



MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN AWARENESS, INC.

85 Constitution Lane, Suite 3-B1, Danvers, MA 01923

617-642-1683 (phone/text)

www.mcnaa.org (website) mcnaa@aol.com (e-mail)

MCNAA TurtleTalk: April-June 2023

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING AT MCNAA

MCNAA BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS AT THE FIRST PARISH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IN DUXBURY AT THEIR "THE EARTH IS OUR MOTHER" CELEBRATION

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member

On Sunday, April 30, 2023, as part of their "The Earth is Our Mother" celebration, MCNAA Board Member, Dawn Duncan, spoke at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Duxbury MA. The service was filled with poetry and music of Native Americans with drumming, singing, as well as a Native Poetry video, the Bell Choir, and hymns about our connection to the Earth, including one sung by Louise Treitman, Guest Soprano Cantor. The service opened with a children's drum group that Dawn was invited to participate in, setting the stage for a well-received talk on the work of the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness as well as Native spirituality. After the service, a Q & A discussion was held with Dawn to talk about the land acknowledgment statement that was created, over several months, by First Parish. This was also a time for the congregation to ask questions and learn more about our cultures.



File photo: Dawn Duncan, hand drumming.

Once a month, First Parish gives their entire non-pledge collection to a member-nominated nonprofit whose values align with those of the church. For April 2023 "Share The Plate" was collected from the congregation for the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness.

After the event, Dawn reported that "It was wonderful! The people were so warm and welcoming and appreciative. It's a wonderful congregation of people committed to social justice. I was very impressed with the group's dedication to honoring our histories and culture and listening and learning. They were very authentic. All in all, a lovely day and lovely event." ■

MCNAA PROVIDES ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY NATIVE FAMILIES & ELDERS

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member

Grant funds for the heating assistance program ended at the end of April 2023, however we found that a number of Elders and families were having difficulty paying some of their other bills. So, with other funds that were donated to the organization for general assistance/support, we were able to help a limited number of the most needy families with other utilities such as cable, electricity as well as some basic needs like food and household supplies. We look forward to the winter season when we receive additional grant funding for our heating program and will be in a position again to help Elders and families with heating bills. ■



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE OFFICE!

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member

Over the last three months, our focus has been on providing services and operating our major programs. Read more to learn what we've been doing:



* We relaxed our visitor guidelines and have allowed for scheduled visits in the office. If you'd like to visit and reconnect with us, please e-mail us at mcnaa@aol.com

* We worked on administrative tasks—bookkeeping, account reconciliations, prepared the books for the accountant for year-end tax reports, composed & e-mailed donation receipt letters, processed membership renewals, attended informational webinars, responded to general e-mail inquiries, updated our website and face book pages, etc.

* Through our Scholarship & Educational Resources Program, we continued to provide culturally sensitive mentoring, vital resources, as well as other supportive services to our college students through the 2023 Spring semester.

* Through our Social Assistance Program, we continued to assist needy Native families and Elders with food, gasoline for their vehicle, and other utility bills such as electricity, internet, and cell phone service.

* We explored a few more grant opportunities as well as submitted an impact report for a current grant. ■

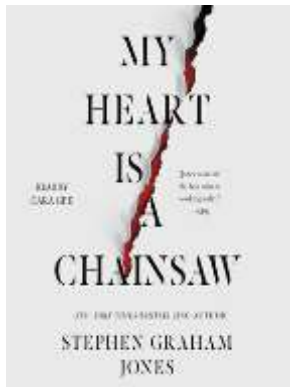
AT MCNAA, WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO AUTUMN

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member

Starting in Autumn 2023, MCNAA plans to hold several events..... some virtually, some in person. A few of the events will be coordinated in partnership with our friends at Brandeis University.

Tentative activities include:

1. Hold a discussion on Native books. Potential book selections might include: Indian Residential Boarding Schools; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & Two-Spirit People; My Heart is a Chainsaw; The Only Good Indians; or any book you might suggest.



2. Hold a Talking Circle, offering a safe space to communicate and listen intentionally based upon equality between participants and the principle of sharing power and knowledge with each other. The event will be open to all and held either virtually or in person.

