing circle, and karaoke every 5th Wednesday (which doesn't happen often).



**Top:** Singer/songwriters Keith Secola, Annie Humphrey and another musician practice.

**Middle:** The Fire in the Village booth.

**Bottom:** The leader of this vision is artist and musician Annie Humphrey, who grew up on the Leech Lake Reservation.

They know that community isn't built only in one-time events, but in constant presence and support to the people who need a space to be free and experimental. The Fall 2025 Music and Art Tour is just an introduction to what is possible for people who are searching for that kind of environment in their lives.

You can attend the following November tours at these locations:

- Nov. 1 at Sampaguita 204 Minnesota Ave. N. Aitkin, MN;
- Nov. 6 at Zietgeist Theater 222 East Superior Street Duluth, MN;
- Nov. 7 at Old Central School 10 NW 5th St. Grand Rapids, MN. No need to RSVP, tickets at the door \$5 - 20 suggested donation. No one turned away!;
- Nov. 8 at Voyagers Expeditionary High School at Headwaters Music and Arts 519 Minnesota Ave. NW Bemidji, MN. Tickets \$5 - 20 suggested donation;
- Nov. 15 is a special closing show only (no daytime art) at The Cedar Cultural Center 416 Cedar Ave. Minneapolis, MN. Tickets \$15 Advance, \$18 Day of Show.

*Learn more about Fire in the Village at their website: <https://www.fireinthevillage.org>.*



# ‘Matrilineal Memory’: Hopi artist reckons with grief in solo show in Mpls

BY MYAH GOOF/SAHAN JOURNAL

“We are keepers of our stories,” writes Hopi artist Mikaela Shafer in a poem featured in her solo show at All My Relations Arts. “Matrilineal memories. I want my daughters to tell stories of love, of resilience. I am rewriting our tales for tomorrow.”

This weekend, that spirit of storytelling echoes across the Twin Cities. Shafer’s work traces grief, memory and ancestral strength in Minneapolis, while author Kao Kalia Yang carries the experiences of her Hmong refugee family forward in St. Paul. At the Weisman Art Museum, rugs from Lebanese, Afro-Caribbean, Chinese and Ukrainian artists thread stories of heritage, resilience and cultural survival.

## Watercolors and poetry reach for ancestral memory

All My Relations Arts on Franklin Avenue feels more like a home than a gallery. The smell of coffee drifts in from Pow Wow Grounds next door, conversations spill between rooms and the soft shimmer of chiffon hangs from the ceiling for “Matrilineal Memory,” a new solo show by artist Mikaela Shafer honoring her Hopi culture.

Shafer’s work combines abstract watercolors with found materials, including coffee paper, gauze, kombucha leather, and fallen leaves, alongside poetry. She traces how grief and ancestral memory are carried, processed and passed down through generations.

Beside her piece “The Salmon Are Coming Home,” she writes: “I hope you understand that my rage is not my own. My blood is ancestral. My screams are generations. I came out of the womb ready to resist. And my fists are tight from decades of lost fights.”

Her installation “Memory Is Ephemeral” centers on an antique bed-frame sprouting with leafless branches and crafted butterflies. Photographs of Shafer free-falling hang above the bed across multiple layers, so her body shifts and floats depending on where viewers stand. Light passes through the sheer material, giving her a translucent, ethereal presence.

Across from the bed, a video projection shows Shafer sewing pieces together in an open, expansive field.

The gallery has become a space for experimentation and risk, where Native artists can show new work and push boundaries. Angela Two Stars, director and vice president of arts and culture at All My Relations Arts, experienced that firsthand when she first exhibited her own work at the gallery in 2016.

“It was an exhibition called ‘On Burrowed Ground.’ I was living in



Above: “Matrilineal Memory” is a new solo show by artist Mikaela Shafer honoring her Hopi culture. Shafer’s work combines abstract watercolors with found materials, including coffee paper, gauze, kombucha leather, and fallen leaves, alongside poetry. She traces how grief and ancestral memory are carried, processed and passed down through generations.

Below: “Memory is Ephemeral” is just one tapestry part of “Matrilineal Memory,” a solo show by artist Mikaela Shafer honoring her Hopi culture. (Photos by Myah Goff for Sahan Journal)

Michigan and drove nine hours to the opening because it was that important to me,” Two Stars said.

She later returned to curate an exhibit on missing and murdered Indigenous women before taking on her current leadership role.

“This art is a reflection of our people,” she said. “When people come in to see the exhibitions, they can relate to it because they understand what the artists are saying, the symbols they’re using, and the stories and songs that the artists incorporate into their work. I’ve seen people point to a mural we’ve had on the wall and say, ‘That’s home right there.’”

Two Stars noted that changes to the neighborhood, including fences installed to prevent homeless encampments have reshaped the neighborhood’s perception.

“When I first came back home in 2017, I turned onto Franklin Avenue and saw beautiful murals that looked like a regalia,” she said. “It made me feel welcome like, here’s where my people are. Now when I turn on Franklin, I see fences and it makes me feel like it’s harmful to the land, which hurts me to see.”

Through her work at All My Relations Arts, she hopes that the American Indian



Cultural Corridor in Minneapolis will be defined by artists like Shafer rather than barriers.

“I’d like to see a sculpture park,” she said. “Art drives out negative traffic. It gives opportunities for artists to show their work and it helps people feel that same sense of welcome I felt.”

The exhibit runs through Dec. 13 at All

My Relations Arts, 1414 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is free.

For more information: Visit [allmyrelationsarts.org/exhibitions-events/exhibitions/matrilineal-memory](https://allmyrelationsarts.org/exhibitions-events/exhibitions/matrilineal-memory)

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## *Dyani White Hawk: Love Language*

October 18, 2025—February 15, 2026

A new exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

The work of Dyani White Hawk (Sičánǵu Lakota) centers on connection—between one another, past and present, earth and sky. This sweeping survey exhibition presents the Twin Cities-based artist's expansive beaded paintings, video installations, and new sculptures and mosaics on view for the first time.

The Walker is open Wednesday—Sunday.

### Upcoming Free Events

- Opening-Day Panel, Oct 18 **LIVESTREAM AVAILABLE!**
- Evening for Educators, Oct 22
- Scholar's Night: Indigenous Academia, Oct 23
- One-on-One: Indigenous Artists on *Love Language*, Nov 20

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# Guy lands plane on “closed” Red Lake reservation. Oops

BY WINONA LADUKE

Darren Smedsmo’s plane was seized by Red Lake Nation police for trespassing on tribal airspace. That was October 15. I think we are all glad that he’s alive. But the story is being treated with some sensationalism by the media. The story deserves more discussion.

