

TURTLETALK NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of
Mass. Center for Native American Awareness, Inc.
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SUMMER - AUTUMN - EARLY WINTER 2006

GOVERNING BOARD : President: Burne Stanley-Peters; Board Members: Dawn Duncan, Claudia FoxTree, Marie Levenson, Kim Orben, Anthony Silva, and Maria Wilkins.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Don Barnaby, Eva Blake, Anne Foxx-Whitford, John Sly Fox Oakley, Autaquay Peters, and Len Rose.

FOUNDER: Burne Stanley-Peters

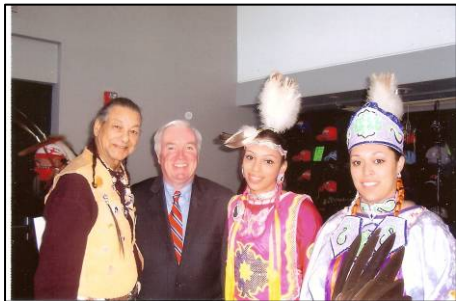
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS: Claudia Fox Tree, Anne Foxx, Anthony Silva and Burne Stanley-Peters. ■

MCNAA NEWS & INFORMATION

RESULTS OF MCNAA'S NAT'L NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY POW-WOW, MEDFORD, MA

by Claudia Fox Tree

This year the MCNAA Nat'l Native Am. Heritage Day Pow-wow was held in Medford, Massachusetts in the beautiful Springstep building. The mission of Springstep is to celebrate cultures and connect people through dance and music, so the building offered three ballrooms on different floors. The Pow wow was held on the top floor in the largest ballroom and vendors were set up in several areas. This indoor location made it possible to set up a television and showcase some videos about Native Americans for folks who wanted to sit down and rest a bit.



Chief Vernon Lopez, Mayor Michael McGlynn, Aquayah Peters, and Autaquay Peters-Chacin

We were honored by the presence of the Mayor Michael McGlynn of Medford who made an appearance just before Grand Entry. He presented two citations. One to Chief Vernon Lopez of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the other to the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness.

He said this was the first Pow Wow ever in Medford and that the City welcomed the event. After the Mayor's words, Star emceed the program which included Iron River Singers as host drum and Quabbin Lake Singers as the invited drum. Aquayah Peters was the

Head Lady Dancer and Don Barnaby was Head Man Dancer. They led the way for some wonderful intertribal dancing.

The Wampanoag Nation Singers and Dancers shared Eastern Social Songs and Dances. This was especially great because there were some students who this time of year are studying Native Americans in general, and Wampanogs specifically, so they were thrilled to see the Wampanoag people and participate in the dances. This also seemed to help the children see that we are a contemporary people, and still alive, who do many traditional things. For example, Marlene Blake was there to demonstrate "finger weaving" and her dad Chief Vernon Lopez sat next to her, adding to the general excitement of the students. As is often the case, this pow wow was a first time experience for many of the people who attended.

Storytelling by Loril Moondream and Peter White Fox was held in one of the smaller ballrooms. Adults and children had the opportunity to listen to Native stories of creation and animals. The craft making was colorful sand painting art.

There seemed to be many teachers and college students attending as well, maybe it was the semester ending? I found myself losing my voice by the end of the day from answering so many questions about the meaning of dances, songs, regalia, and such. It was quite an educational opportunity for those who wanted to learn more about culture, song, and dance. ■

GRANT PRESENTATION NIGHT – HAVERHILL CULTURAL COUNCIL

by Burne Stanley

Officials of MCNAA were invited to the Haverhill Cultural Councils' Grant Presentation Night. The invitation is generally extended to the organizations who apply for cultural council funds for a specific event or activity. MCNAA applied for a grant for the annual Inter-tribal Pow-wow that is held in Haverhill in September.

MCNAA Board Members who were able to attend included Dawn Duncan, Claudia Fox Tree, Anthony Silva, and Maria Wilkins. In addition, Advisory Committee Members who attended included: Sly Fox Oakley (and wife Claire), and Len Rose.

Anthony introduced himself and talked about the history of MCNAA for the benefit new members of the HCC. One of the few questions posed by a new member of the Council, which had to do with how the event educates the public, was answered precisely and eloquently by Claudia.

We will know in January 2007 if our application is approved for funding. ■

STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING NOVEMBER CELEBRATION

by Burne Stanley and Anne Foxx

Through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Transportation Agencies and Authorities the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, Partners in Transportation Diversity Committee and the MBTA presented an event in recognition of National Native American Heritage

month. It was held on Friday, November 17, 2006 in Boston and MCNAA was invited to be present.