3. Organize a traditional Wild Edibles Walk. Learning how to forage for native edible plants in the unkempt borders of our fields, ponds, pathways, and reserves will connect our participants with traditional Native practices of food sovereignty and sustainability in harmony with people and nature. We will reach out to our good friend Russ Cohen to see when he can accommodate us.

4. Offer Indigenous Peoples Day as well as Native American Heritage Month programming to address topics like language reclamation. Language reclamation can unlock the door to pre-contact Indigenous epistemologies and practices, decolonizing understandings of sovereignty, gender and sexualities, and other humanistic concepts. We will partner, on this event, with our friends at Brandeis University.



5. Organize a movement workshop and a Native dance event at Brandeis University. An exploration of dance is tied to embodied knowledge and memories of the past which can break down barriers to truth and reconciliation.

Please let us know what you think and if any of these activities are of interest to you and/or your family. Remember, these are tentative thoughts on activities we can hold. ■

OTHER NEWS & INFORMATION

MASHPEE COMMUNITY RAISES EARL “SWIFT EAGLE” MILLS JR. AS CHIEF

A reprint of Dasia Peters' article in the Mittark Newsletter

On Saturday, May 6, 2023 our community came together to raise a new Chief following the passing of Chief Vernon “Silent Dum” Lopez. The ceremony, which took place within our Sacred Circle on 55 Acres, was a beautiful example of Mashpee Wampanoag culture, tradition, and community. The consensus resulted in the raising of Earl “Chiefie” Mills Jr. as a new Chief of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and Vernon “Buddy” Pocknett as a new Sagamore. Chiefie, or Chief Swift Eagle, is the son of Chief Earl Mills Sr. and Shirley Mills. Sagamore Pocknett is the son of the late Chief Vernon “Sly Fox” Pocknett and Bernadine Pocknett.



I sat down with Chiefie one afternoon to discuss his feelings about the ceremony. He stated that he felt pleased with the outcome given that the community was able to come together as one, which he expressed is “the traditional way in which we come to a consensus”. He simply wanted the people to stand in support of whoever they felt was best fit, whether that ended up being him or not, because the position of Chief was not one that he actively sought out.

This is the traditional way of Wampanoag people when being considered as a new Chief;

It is not a position that the individual would seek for themselves. Instead, they can choose to accept or deny consideration when asked by a community member and then see if they are ultimately chosen by the people at the raising ceremony. Given that the position is lifelong unless revoked, it takes a level of dedication to one’s community to be willing to accept it. According to Earl, the title of Chief is a “burden to wear” because of its inherent demands, but it is one that he now proudly carries.

According to Chiefie, the role of the Chief, or Sôtyum, is to act as a point person who leads the community based on what they say their needs are. The role of Chief is not that of a dictatorship, but rather he or she serves as a leader and representative on behalf of all the people. This applies to the role of a Sagamore, or sub-chief, as well. Traditionally the tribe has always had multiple Chiefs, Chiefie can recall multiple within his lifetime alone, and they serve in that capacity for the entirety of their life.

Being raised as the son of a Chief has helped to prepare Chiefie to fulfil this role. He recalls being a young child with attentive ears as he listened to elders at tribal council meetings discussing issues that were important at the time. Many of those issues remain the same today, and he feels it is important not to forget those topics as we move forward. His father, Chief Earl Mills Sr., remains as a pillar of knowledge that Chiefie can seek council from when needed. He lightheartedly talked about the way of our Mashpee elders within his father's generation, and how, if something needs correcting, they are not known to hold their tongue.

One of our longest standing struggles as Wampanoag people revolves around land rights issues. Chiefie has seen this first-hand, remarking that "Our people need land not only to live upon, but to be able to practice our ways ... We can't hunt without land where there is game, we can't fish without clean waters for which to gather the fish, we can't have ceremonies without all these things."

Chiefie plans to be an active Tribal Council member when it comes to matters of importance like these for our community. The Chief and Medicine Man are the only two council members who do not have required attendance at Tribal Council meetings. However, for Chiefie he feels that the people put him in this position for a reason, and he plans to represent the people in that way when high priority issues are present at the council table.