Now, to be clear, I am not a Red Laker, but I do have a few observations. First, Darren is flying a very old plane. That’s

to say a single engine 1946 Stinson vintage airplane. That plane is a treasure, but vintage is not always great. I am vintage at 66. A plane that is eighty years old with a single engine is, well old.

Then, there’s Smedsmo’s choices. He safely landed on a highway, within the reservation boundaries. It was a good landing, in a dangerous situation.

This is where ignorance of the law is no excuse, I believe is the way the law works, at least for Native people, and probably should for white people as well.



Darren Smedsmo’s plane was seized by Red Lake Nation police for trespassing on tribal airspace on October 15.

## What do federal Medicaid changes mean for me and my relatives?



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[mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges](https://mn.gov/dhs/federalchanges)



Red Lake is a closed reservation, and this means that none of us, even tribal members from other reservations, really try to mess with Red Lake. Red Lake closed their airspace over the reservation in a resolution in 1978, for a good reason.

In 1978, the U.S. Air Force asked the FAA for permission to set up low-altitude military training routes over the reservation. The routes would have “seriously adversely affected” wildlife, “upon which the residents of the reservation are dependent for their livelihood.” The tribe made a resolution opposing the military flights. Now to be clear, having military jets over your peaceful land is not a good thing in any era.

While most of the 1978 resolution was about preventing the Air Force from implementing training routes, the final paragraph covers the problem with Smedsmo’s Stinson. “Be it further resolved that there is hereby established an air ban prohibiting the flying of any airplane over the lands of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians at an altitude of less than 20,000 feet.”

Red Lake is known for confiscating planes that trespass. Mostly, this is about non-Natives who just want to see if they can fish on Lower Red Lake. Just do a little search on the internet. In 2022, Justin Fuhrer, from St. Cloud, flew a small plane onto the ice of Red Lake in northwestern Minnesota, hoping to sample the phenomenal crappie.

His plane was seized by Red Lake. Because that’s what a closed reservation means, and even if you have some of the best walleye in the world, those fish belong to the lake and the Anishinaabe. There’s a few of these cases. It’s almost

like watching dumb tourists try and pet a buffalo at Yellowstone. None of us are surprised at the results, either at Red Lake or Yellowstone.

Smedsmo, because he wanted to take a quick route which saved him probably a half hour of flight time or so, took a shortcut across the reservation. And he was flying at 3500 feet. He was going for training in Bemidji, and it seems that training would cover airspace regulations. To be clear, 3500 feet is well below the 20,000 ceiling. Darrel Smedsmo told reporters, he had no idea of the restrictions. “If that were the case, it would have been marked on my VFR aeronautical chart, or my map so to speak.”

Most of us know the law, and in this case, I think that ignorance of the law is not really an excuse.

Aviation News reports, “the Minnesota Pilots Association warned members to ‘Be aware of the direction given by the Red Lake Tribal Council to ‘report low-flying planes,’ which means of altitudes less than 20,000 feet ‘If you observe a plane flying below this altitude, you should contact Red Lake Law Enforcement at 218-679-3313.’“Until this is clarified, please use discretion when considering flights near or over Red Lake Tribal Lands”. That’s some directions and I am going to keep that number handy.

Now I am pretty sure that people who hate Native people will use this to justify some nasty behavior, but what about respecting people’s boundaries? I hope that the guy gets his plane back for sure, but I also hope that the state of Minnesota and pilots put that airspace on the map.

'Leaning into our sovereignty'

Chase says her agency has some money set aside to assist with purchasing food to distribute to local community centers to help offset the loss of SNAP benefits. Chase says she is working with each of Leech Lake Band's dozen community centers to determine what kind of support each community wants.

"We're really kind of leaning into our sovereignty and the knowledge of those communities," Chase said.

The Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council posted information to the band's website telling Bois Forte Band tribal members that the tribe's FDPIR and food shelf programs are not affected.

A post to the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa's social media accounts let band members know extra food will be available through the tribe's food shelf starting early November.

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe posted a notice on the tribe's social media page Monday.

"As we continue to navigate the federal government shutdown, our commitment to the well-being of our Tribal Community remains constant," read the statement from the Fond du Lac Band. "We are working to ensure that no individual or household is left without support."

The Fond du Lac Band provided a list of food resources for families living in St. Louis and Carleton counties.



Urban Native American communities organize

The Division of Indian Work, along with a dozen Native-led nonprofit organizations, are pitching in to help distribute food to address food insecurity during the shutdown. The Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors met Tuesday at the Minneapolis American Indian Center. The coalition plans to publish a list of resources for those seeking food support

in the coming days.

The Twin Cities metro area is home to tribally diverse urban Native communities numbering over 50,000 people, according to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for 2017-2021.

Food insecurity in Native American households has also long been an issue in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Division of Indian Work, a multi-service

nonprofit in Minneapolis, has been running a food shelf since 1952, dating back to the organization's founding as a church-based organization. Today, the independent nonprofit food shelf serves an estimated 8,000 people annually.

"Any change at all is going to have a huge impact and taking away a basic necessity like food for families and particularly young people, our elders — the impact is daunting," Louise Matson, executive director of the Division of Indian Work, said.

The organization's food shelf is open Monday through Friday. Matson said the organization has plans to increase the number of times people can visit the food shelf and the amount of healthy food that is available.

"We also work really hard with partners to bring fresh produce and also culturally-based food, like bison or wild rice. Things like that are maybe a little pricey. We try to offer those as much as possible," Matson said.

Matson said that she's proud of the way Native communities have historically come together in challenging moments.

"One thing I think we do really well in the Twin Cities is support one another; and people will step up for community, and they will step up for the young people, and they will step up for the elders."



