

TURTLETALK NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of
Mass. Center for Native American Awareness, Inc.
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SPRING 2008

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

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FOUNDER: Burne Stanley-Peters

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS: Claudia Fox Tree, Anthony Silva, Burne Stanley. ■

MCNAA NEWS & INFORMATION

MCNAA ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION APRIL 6, 2008

by Anthony Silva with input by Burne Stanley

The Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) celebrated it's 19th Year Anniversary at the Holiday Inn – Randolph on April 6th, 2008. The hard work of the President and the organizations' Leadership Team was reflected in the large attendance and the overwhelming success of our annual event. More



*A full house at the 2008 MCNAA Anniversary Celebration
Photo by Liz Feitelberg*

than 165 members and supporters attended this occasion. Although a few of our regular supporters were unable to be there this year, the welcomed addition of first time attendees more than filled the hall. Each purchased a "table of 8" for their members that included the Natick Praying Indians from the Stoughton area; Nipmuc community members from Central, Mass.; members of the North American Indian Center of Boston; the United Native American Cultural Center from Devens;

and members of the Bedford VA's Native American Initiative. There were also numerous MCNAA members who joined us this year and a few of them bought a table for their family members.

Prior to the start of the program, people were invited to go to the back of the room for a silent auction. Many beautiful items were donated by MCNAA's members and friends for the cause. Of particular interest was an array of silver jewelry from cousin Billy Love's collection, donated by his dear friend Peter Malloy in fond remembrance. A pair of Red Sox tickets as well as an official Red Sox baseball were hot items and ignited spirited bidding by many. The baseball was autographed by their budding superstar, Jacoby Ellsbury, from the Navajo Nation.

The celebration began with a prayer from our friend Dr. Bert Waters, followed by a beautiful cleansing song performed by our musically talented Board member, Dawn Duncan. This set a very positive tone to the afternoon.

After the prayer and cleansing, MCNAA's Board member and designated emcee, Claudia Fox Tree, began the afternoon by introducing the organizations' Leadership Team. Board members were asked to come to the front of the room for acknowledgement as well as a group photo. Advisory Committee members as well as other major supporters of the Center were asked to stand and be acknowledged for their help in making MCNAA a class organization.

After all acknowledgements were made, attendees were ushered to a delectable buffet. The menu included chicken picata, sirloin steak tips, pulled pork as well as a vegetable medley, rice, and desserts of strawberry cheesecake, triple chocolate cake and other scrumptious foods. Everyone was able to fill their appetites to their hearts content.

The emcee introduced the Wolf Cry Singers, who graciously accepted our invitation to enjoy their melodic singing and hand drumming. The applause from the audience was a testament to their beautiful voices and song. After finishing their song, they were asked to remain at the front of the room and each member was given a gift made by Advisory member and Native craftsman Len Rose.

After everyone had enjoyed their meal, our emcee began the introductions of our invited guest speakers one at a time and asked them to share their stories.



Paul Bullock
Photo by Liz Feitelberg

Our first speaker was Paul Bullock, the entrepreneur of the well-known and amazingly successful Native American supplies shop, The Wandering Bull. Paul, who is of Wampanoag ancestry, was invited to talk about how the Wandering Bull was established and about his trips to Fairbanks, Alaska where he emceed several pow-wows. The audience found his story of how he founded Wandering Bull to be quite interesting, while his vivid description of his participation in the pow-wows was equally fascinating. He emphasized how serious the Alaskan Natives took their pow wows and how everyone participated without exception.

Our second speaker was Leslie Tuplin, Mi'kmaq (Lennox Island Band). She told a very inspiring story of how she overcame overwhelming gender discrimination in a field that is traditionally male-dominated. She gave a humorous vignette of how many of her employers were shocked that Leslie was a woman and not a man and how the MTA had to accommodate her by retrofitting their bathrooms. She told us that she has the only Native American and Women owned Construction Management Company in

Massachusetts. It is called “Native Solutions” and is SOMWBA certified. She has a lengthy career in the Engineering and Construction Industry.

Her story needs to be heard by our youth, especially our young women who feel they can’t succeed in a male dominated field. We hope that she will be able to share again.