Jim Peters, Lynn Heard, John Cogliano, Anne Foxx, and Jeanne Morrison

The name of Anne Foxx was selected from MCNAA's Speaker's Bureau. She was asked to be the keynote speaker for the event. She spoke eloquently on "Defining Our Destiny Through Our Culture and Self Determination". Anne is a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and a member of MCNAA's Advisory Committee. Please read her speech below.

Others who were part of the program included Cecelia Vaughn, Story Teller/Poet; and Mixashawn, Musician – The Wave Artist.

Those who attended to support Anne, at MCNAA's invitation, included MCNAA Leadership Committee members: Marie Levenson (crutches and all), Kim Orben, Burne Stanley-Peters, and Maria Wilkins. Others included Peter Levenson, Aquayah Peters, Jim Peters, and Jason Wilkins. There were many others who attended in support of the program and other participants. ■

OTHER NEWS & INFORMATION IN AND AROUND THE REGION

PARTNERS IN TRANSPORTATION

CELEBRATING AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Friday, November 17, 2006

“Defining Our Destiny Through Our Culture & Self Determination”

Keynote Address by Anne Foxx,

Here is the edited version of Anne's speech

I am known as Smiling Dove and am a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. History says that the Wampanoags were the first to meet the white settlers when they arrived in 1620. It is important for all people to know about the history of Native Americans in this country. Understanding a culture vastly reduces prejudices toward that culture. I found out in my early 20s my ancestry was strongly tied to the Mashpee Wampanoags. My mission is to be someone who will educate the public and dedicate my time getting resources for tribal people. I often wondered why ancestry was not talked about in my family. I suspect part of it was because life's other obstacles got in the way and perhaps there was shame attached to it. It was “easier” to not be Indian. What is it like to be American Indian in society today? The most precise way of explaining this is that it feels like living in two worlds. One is contrary to the other. For example, at our social events, children have always been included. It is all about family. We greet each other with hugs and express our happiness seeing each other. We respect and appreciate the environment often going to places like the forest or oceans to do spiritual ceremonies. In this, there is a deep spiritual connection for Native People.

In the wide world, it's not set up to be like that. Our society has become so individualistic. Generally, American people are so focused on their jobs and getting ahead. Doesn't it make more sense to spend more time and positive energy with families? Nourishing our families, ourselves, and keeping our lives in balance helps to cope better with our everyday lives. The environment is being taken for granted and abused. It seems to me that Mother Earth has been taken for granted far too long. Don't you think we should take care of our beautiful and nourishing Mother Earth? She takes care of us!

Native people have long been denied their culture and heritage, the same way I felt deprived of who I really was growing up. It seems American Indians always must prove themselves to others. As a Native American I have heard such comments as: "What part Indian are you?" "There are no more real Indians" and "I thought all the Indians were killed off". These comments are the basis for my activism in the community. Like many others, I have been working hard to dispel the myths. Over the last 30 years I have strived to educate and promote awareness of Native People in New England. For six years now I have served on the Advisory Committee for the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness. This organization was incorporated in 1989 for the exact same reasons I do the work today. John "Slow Turtle" Peters and Burne Stanley-Peters had a vision to educate the public and promote understanding of the Native American culture. You can go to the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness web site for more information (www.mcnaa.org).

In 2005, the first college course of its kind, "Contemporary Issues in Native New England" was taught at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Other events, which featured top tribal officials and educators in New England, were presented. I team-taught this class with Professor Amy Den Ouden of the Anthropology Department through a grant from the Kellogg Foundation that was awarded to the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs. For the past two years, the Native American Student Society at U Mass Boston sponsored a Native American Pow-wow. I was so excited to be a part of that process and believe these events are historic events on the Boston Campus.

I have also been involved with a program call "Higher Education Opportunities Program". Classes are held at the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council and enrolls Wampanoag members, some of whom have received their undergraduate degrees. I am proud to say I have worked on this program with Professors Ann Withorn and Marian Spencer, College of Public and Community Service, U Mass Boston. These kinds of allies with Native Peoples can help gain educational support and resources and will sustain a viable future for the Tribe and for Massachusetts.