When asked if he had a message to share with the community, Swift Eagle stated:

"I want to move with the tribe into the future, but I want that future to be rooted in the traditions of our ancestors to the extent that we are able to do that. While there are some things we have lost, we're looking to the spirits of our relatives to guide us to regain the important things both culturally, and spiritually to help the people into the future."

Kutâputush Chief Swift Eagle for your dedication to our tribal people and your willingness to serve in this position. We appreciate all that you have done and will continue to do on behalf of our people. ■

*"The most Beautiful morning anyone could imagine....
The Moon at its fullest, before the Sun at its Brightest....
with All My Relations. A'ho"
– Trish Keli'inui*

MCNAA BOARD MEMBER ATTENDS FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING OF ECCF'S RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member

MCNAA Board Member, Claudia Fox Tree, has maintained a seat on Essex County Community Foundation's Racial Equity Committee since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The purpose of the Committee, as described by ECCF, is to advise their staff and trustees in its current and evolving racial equity strategy and hold them accountable for the actions needed to effectively bring about change. The Mass. Center for Native American Awareness, located in Essex County, is represented by this advisory group along with other nonprofits in the area.



One Friday, June 30, 2023, Claudia attended a meeting of the Committee at Teresa's Italian Eatery in Middleton, MA. This was the first in-person meeting since the pandemic and Claudia felt it was incredibly nice to talk in person, socialize, and get to know one other. From her perspective, ECCF has a commitment to diversity, educating leaders, mentorship, and more equitable distribution of grants. She is happy to be sitting on this Committee and involved in such productive meetings and important work. ■

MCNAA'S MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

Last year, we received a small grant to help Native families and elders with heating bills during the winter season. However, the grant does not help with other program needs such as: scholarships for students; food for elders and families; cultural programs, social change events; and youth activities. Monthly donations are a sure way to help our organization receive



recurring funds on a regular basis to help more families and/or to put towards some of these other important initiatives.

In the spirit of "paying it forward", we invite you as well as large, medium, and small businesses, to become a GEM (Give*Every*Month) donor and help make a difference by joining the circle of monthly giving. Donations will be applied to either our college scholarship program, our social assistance-needy fund, or our social change/social justice initiatives.

If your heart speaks and you would like to support the organization this way, please go to your PayPal account and make a donation to the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (or mcnaa@aol.com) then select "make this a monthly/reoccurring donation." Thank you. ■

CELEBRATE THE THREE SISTERS: CORN, BEANS AND SQUASH

by Guest Author Alice Formiga

According to Iroquois legend, corn, beans, and squash are three inseparable sisters who only grow and thrive together. This tradition of inter-planting corn, beans and squash in the same mounds, widespread among Native American farming societies, is a sophisticated, sustainable system that provided long-term soil fertility and a healthy diet to generations. Growing a Three Sisters garden is a wonderful way to feel more connected to the history of this land, regardless of our ancestry.

Corn, beans and squash were among the first important crops domesticated by ancient Mesoamerican societies. Corn was the primary crop, providing more calories or energy per acre than any other. According to Three Sisters legends corn must grow in community with other crops rather than on its own – it needs the beneficial company and aide of its companions.



Drawing of three corn ears. The Iroquois believe corn, beans and squash are precious gifts from the Great Spirit, each watched over by one of three sisters spirits, called the De-o-ha-ko, or Our Sustainers. The planting season is marked by ceremonies to honor them, and a festival commemorates the first harvest of green corn on the cob. By retelling the stories and performing annual rituals, Native Americans passed down the knowledge of growing, using and preserving the Three Sisters through generations.

Corn provides a natural pole for bean vines to climb. Beans fix nitrogen on their roots, improving the overall fertility of the plot by providing nitrogen to the following year's corn. Bean vines also help stabilize the corn plants, making them less vulnerable to blowing over in the wind. Shallow-rooted squash vines become a living mulch, shading emerging weeds and preventing soil moisture from evaporating, thereby improving the overall crops chances of survival in dry years. Spiny squash plants also help discourage predators from approaching the corn and beans. The large amount of crop residue from this planting combination can be incorporated back into the soil at the end of the season, to build up the organic matter and improve its structure.