Leslie Tuplin
Photo by Liz Feitelberg

Our third guest speaker was Larry Mann of the Historical Nipmucs of Central Mass. He is also a member of the Confederacy of Nipmuc Tribes. He selected the topic of “Native



Larry Mann
Photo by Liz Feitelberg

American Sovereignty, Identity, and the Continuing struggle for self-determination”. Although being relatively youthful, Larry has shown to be passionate about all that he trying to attain for his people. He is known to have the heart of a warrior. His talk complemented the speakers before him. The audience was very absorbed until the end.

The afternoon ended with a door prize drawing and a 50/50 raffle after which high bidders were invited to pick up their silent auction items.

All were thanked for their attendance and support.

Below are a few comments from Members who attended the event:

~It was an outstanding event. The opportunity to meet so many wonderful people was a highlight. My only regret was that I didn't bid high enough on some of the lovely items. I'll do better next year.

~We had a wonderful time. Some of us have been talking about joining your organization. You are a wonderful group of people who we admire and enjoy spending time with. It would be an honor and a pleasure to support your many efforts in the Community.

~I had a wonderful time at the anniversary celebration. I was so glad that I got a chance to be there and see all the folks that I haven't seen in a while. The speakers were wonderful, intelligent, interesting and very moving and inspirational. There were such diverse groups and representation of Wampanoag peoples. I loved the honoring of all the chiefs - that was very special. The food was delicious and plenty of it. Looking forward to seeing you in Marshfield, if not sooner.

~It has been and will always be a pleasure to work for MCNAA and you. It was a great event and turnout was tremendous. You might consider a bigger room for the 20th Anniversary Celebration...that will be HUGE!!

~We are honored to help in any way we can. We respect MCNAA and all that they have done as an organization. The best way to get things done is to have help within our own community. We are but a small part of people who believe that together we can make a difference and take care of our own. MCNAA is part of our family. We love you and the girls and will always be there for you girls in any way that we can be of service. Never hesitate to ask us for help in any way. ■

RED SOX DANCE PRESENTATION AT FENWAY PARK

by Claudia Fox Tree with input by Burne Stanley

This year, Red Sox officials decided to honor team members who were born in other "Nations." During the first week of pre-game shows at Fenway Park, they had Dominican Day, Japanese Day, and Native American Day, and the following week was Puerto Rican Day. Since Jacoby Ellsbury is Navajo, the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) and another Massachusetts Native organization was contacted to participate.



A small sampling of the dancers.

Approximately thirty dancers, including me and my daughter Cheyenne, were invited by Burne and Aquayah to take part in this "history-making event" as Dr. Waters called it. We danced for the pre-game show on Friday, April 11, 2008. It was the first game between the Red Sox and the Yankees. Dancers traveled from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Maine, Southeast Massachusetts, and Connecticut representing various dance styles. Marvin Burnette felt it would be a great idea to have a live drum group present (opposed to dancing to music on a cd) so on behalf of MCNAA he invited the Iron River Singers to be part of the program.



A few more dancers.

From the beginning, we all understood that the trade for our participation would be complimentary tickets to see the game. All dancers agreed and absorbed the cost of traveling to and parking at Fenway Park. This was a great feeling for the coordinators of the event because it showed the level of enthusiasm and desire these dancers had in being part of this historic occasion.

This was a touching and memorable occasion that will not be soon forgotten by those who participated. ■

MCNAA CELEBRATED EARTH DAY AT THE STONE ZOO

by Claudia Fox Tree

The Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) was asked to set up a booth for Earth Day at the Stone Zoo in Stoneham, MA. Len Rose, MCNAA Advisory Committee Member (and his family), and my daughter Cheyenne and I thought we'd share some hand drumming, sample dance styles, a drum making demonstration, and some songs from the comfort of our display table, and thereby draw in more people to see what MCNAA was all about. But before we knew it, our little table with Pow Wow information and membership flyers had become a one-hour presentation in their amphitheater! We adjusted well to the change, thanks to my friends, Jennifer, Laurel, Jan, and Bridget who were able to join me on this glorious Saturday afternoon.

I brought the Fox Tree family drum which is made from a hollowed-out cottonwood tree with buffalo hide stretched on both sides. At home, I've been teaching my children and their friends and the parents of their friends some Native American social songs.