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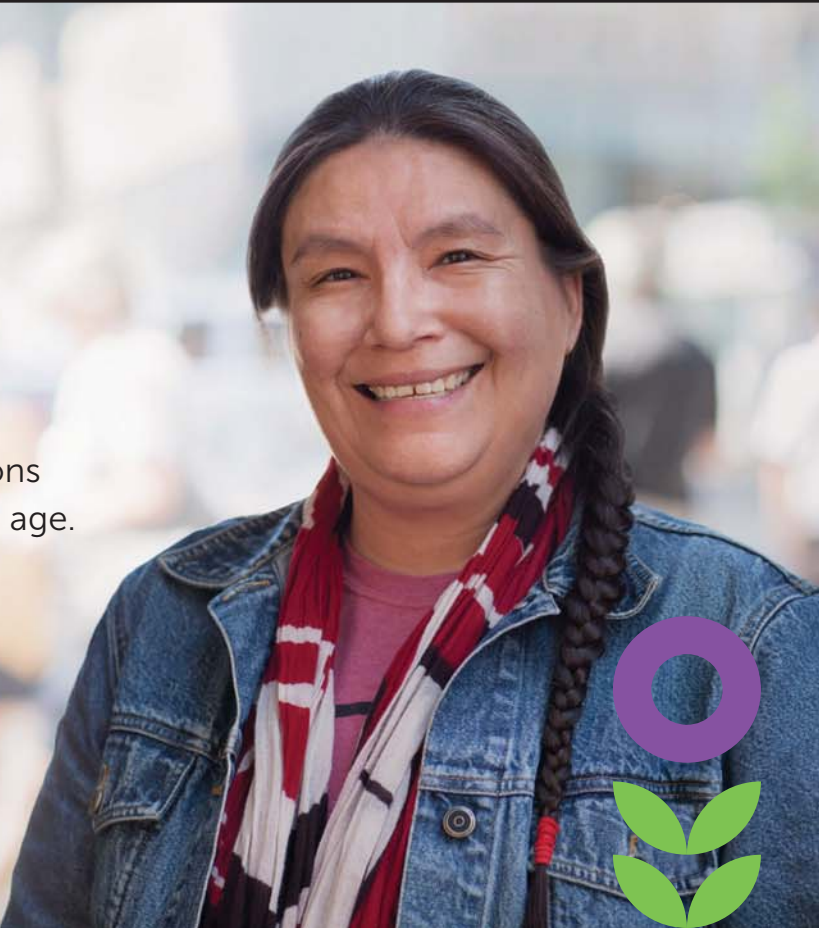
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MAW booked lucha libre wrestlers for a St. Paul Mexican Independence Day celebration in September after the West Side Boosters reached out to them. MAW owners would like to do more events like that, Sager said.

Two wrestlers who have appeared in MAW bouts say the company fills a need for smaller, more accessible venues in the pro wrestling ecosystem.

A luchador from Faribault who goes by “El Muerto” or Muerto Gonzalez, said MAW is a great company for younger wrestlers to work with.

“If you ask, they’ll book you,” he said.

Gonzalez said he had his eye on MAW before he even started wrestling, as the company posted Facebook ads featuring WWE and TNA wrestlers like Kurt Angle. The wrestler, who asked to keep his first name anonymous to maintain the illusion of the mask, he’s grown close to the wrestlers he has trained and performed with during his time working with MAW.

Damon Luken, who goes by the wrestling name Richard Powers, competed in MAW’s Friday Night Fight on Sept. 26 at Tasty Pizza Bar & Bowl in St. Francis.

It was a retirement match for Luken, a firefighter and Harley-Davidson salesman, who said his seven-year career had been enjoyable, but his injury history made him decide to retire.

He got the owner of Tasty Pizza Bar in



contact with Amitrano to book the fight in his hometown.

“In the end, I decided what better place

to finish than my hometown,” Luken said. “With the head injuries and the ability to wrestle in my hometown, I thought

it was a good time to call it a career.”

Wrestling fan Irvin Gonzalez showed up at the St. Francis match and also came

# Ignite curiosity at the Bell Museum

## Collectors Day 2025

November 1, 10 am – 3 pm

Take a look at local collections from the community.

## Spotlight Science: Climate Action and YOU!

November 15, 10 am – 2 pm

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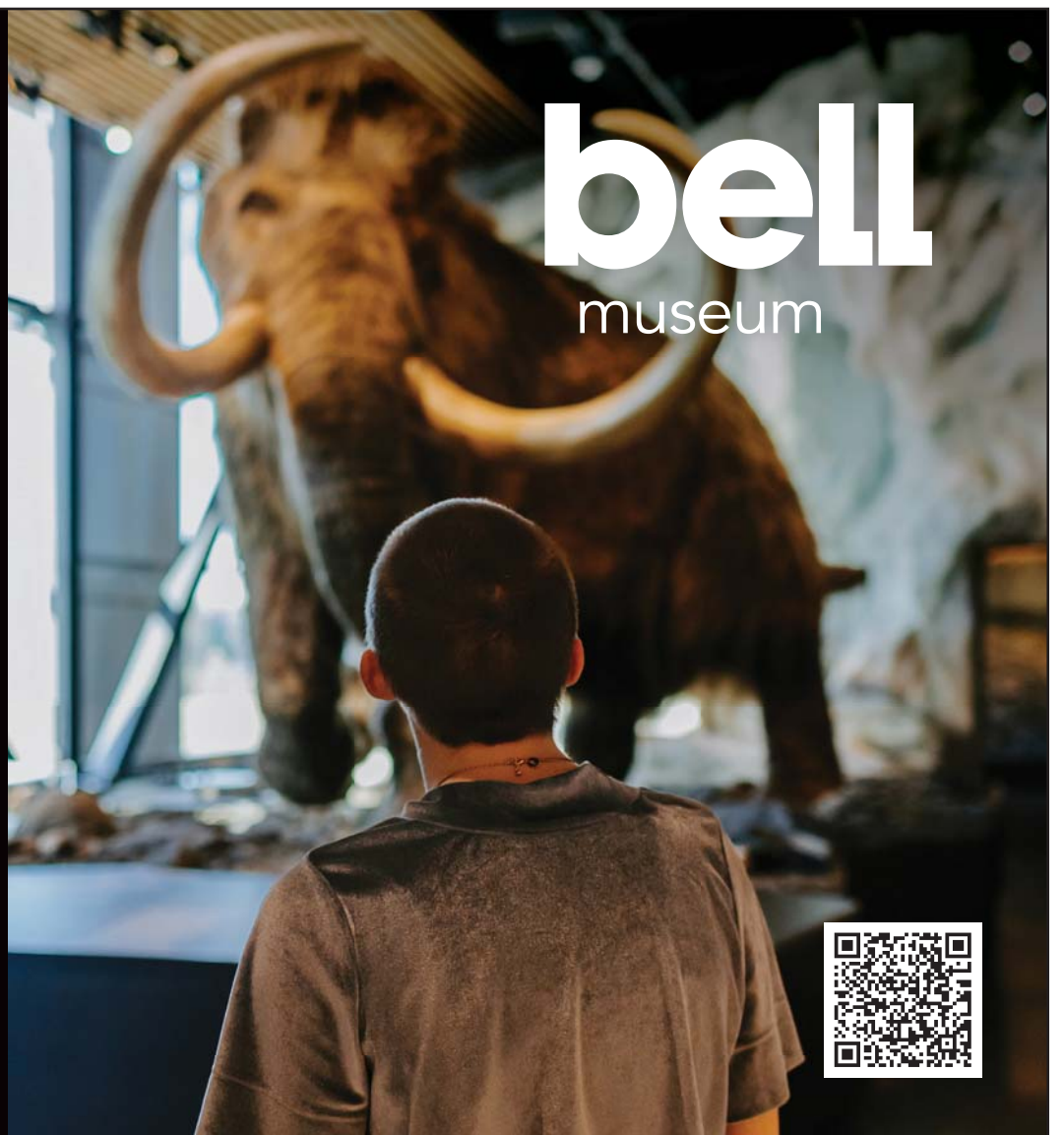
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The Bell Museum waives general museum admission for Dakota and all Indigenous peoples. For more information visit [bellmuseum.umn.edu/mnisota-makhoche](https://bellmuseum.umn.edu/mnisota-makhoche)