Despite the best efforts by some of the bureaucracies and citizens in Massachusetts and the U.S. who would undermine the Tribe's importance and status, **We're Still Here**. We have a community closeness, a family with the love and familial disputes of any other family. Wampanoag society is matrilineal and close kinship ties are practiced. The family line is through the female and membership is dependent on lineal descent. We look to our clan mothers, the Chief and Medicine Man for guidance in our traditional way of life and our contemporary lives also. Without their guidance, I could not have found my own deep spiritual beliefs and continue with our ceremonies and rituals that have long been practiced. These practices have always been sacred to the Wampanoag. I believe it is this spiritual foundation that



has given us tremendous pride, fortitude, determination, courage and hope to maintain a strong community.

The Wampanoag language is of the utmost importance since the Wampanoag language was, at one time, outlawed and almost lost to the community. It is one of the ways we define our destiny. It is intimately tied to our cultural traditions in our way of life and respect for all living things.

After over 30 years since filing our first petition, The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe received a preliminary positive decision on federal recognition from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Dept. of Interior. The final decision is due in March 2007. It was great news to a lot of people in the tribe and our allies who supported us. First and foremost this will help in getting resources for tribal people to gain more access to affordable housing, economic development, access to good health care and the best education, especially for our young people

What kind of legacy do we want to leave our children, our grandchildren? Compassion and listening are key in human relationships with each other. Whether it's a small child or the elderly person that lives next door.

We are all citizens of the world. My ancestors were taught that they are part of the universe and the universe is to be respected and honored. In my teachings from the elders, I have learned that we must respect all living things, including each other. We are all unique individuals who have abilities to offer the world. As human beings we need to recognize what this means for the sake of the young ones, the babies - our future generations. All my relations. Anne Foxx" ■

INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD

by Burne Stanley

We are sad to report that Art Egerton, a MCNAA member, passed into the spirit world on November 9, 2006 in his home in Pembroke. He was 84 years young.

Art, affectionately known as Edgie, was concerned about MCNAA not having a "permanent home" and he wanted to help us secure a building or a piece of property. So, every opportunity he got to put out the word on the South Shore, he took it. His enthusiasm about helping MCNAA made us feel very special.

In addition to being a member of MCNAA, Edgie he was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Pembroke, the American Legion in Hanson, the Masonic lodge in East Weymouth for more than 50 years, the National Rifle Association, the Gun Owners Action League, the Hanson Rod & Gun Club and the Upland Riders Motorcycle Club in Plympton.

Contributions were made to MCNAA in his memory. Also, The Upland Riders Motorcycle Club is having a memorial patch made in Art's honor and all proceeds will be donated to MCNAA. ■

JULY 22ND SEMINAR ON NATIVE AMERICAN NEEDS AT U MASS BOSTON

by Burne Stanley and Jim Peters

Continuing the planning efforts of the Commission on Indian Affairs to formally establish an Institute for Native American of New England, a community meeting at U Mass Boston was held on Saturday, July 22, 2006. It was entitled "Native Sovereignty & Self Determination – Understanding the Needs of the New England Native American Communities".

Native representatives from the New England tribes and communities sat on the panel. They included Joanne Dunn, Executive Director, North American Indian Center of Boston; Chief April St. Francis Merrill, Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, Vermont; Paula Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag; Fran Richardson Garnett, Chairperson, Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council; and Jim Sappier, Chief, Penobscot Indian Nation, Maine. They each described where their communities have been and what their vision is for tomorrow. These presentations were followed by a facilitated discussion to ascertain what the audience thought an Institute could do for Native communities. The gathering was well attended by numerous tribal groups and many invaluable points were made with respect to how a Native Institute can help the New England Native communities. This gathering should help the Commission identify some of the needs of the Native people in the region. ■



*Members of the
Massachuset Tribe*

ANNOUNCEMENT - FREE TUITION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard University has announced that from now on undergraduate students from low-income families will pay no tuition. In making the announcement, Harvard's president Lawrence H. Summers said, "When only 10 percent of the students in Elite higher education come from families in lower half of the income distribution, we are not doing enough. We are not doing enough in bringing elite higher education to the lower half of the income distribution."

If you know of a family earning less than \$60,000 a year with an honor student graduating from high school soon, Harvard University wants to pay the tuition. The prestigious university recently announced that from now on undergraduate students from low-income families can go to Harvard for free ... no tuition and no student loans! In addition, Harvard announces reduced fees for students from families with incomes between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

To find out more about Harvard offering free tuition for families making less than \$60,000 a year visit Harvard's financial aid website at: <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/daily/2006/03/30-finaid.html> or call the school's financial aid office at (617) 495-1581. ■