Cheyenne, Claudia & Friends

It's a way I can keep up my skills, pass on the tradition of the drum, and model respect for Native beliefs. Today at the zoo, I called upon their willingness and ability to follow me on the drum, so that we could have a more full sound.

We did an introduction song which thanked *Atebeyra*, the name for the Earth mother in the Arawak language. After all, it was *Earth Day!* I wore my traditional regalia

which has the symbol of Atabeyra on it (half frog, half female). We mentioned the importance of using the words *regalia* or *dress* and not *costume*, as this is what you wear when you pretend to be something else, like for a play or to dress up. We drummed for Cheyenne when she did a jingle dance and a fancy dance demonstration. In between her regalia changes, we told a story about rabbits and sang a Rabbit Dance song and Len shared his expertise.

Len spoke about the different sounds that drums can make. Thanks to friends Richard and Cheryl, he was able to have a water drum and demonstrate how to put it together and how it sounded. He and daughter Raven led the audience in a song using a hand drum. It was a big hit. Raven was in full regalia and Len wore his ribbon shirt and some nice jewelry. Len closed out the presentation by having everyone come down around his table while he made a "kids drum," the kind he sells at Pow Wow.

Back at the booth, we weren't allowed to sell anything, but Len had displayed his crafts (bear claw necklaces, silver necklaces, dream catchers, painted skulls, and more) and we handed out brochures about our businesses. Raven wove bracelets at the table for most of the day. While I got caught up in a few one-on-one conversations with teachers, future interns, and folks pursuing degrees, Len's wife and other daughter (Mikki and Alex), helped watch the booth and, along with Len, answered many questions about pow wows, crafts, and MCNAA. We were in the company of many organizations related to the Earth and animals, such as a coffee/tea company and an organization which protects the whales.

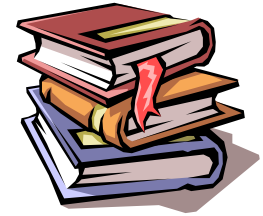


Len and Raven

We were surprised and happy to see friends Shawn and Cindy from VT who came by and showed their support! They were in Marshfield for their granddaughter's birthday and made a little detour to come our way.

All in all, it was a great opportunity to educate the 150 or so people in the amphitheater and another 100 or so who passed by the booth about Pow Wows and MCNAA; the drum and its connection with the Earth; and the specific stories behind the songs we were singing and the dances Cheyenne was demonstrating. ■

MASS. CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN AWARENESS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



2008 Spring Scholarship Awards

For the 2008 Spring Semester, five Native American students received a scholarship. They are:

Andrea Leighton, Abenaki, Springfield Technical Community College
Erin Thompson, Cree, Bridgewater State College
Jonathan Martin, MicMac, Salem State College
Linda Edmonds, Wampanoag, Bunker Hill Community College
Kevin Brown, Cherokee, Mass. Maritime Academy

Through this program, funds can be used to help defray the cost of books, room, board, travel expenses, and other college related expenses. ■

RAFFLE TICKETS FOR SALE

A part of MCNAA's fundraising efforts, Don Barnaby, Advisory Committee member, and wife Leslie donated a weekend timeshare in the Berkshires as a raffle item. The timeshare is at Bentley Brook in Hancock, MA and the weekend is on Friday, June 27 and Sat., June 28 (with checkout on Sun., June 29.) Tickets are \$5.00 each (or \$20.00 for 5.) The drawing will be held on Sun., June 1 at MCNAA's Spring Pow-wow in Topsfield. If you'd like to contribute to this effort by purchasing a few tickets, please mail your check to: MCNAA, P.O. Box 5885, Boston, MA 02114. I will fill-in your information on the raffle ticket, enter it into the drawing, and mail the stub to you. ■

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD

MCNAA is sad to report that Arthur Selden (Nishe Natacherman) passed into the Spirit World on Wednesday, April 23, 2008. He was an active and dedicated member of the Natick Nipmuc Indian Council as well as the Vice-President of the Nipmuck Nasheuonk, Inc., a member of the Confederation of Nipmuck Tribes, the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness, and the Deer Island Memorial Committee. He was also a former council member of the Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council. Arthur was a Viet Nam Veteran who carried the Eagle Staff at many pow wows. He had made friends all over the pow-wow circuit in New England and in Eastern Canada. A gathering to celebrate his life was held a week later in Brockton. His Spirit is now Free! ■



MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBAL ELDERS LOOKING FOR A NEW CHIEF

Excerpts taken from Cape Cod Times article written by Stephanie Vosk

Chief Vernon Lopez (Silent Drum) has officially stepped aside as the tribe's spiritual leader, though he will continue with his duties until the tribe finds a successor.