to Saturday’s Grand Slam in North St. Paul. The Otsego resident, said he heard about MAW through word of mouth while watching a Total Nonstop Action. He was effusive after Saturday’s Grand Slam.

“Great event! I’d say the card was very stacked. It was great seeing so many guest appearances,” he said. “This was easily a 10 out of 10.” Sahan freelancer Chris Juhn contributed to this story.



Left: Sonny Onoo, the manager of the wrestler Tajiri steps out onto the walkway at the MAW Grand Slam VII at North High School on Nov. 1, 2025.

Above: Midwest All-Star Wrestling co-owner David Amitrano at the Grand Slam VII at North High School on Nov. 1, 2025.

Right: MAW fans Irvin Gonzelez, left, and Grace Nystrom pose for a photo at the MAW Grand Slam VII on Nov. 1, 2025. (All photos by Chris Juhn / Sahan Journal.)

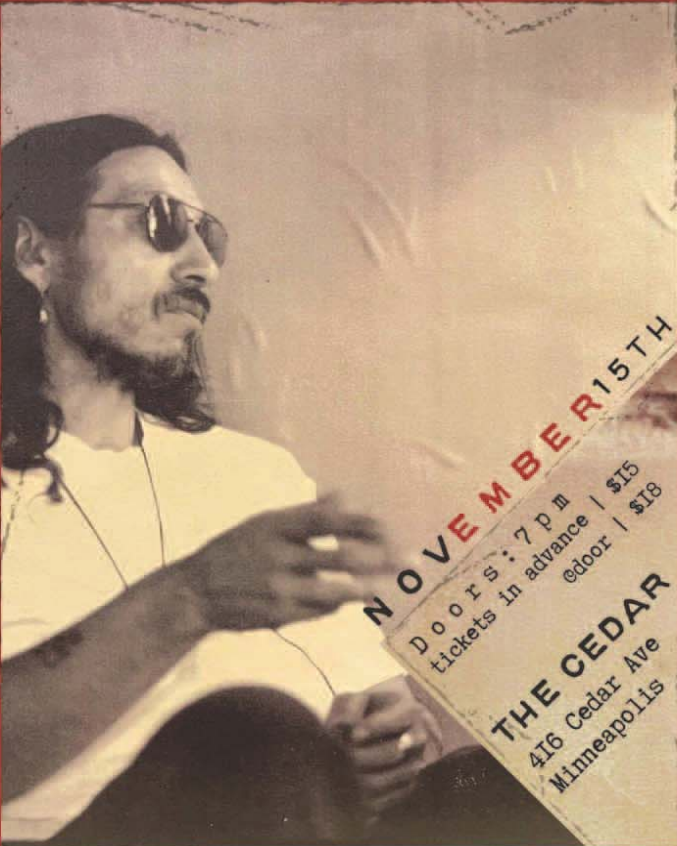


2025

REMEMBERING  
JOHN TRUDELL

ANNIE HUMPHREY   KEITH SECOLA

JEREMY YLIVISAKER  
SEAN CAREY



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Rising to prominence as the spokesman during the 1969–70 occupation of Alcatraz under the “United Indians of All Tribes,” John Trudell broadcast fiery messages as “Radio Free Alcatraz” before serving as national chairman of the American Indian Movement throughout much of the 1970s. John Trudell has been physically gone for ten years now. His life and words continue to matter. John reminds us that if we use our intelligence and stay coherent, we will outlast them. (The industrial ruling class)

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# Lifelong memories made for Bemidji HS soccer player Novak

The Bemidji HS varsity girls' soccer team's 2025 season is over. For senior team members there are lifelong memories that were made not only during their final season. Memories were also made from many years of preparation to be a part of a successful varsity high school soccer program.

In a traditional introduction of oneself to others: "My name is Miikawaadizi Novak, Miika for short. Miikawaadizi means "to be beautiful" in the Ojibwe language. My we'eh named me Niigaanibik, which translates to "the one who leads." I am an enrolled member of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and a descendant of two other tribes. I am from the Bear clan. My Grandpa Eugene Novak was from the Oneida tribe in Wisconsin and my Grandma Jonie Johnson was Akimel O'dham from the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona."

Miika is a senior at Bemidji High School in Bemidji, Minnesota. Her primary sports and activities included soccer, hockey, modeling, and pageantry.

"I have been playing varsity soccer since I was a sophomore. I've played soccer since I was (about) four years old,

starting with rec soccer at Bemidji Youth Soccer. Since then, a soccer ball has been practically glued to my feet," added Miika.