Earlier this month, he presented the tribe with a letter announcing his decision and urging the elders to find a new, younger chief who could relate to younger tribe members.

"I'll still be active and people can still come to me if I can help them in any way," the chief said. But "I'm getting old and I just wanted time to relax and do some of the things that I'd like to do."

Silent Drum, now 85, was elected chief by a majority of tribe members eight years ago. He has guided the tribe's 1,500 members through the final stages of federal recognition and the beginning of its casino pursuit

"Vernon's been kind of the glue in the tribe for a number of years now," said Mashpee Selectman John Cahalane, who negotiated an intergovernmental agreement with Lopez and other tribe leaders.

"He always had a good thing to say and always looked to the positive when people were getting negative or thought that things were taking too long," Cahalane said of Lopez during the tribe's 30-year recognition pursuit.

In recent months, Lopez has been outspoken about a membership dispute he said was dividing the tribe — the "shunning" of four tribal members. The punitive action was taken by the tribal council after several members filed a complaint in Barnstable Superior Court. The complaint sought to force tribal leaders to disclose details of the tribe's financial relationship with their casino backers. It was Lopez who called for tribe members to vote on the shunning issue at a recent meeting. Though the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of reversing the "shunning," the tribal council has yet to re-instate the four members who are still officially barred from receiving any tribal benefits.

Lopez, who first hinted he would step down eight months ago, said the "shunning" did not contribute to his decision.

It is now up to the tribe's elders — members age 62 and over — to develop a process for choosing a chief.

An 11-member tribal council is the official governing body of the tribe, but members also designate a chief and medicine man to lead them spiritually.

That person must be outside of the political arena, be a good role model and be able to relate to the people, said Lopez and tribal council spokeswoman Gayle Andrews.

"They have to offer guidance at all times in virtually all situations," Andrews said.



*Chief Lopez at MCNAA's 19th Yr. Anniversary Celebration 4-6-08
Photo by Liz Feitelberg*

"They have to keep us grounded in terms of who we are in the sense of tradition, but also how to function in the modern world."

Although he is stepping aside — "Bunny," as Lopez is affectionately called — will always be a tribal chief, Andrews said.

NOTE: According to Patricia Oakley, the genealogist for the Tribe, Mashpee Wampanoag Chiefs of the past century include: William "Billy" James, Louis Webquish, Earl Mills, Sr., and Vernon Pocknett. ■

DIFFICULT DIALOGUES SPEAKER SERIES

BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FEATURED SPEAKER - WILMA MANKILLER

"COMMUNITY CENTERED LEADERSHIP – LEADING FROM THE HEART"

by Burne Stanley-Peters

On Tuesday, April 15, 2008, along with several members of the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness, Inc. (MCNAA), I attended Bunker Hill Community Colleges' "Difficult Dialogues Speaker Series". The featured speaker was Wilma Mankiller. In our midst were college students, faculty, staff and other community members. All enjoyed a hearty hot lunch inclusive of baked stuffed chicken breast with ALL the trimmings topped off with specialty desserts.

Ms. Mankiller served for two years as the first female elected deputy chief and for ten years as first female principal chief of the 137,000-member Cherokee Nation. She is one of a handful of Native American recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She has also been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, the International Women's Hall of Fame, the Minority Business Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame, and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She has 18 honorary doctorates from universities, including Yale, Dartmouth and Smith Colleges. This will give you an idea of what an impressive and remarkable person we had speaking to us.



As principal chief she told us how surprised she was to learn that although she comes from a matriarchal society there were still some within her tribe that were against having a female leader. Through the course of her duties as principal chief she endured many acts of public outburst against her and small forms of sabotage. In order to persevere, she knew she had to out-smart them and do it without hostility and violence. She described to the audience two such encounters which were sad but in the end she won them over and gained their respect.