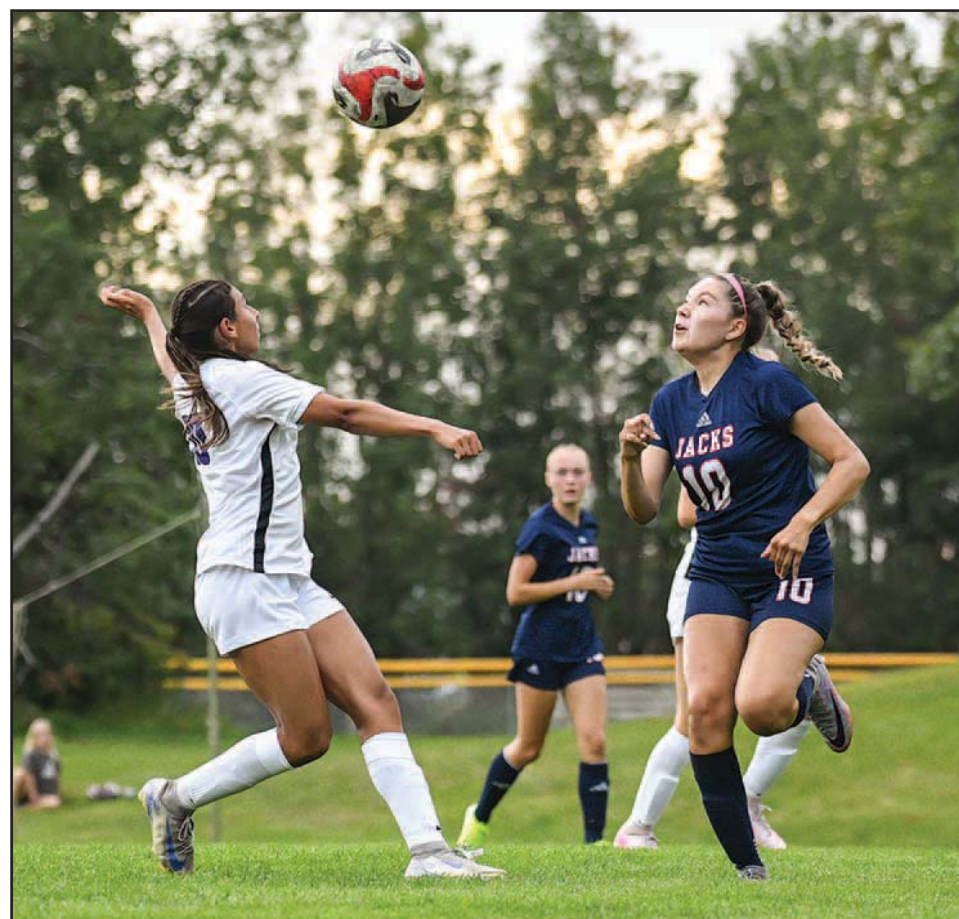
"When I was 10, I started playing hockey during the winter. While soccer has my heart, I play hockey for fun. I started playing later than most players and had a lot to learn but I kept with it. I even played on a boys' team when I was 12," added Miika.

Miika's path followed in the translation of her Ojibwe name. She had an extensive background in modeling and pageantry.

"In a completely different direction, I have enjoyed modeling for Indigenous photographers and Indigenous brands," said Miika. "I have gotten opportunities to model in fashion shows for Red Berry Woman, Devontey's Designs, RedWing Collections, Choke Cherry Creek and more. Fashion modeling has taken me to Montana, Oregon, South Dakota, and more."

Training at a high level at a young age has prepared her to compete at the big school level in Minnesota high school soccer.

"In 2023 (we) won our conference championship," said Miika. "Same for



Miikawaadizi Novak, Ojibwe, #10 in blue, played varsity soccer for Bemidji HS since her sophomore season. (Photo courtesy Bemidji Pioneer Sports.)

the 2024 season and this season too in 2025. I've scored multiple goals for the high school team. Unfortunately I did not score my senior season, but I did have assists for a lot of points and received recognition for my assists and corner kicks."

Club soccer was played from November to July. The commitment to improve as a varsity player meant traveling long distance for practice and competition.

"This year, I got the amazing opportunity to play for Zolos FC MN," said Miika. "We practiced in Alexandria, MN and Brainerd, MN. Girls from all over northern Minnesota were on my team: Alexandria, Brainerd, Detroit Lakes, Grand Rapids, Pequot Lakes, and me from Bemidji," added Miika.

Many athletes have their favorite memories within their sport that encouraged them to strive to be better.

"One of my favorite memories of playing soccer was this past summer, the last tournament we went to," said Miika. "All the practices led up to our final tournament, the Target USA Cup. The Target USA Cup is where we had to show up and play our hearts out. It was many of my teammates' last games as a soccer player."

"We made it to the semifinals. We played Ireland in our very first game. We lost to Ireland. But we ended up seeing Ireland again in the semifinals. We played one of our best games. It was 0-

0 for what felt like forever. I all of the sudden got a breakaway and took a shot at the net. The goalie tipped it out with her fingers which led to a corner kick. I took the corner kick, a beautiful floater right into the feet of Sydney Kalina and she scored! It was one of the best moments ever," added Miika.

"But we ended up losing and that's okay, it was one of the most memorable soccer memories from the tournament," said Miika.

As soccer season was ending, and hockey was starting, Miika also has plans for post-high school.

"My plans for after high school is that I will attend college and major in environmental and outdoor sciences and minor in deaf studies," said Miika. "I chose environmental studies because of my grandfather who inspired me into picking it. I plan to minor in deaf studies. I took my first ASL class during my sophomore year and it inspired me to be an interpreter."

"While I was in Montana for modeling my mom and I had stopped at the local Walmart to get some snacks and a deaf employee greeted us. I noticed that he was doing some hand movements while he spoke and I picked up he was signing. I signed back to him and told him my name in sign language. He had told me that I made his day and he was so happy that he was able to speak with someone. That memory will forever stick with me," added Miika.



On the “No Kings” protests

Some readers of The Circle likely participated in the Oct. 18 protests against the Trump 2.0 regime. The sponsoring organizations and press reported that some seven million individuals participated in these demonstration in large cities, suburbs and small towns.

The rubric of “No Kings” harkens back to the birth of the United States in its revolt against the Crown, the British colonial rulers.

Writing in The Atlantic magazine (Nov. 2025), Ned Blackhawk noted: “The Declaration of Independence is venerated for its poetic language and universalist prologue, with the soaring, ‘self-evident’ truth that all men have the right to ‘Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.’ But, less famously, the Declaration is also a set of specific grievances. There are 27 in total, building to a defining final charge against the Crown: The King of England has attempted to afflict frontiersmen with ‘merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.’”

Blackhawk, a history professor at Yale and the author of “The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History,” continues: “The most famous text of the Revolution culminates not with an idealistic wish but with a derogatory indictment, legal as well as moral. The drafters drew upon nascent doctrines of international law and made England’s incitement of ‘Savages’ the ultimate unjust act against a ‘Free and Independent’ people. In this so-called Age of Reason, Native Americans were charged with having none at all. They were not only lawless but also irrational, incapable of self-governance, and lacking moral capacity.”

And Blackhawk adds, “This one-dimensional vision of Native Americans was new.” Moreover, the colonists knew better. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Europeans on these shores lived among Native communities, and folks like Benjamin Franklin admired the Iroquois (or Haudenosaunee) Confederacy’s “centralized political, military, and diplomatic practices” ... “Native self-governance was so evident and persistent that it became a source of colonial frustration,” as per Blackhawk.

In school we were taught that the American Revolution was a matter of “taxation without representation,” which inspired the dumping of tea in Boston harbor, etc. In reality, the revolt against King George III was about stealing Indian land to the west of the

Appalachian Mountains. Blackhawk’s article in The Atlantic is accompanied by a map, issued by British General Thomas Gage in 1766, which depicts land west of the Appalachians as “reserved for the Indians.”

This point will be expanded upon in the upcoming Ken Burns documentary for PBS, “The American Revolution.” The six-part series, which is co-directed by Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt, premieres on Nov. 16.

In an October interview with Terry Gross on “Fresh Air,” Burns pointed out that Franklin and George Washington were “speculators in tens of thousands of acres of land in the Ohio Valley, where people wanted to go.”

“So it’s about Indian land,” Burns said, regarding the Revolutionary war.

If you’re a history buff like me, “The American Revolution” might fill in some gaps in your understanding of U.S. history and how the “new birth of freedom” on Turtle Island was bound up in the “sovereignities it sought to erase,” in Ned Blackhawk’s words.

Dyani White Hawk’s art

In October, I was invited to a media preview of “Dyani White Hawk: Love Language” at the Walker Art Center. The mid-career survey of the artist’s compositions features nearly 100 works, including new sculptures.

I’m not well versed in the language of art criticism, so my assessment is: Wow! This is one of most beautiful art shows I’ve ever seen.

White Hawk (Sičąŋǵu Lakota) incorporates porcupine quillwork, lane stitch beadwork and mosaics in her artworks. Trying to get a look at the intricate beadwork in one painting, I moved too close and a museum guard asked me to step back behind the blue tape line on the floor.

As for the exhibition’s title, White Hawk explained that “‘Love Language’ speaks to Lakota artistic practices that represent love for family, community, the land, and life. The exhibition is an embodied love letter to our ancestors, our communities, family, and the people — all of humanity.”

The show will be on display at the Walker through Feb. 15, 2026, and then move to the Remai Modern, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, April 25-Sept. 27, 2026. The show was co-organized with the Remai Modern, and at the media preview here I had a brief chat with Tarah Hogue (Métis), the museum’s adjunct curator of Indigenous Art. Hogue and the Walker’s Siri Engberg, are co-curators of White Hawk’s show.

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# On-demand transportation service links Grand Rapids to tribal communities

BY CHANDRA COLVIN/MPR NEWS

With the tap of a button or short phone call, community members living in the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's Ball Club community can request a free ride with the recently expanded transportation service, goMARTI.

Minnesota's Advanced Rural Transit Innovation, or goMARTI, launched its pilot program three years ago to test free, autonomous and on-demand transportation services in rural Minnesota's "challenging winter conditions." Until two months ago, the program primarily served the community of Grand Rapids, providing over 30,000 rides since its initial launch.

The company that manages the project, The PLUM Catalyst, worked with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to bring transportation services to Ball Club, the tribal nation's southernmost community along Highway 2.

Tammy Meehan Russell, president and chief catalyst for The PLUM Catalyst, says in addition to the tribal community, over 70 new pick-up and drop-off locations include those in La Prairie, Cohasset and Deer River.

"We wanted to really understand the needs, especially in a rural community or rural area like Grand Rapids," Meehan Russell said. "By leveraging technology and funding that's going toward technology and technology development, we're able to also fill a gap and show this need for transportation in a region like this."

GoMARTI's fleet includes electric and hybrid vehicles, and autonomous vehicles with self-driving capa-



Minnesota's Advanced Rural Transit Innovations, goMARTI, marks the expansion of its free, on-demand transportation service in northern Minnesota. 70 new pick-up and drop-off locations along Highway 2, now link Grand Rapids to La Prairie, Cohasset, Deer River and Ball Club, including locations within the Leech Lake Reservation. (Photo courtesy of goMARTI.)

bilities. Most of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Despite self-driving capabilities, Meehan Russell says drivers are still in the car when using autonomous vehicles, which primarily service the immediate Grand Rapids area.

Kyle Fairbanks serves as district one representative for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. He says transportation is a major barrier in Native communities.

"Just the lack of our band members having that transportation prevents them from seeking everyday needs, from health care to groceries and being able to get to

school," Fairbanks said.

He emphasizes health care needs, noting the increased access goMARTI has provided since its expansion. He hopes the tribe will continue to work with The PLUM Catalyst to further expand services to more communities within the reservation.

"A lot of our band members, they either go to a doctor in Deer River or Grand Rapids or IHS," Fairbanks said. "I've spoken with a few that have used goMARTI and it was simple. As simple as getting on an app or as simple as making a phone call to be able to make those appointments."

Adam White grew up in the community of Ball Club. Currently the supervisor of transit operations for the newly expanded area, White says he began as an autonomous vehicle driver with goMARTI in Grand Rapids.

"I just never realized that it was my calling to help people with transportation issues, you know, like getting people from A to B," White said. He says he enjoys being able to help his community and make an impact on those utilizing goMARTI.

Since its expansion, he's noticed there are already several people in the tribal community who use the service nearly every day. White says while the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe already offers shuttles for certain needs like transportation to work, the goMARTI expansion is not going to replace that.

"We're trying to fill in the gap so people can get to the hospital, grocery stores, convenience stores," White said.

One of the most common questions he's been asked is if anyone can use goMARTI's services, stating that many think goMARTI is primarily for those with accessibility needs, but he says it's open to everyone.

Meehan Russell says the service wasn't designed with one specific group in mind.

"It was to make something that the communities all feel like it's theirs," Meehan Russell said.

A community celebration takes place 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday at the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids.