Ms. Mankiller has chronicled her life as an icon in *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* and is co-editor of *A Reader's Companion to the History of Women in the US*. Her latest book, *Every Day is a Good Day: Reflections of Contemporary Indigenous Women*, offers a passionate gathering of the voices of proud indigenous women. ■

U.S. SENATE PASSES

"437" *Indian Health Care Improvement Act*



A Monumental Step in Improving Health Care for Native Americans

In February 2008—After nine years of negotiations, with resounding bi-partisan support the U.S. Senate finally affirmed its commitment to health care for Native Americans, passing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act of 2007 (S. 1200) in a 83-10 vote. Indian Country now takes this strong show of support onto the U.S House of Representatives for swift passage.

"It's about time and I applaud the Senate for this historic vote" said National Congress of American Indians President Joe A. Garcia. "Federal prisoners continue to receive better health care than Native people and this is a major step in reversing that alarming statistic. I encourage swift consideration in the U.S. House so that we can begin to bring modernized health services to Native people this year."

There are massive disparities in Indian health care when compared to the general population: American Indians and Alaska Natives face dramatically higher diagnosis rates and overall death rates from many chronic illnesses including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer than their non-Indian counterparts.

"We have been working for nearly ten years to reauthorize the bill" said Sally Smith, Chairman of the National Indian Health Board. "We appreciate the leadership of Senators Dorgan (D-ND) and Murkowski (R-AK) and other key Senators on both sides of the aisle that made passage by the Senate a reality. Indian Country will continue to work with the House leadership to ensure a final bill can be sent to the President for his signature."

S. 1200 will modernize and improve Indian health care services and delivery; provide the basic tools to address the overall health of our communities and the increasing problems of teen suicide and methamphetamine abuse; and allow for in-home care for our elderly population.

"The reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act will help to provide a higher level of care to all American Indians and Alaska Natives no matter where they live," said Georgianna Ignace, President of the National Council of Urban Indian Health. "As such we are both pleased and proud of the bi-partisanship displayed by the Senate in making such essential legislation a success." ■

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

Please call or e-mail us if you'd like to help with the planning and organizing of MCNAA's upcoming special events. We'd also like your input of other types of special events we could hold.

617-642-1683 or mcnaa@aol.com ■

MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT MUSEUM

MAJOR 2008 EXHIBITS, SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS

110 Pequot Trail
Mashantucket, CT 06338

Special Exhibit - RACE: Are We So Different?

This thought-provoking exhibition – featuring film, still photography, interactive components – explores race and racism in America from the perspectives of science, human history and everyday experience

Saturday, May 17 to September 7, 2008, free with regular Museum admission.



Strawberry Thanksgiving Celebration

Celebrate the first berry of the year with music, dance, storytelling, Puppet Theater, games, crafts, a strawberry drink and more

Friday, June 20 from

11 a.m. to 3 p.m., free with Museum admission. ■

MCNAA'S WISH LIST

Donations of all types needed!

- Reams of copier paper
- New computer with flat panel monitor
- Postage stamps
- Memorial Gifts - When a friend or relative passes into the spirit world, honor their memory and send a tax deductible contribution to MCNAA. Your contribution will be acknowledged by MCNAA to you and to the family.
- A Building - Donate a useable building for MCNAA's permanent administrative offices and programs. Certain tax benefits may apply.
- We will also accept a parcel of land that will be used as financing leverage to build our Center. Any size or location within the I-495 belt is acceptable. Certain tax benefits may apply.
- A travel trailer or motor home to be used as an on-site office, resting place, at MCNAA pow-wows. ■



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MCNAA

May 24-25 Spring Planting Moon Pow-wow, Marshfield Fairgrounds, 140 Main St. (off Route 139), Marshfield, MA

May 31-June 1 Inter-Tribal Spring Pow-wow, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Route 1, Topsfield, MA

Sept. 6-7 Annual Inter-Tribal Pow-wow, Plug Pond, Mill St., Haverhill, MA

Oct. 26 (Sun.) Annual Benefit Auction & Reception, Holiday Inn, Randolph, MA

Nov. 15 Nat'l Native American Heritage Day Pow-wow. Loc: To be determined ■