"Being on this project is a real honor, giving back to my community," White said.

Users can access goMARTI by downloading the goMARTI app onto their mobile devices or by calling 218-466-2784. Hours of operation can be found on goMARTI's website.

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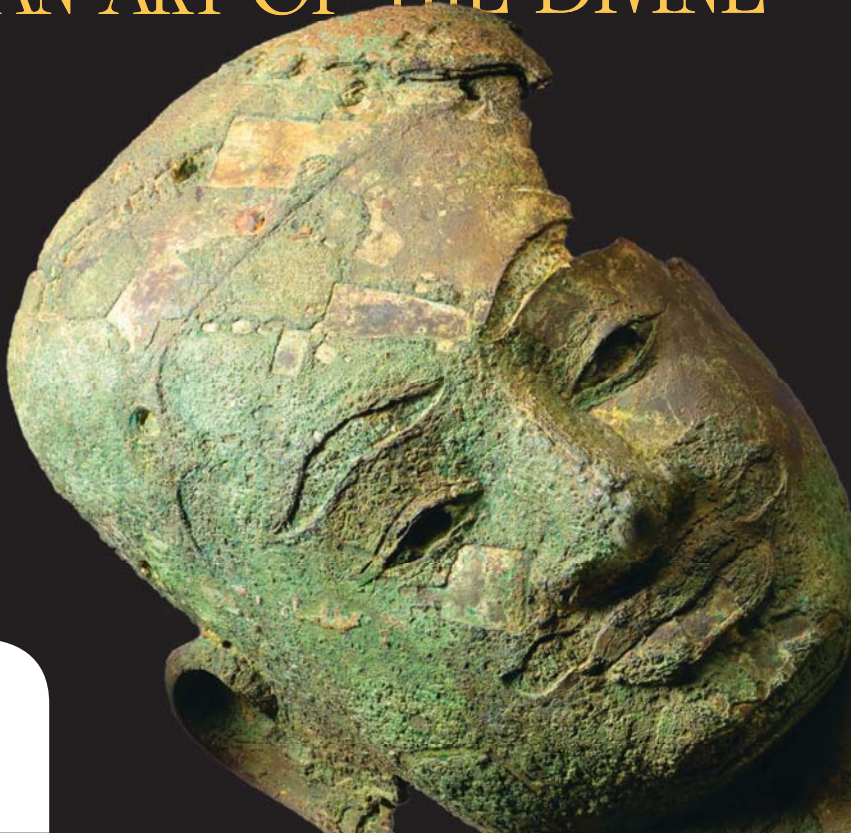


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# Long time columnist Kristine Shotley “Ricey Wild” passes on

BY THE CIRCLE

It is with sadness that The Circle remembers our longtime columnist Kristine “Kris” Shotley, who wrote under the byline “Ricey Wild” for more than 25 years, and whose sharp wit, honesty and heart earned her loyal readers across Indian Country.

Shotley, 63, of Cloquet, Minn., died Oct. 8 after a brief illness, according to her obituary. Services were held Oct. 13 at Holy Family Catholic Church in Cloquet.

Shotley was Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. She grew up in Cloquet and attended Metro State College in Minneapolis. She lived in the Twin Cities and in Denver over the years, and she raised one son, Steve, who she often wrote about in her columns, sometimes with humor, always with affection.

She wrote “It Ain’t Easy Being Indian” — under the pen name “Ricey Wild” — with a voice that was unmistakably her own: often raw, often irreverent, sharply funny, culturally rooted and honest about Indigenous life in America. Her work explored everything from environmental concerns, to politics, to family stories, to the quiet heartbreaks and daily resiliencies of Native people, and life on a modern day reservation.

Shotley was an activist for journalism, a member of the American Journalists Association, and was featured on Native news podcasts, including News From Indian Country.

Her obituary described her as a woman who made friends “with anyone from all walks of life.” She loved history — especially English history — and once acted



as tour guide on a family trip to London, Hampton Court, Bath and the British Museum. Her favorite place however, her family wrote, remained the shores of Lake Superior.

Shotley is survived by her son, Steve Shotley of Duluth; her mother, Naomi Shotley Barnard of Shakopee; granddaughter, Daenerys Shotley of Shakopee; and siblings Stefanie Lyons, Rebecca Goebhal and Michael Wynd, among many other family

members, friends, cousins and readers. She was preceded in death by her father, Jerome Charette, and her grandparents.

Kris Shotley leaves behind thousands of words — and a generation of Native people who felt seen in them. Her readers will miss her voice.

Her obituary is at: <https://www.nelsonfuneralcare.net/obituaries/Kristine-Krissy-E-Shotley?obId=45847782>

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# Creator’s Place empowers Ojibwe artists in Pine Point

BY DAN NINHAM

**B**am'idizowigamig Creator's Place was founded in 2021 in the tribal village of Pine Point, located a half mile north of Ponsford and both are on the southeastern corner of the White Earth Nation in northern Minnesota.

Jean Kruft has a few hats on as the founder, board chair and daily volunteer with the Bam'idizowigamig Creator's Place. Her main hat would be a visionary. Kruft knew the community lacked employment opportunities so she used an inheritance to have a steel building built and started the economic social enterprise to provide training and meaningful work in creative, culturally rooted fields.

“What began as a handful of people making art and products together has grown into a nonprofit employing about 25 local residents, building skills in construction, beadwork, graphic design, book publishing, etched granite memorials, marketing, management and packaging of wild rice food mixes,” said Jean Kruft.

It is called Creator's Place because it seemed obvious to Jean that as soon as she had the idea to build an employment



Bam'idizowigamig Creator's Place Board of Directors (left to right): JoAyn Judson, Sara Forsberg, Pam Fairbanks, Amy Thompson, Trulo Adams, Jean Kruft, Evelyn Bellanger, and Butch Smith. Not pictured is Pete Ellis. (Photos by Dan Ninham.)

center in Pine Point, she received an unexpected inheritance to do it. “So... Creator's Place means it belongs to the Creator. Bam'idizowigamig means a house or place for supporting oneself,” said Kruft.

“Our mission is to create meaningful work and economic opportunities

through building, art, design, and culture,” said Kruft. “We want our community members to not only earn wages but also build confidence, skills, and pride in producing items that reflect our heritage and creativity.”

The work contributes to cultural revitalization and community well-being.

“By producing Ojibwe children’s books, Indigenous-designed apparel, granite memorials, and wild rice soup kits, we are both preserving and sharing culture,” said Kruft. “Each product connects our youth and families to Ojibwe traditions while generating pride and hope.”

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Research also plays in the creative processes to connect to Ojibwe ways.

“Research is essential,” said Krufft. “Artists often draw from oral traditions, elder knowledge, and community stories. For example, our books and illustrations are rooted in Ojibwe teachings, language, and historical storytelling. Many artists also study traditional designs, natural imagery, or archival sources to ensure cultural accuracy while adding their own creative voice.”

“I’ve worked at Creator’s Place for two and half years, doing various art from sculpture, drawings for gift cards, and t-shirt designs,” said Dayton Adams, Ojibwe. “I did my first comic last year and I have been doing it since.”

“It was Jean who requested that I do a traditional Ojibwe story in my style,” said Adams. “As far as I can tell, the Creation Story was never done in comic book form and we figured it would be a good idea for the community, especially for younger readers.”

“I then went into scripting and rough drafts before doing the final product, making sure everything stays in touch with the original story. Overall, the process was pretty lengthy,” added Adams.

Adams continued to address the story details. He said, “Now the characters themselves are just like the ones heard in the original story. Nanaboozhoo, the Muskrat, Loon, et al. I tried to give them varied personalities, for example, how the Beaver and Loon are overly confident in their swimming but were quickly shot down by the water’s depth, and how the Squirrel made comical remarks in the background. The Muskrat was probably the most straight-forward to write, as I gave him a selfless and brave personality

despite his size, mainly for the readers to empathize with the Muskrat’s heroism.”

“Nanaboozhoo himself more or less acted as the main character of the story, seeing events play out and such, acting as the reader’s viewpoint,” added Adams.

“Overall, I think it’s been a valuable learning experience and interesting endeavor to be able to make and market my own comics,” said Adams.

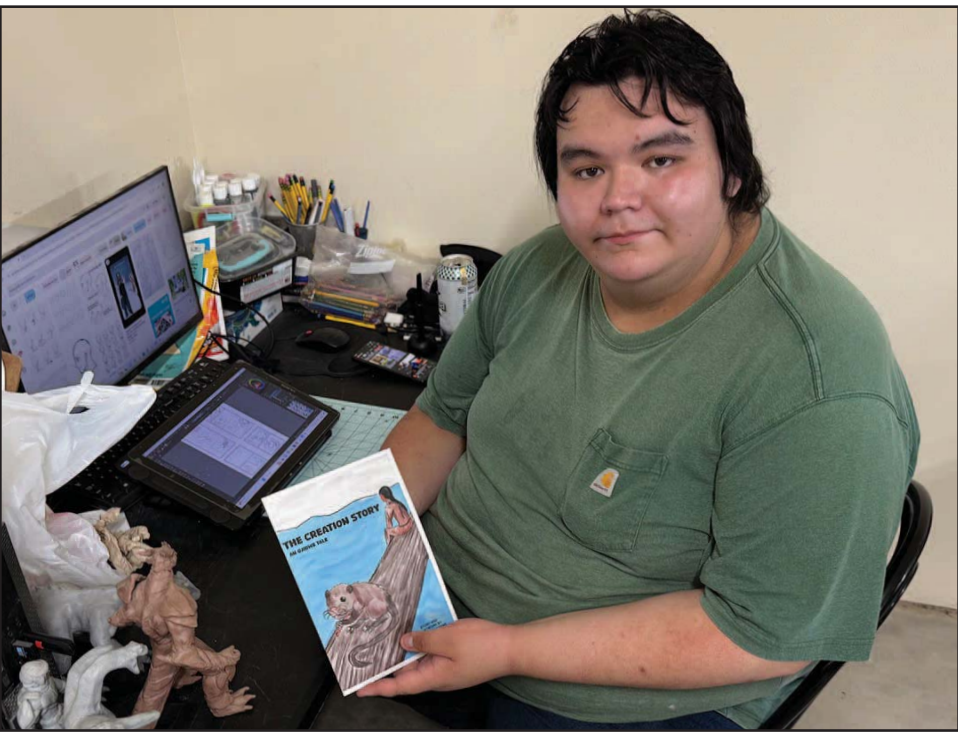
Jean Krufft and a dynamic board of director’s share empowered responsibilities to both the artists and the wider community.

“We see ourselves as bridge-builders—supporting individuals while uplifting the whole community,” said Krufft.

“We hope Creator’s Place will grow into a full-time employer for the community, with expanded food product lines, a strong publishing arm, and a regional reputation for high-quality Indigenous art,” said Krufft. “We want this endeavor to be totally operated and managed by local indigenous people.”

Jean Krufft continued to talk about the vision of the non-profit business on the reservation. She said, “Creator’s Place is more than a studio; it’s a community anchor. We’ve helped over 50 people gain work experience and skills since we started, and each success story builds hope. We’re also creating a replicable model for other rural and tribal communities facing similar challenges.”

“The White Earth Tribal Council has been totally supportive of this endeavor. They have arranged to have trainees wages reimbursed through the Maadadizi workforce Center through



Dayton Adams, Ojibwe, is a sculptor and comic book artist. He is one of the artists who works in the Bam'idizowigamig Creator's Place.

the Quest Program, and are also providing funds for ongoing employment for people who have exceeded the allowed training phase.”

“Our sales cover all supplies, materials, equipment and a portion of wages, but we are not yet self-sufficient. We have also been annually supported through a grant from the West Central Regional Foundation.”

People can visit the program in Pine Point, or they can connect online through their websites at:

- <https://www.creatorsplace.org>
- <https://www.facebook.com/p/Pine-Point-Bamidizowigamig-Creators-Place-100088913816337>
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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

I HAVE ENCLOSED \$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR A \_\_\_\_\_ BULK SUBSCRIPTION  
\_\_\_\_\_ Or pay with credit card \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS ☐ DISCOVER

NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT # \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

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

ALL BULK SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE SEND VIA UPS GROUND.

| RATES                                                                     | ONE YR | TWO YRS |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50 PAPERS/PER MTH                                | \$100  | \$175   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 PAPER/PER MTH                                | \$150  | \$275   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING ORGS<br>(INCLUDES 100 PAPERS PER MTH) | \$200  | \$350   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRIBAL GOVRMT<br>(INCLUDES 200 PAPER PER MTH)    | \$300  | \$500   |

PLEASE CHECK THE BOX FOR YOUR CHOICE ABOVE.