Corn, beans and squash also complement each other nutritionally. Corn provides carbohydrates, the dried beans are rich in protein, balancing the lack of necessary amino acids found in corn. Finally, squash yields both vitamins from the fruit and healthful, delicious oil from the seeds. ■

INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD

Rosita M. Andrews, Natick Praying Indian

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member, with excerpts taken from the obituary posted by the Farley Funeral Home

On Sunday, April 2, 2023, Rosita M. (Silva) Andrews aka "Caring Hands" entered into the spirit world after a short illness. She was the sister to MCNAA Board member Anthony SkyHawk Silva.

Since 1995, she was Chief of the Natick Praying Indians. Upon the passing of her Mother in 2013, she became Grand Squaw Sachem. She also served as Pastor of the Praying Indian Services at the Eliot Church in Natick where she emphasized love of God, while maintaining



cultural identity. In addition to holding services at the church, she also obtained a temporary license to perform the marriage ceremony of her youngest sibling.

Caring Hands was a voracious reader and had an appreciation of animals and all of nature and most of all a great love for others thereby receiving her indigenous name, Caring Hands. Later, as her journey of teaching, healing, and bringing the words of the Father to the world, she was blessed with the spiritual name of Naticksqw.

Caring Hands actively involved herself in any and all Native matters in the Natick area including discussions on changing the Natick town seal as well as the Natick High School mascot. She also assisted Mass Bay Community College with their land acknowledgement among other things. Her input was always well valued and respected.

In her earlier years, she attended Mass Bay Community College as well as Wellesley College and Stonehill College. She was also an accomplished writer and proudly published three books, the most notable being "The Words of the Father as Given to Naticksqw Chief Caring Hands"

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her five children, eleven siblings, five grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral service and interment was held in Stoughton on Friday, April 7, 2023.

She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. ■

Vernon “Silent Drum” Lopez, Mashpee Wampanoag Sôtyum (Chief)

Excerpts taken from the obituary posted by the Chapman Funeral Home

Mashpee Wampanoag Sôtyum (Chief) Vernon “Silent Drum” Lopez, a proud veteran of World War II, died on Monday, April 3, 2023 at the age of 100.

Silent Drum attended school in Mashpee and the Lawrence High School in Falmouth before being drafted into the Army at the age of 21. He served proudly as a member of the 214th Military Police defending the European allies. He was stationed for a time in England before being dispatched to Omaha Beach in the fifth wave of soldiers to reclaim Normandy in the name of France from the Third Reich.



Looking back at century of life celebrating his 100th birthday, Silent Drum recalled the grenades exploding and bullets blazing overhead as he stepped over bodies of men who sacrificed their lives in the effort. He also fought in the Battle of the Bulge on the western front of Germany.

After the war, Silent Drum met and married the love of his life, Mary, and the two made their home in Brockton and then Holbrook raising a son and daughter. He worked at the nearby Avon Cut and Die Company making steel die cuts for shoes. In 1971 Lopez built his home on Meetinghouse Road in Mashpee and took a job at the State Fish Hatchery in Sandwich where he worked for 10 years until retiring at the age of 70. He and his wife remained active farming a small patch of land and tending to the lush gardens that surrounded their home.

Silent Drum served on the board of the first Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council established in 1972 and was a member when the Council petitioned for federal acknowledgement in 1974 and filed a claim for the return of ancestral land in Mashpee in 1976.

After the passing of Chief Vernon “Sly Fox” Pocknett in 1998, Silent Drum was asked to be among those to be considered to lead the tribe. In a traditional process held at the tribe’s sacred grounds on 55 acres, Lopez was overwhelmingly affirmed by the many tribal members who stood behind him.

The Chief is survived by his daughter; two grandsons; a great grandson, a great-granddaughter, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his wife Mary J. Stanley Lopez who died in 2006, and his son Ralph Lopez. A graveside service was held on Friday, April 7, 2023 at the Old Indian Cemetery in Mashpee. ■

David J. Townley

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member, with excerpts taken from an article posted by Endicott Park.

It's with deep sorrow that we share the sad news of the passing of a long-time MCNAA member and good friend.....Dave Townley.... who left on his spiritual journey on Monday, June 5, 2023 after losing his battle with cancer. He and his wife Joan were members of the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) for over 33 years.



When we first met Dave in 1990, he was the Park Director and Manager of Endicott Park in Danvers where he served for 40 years. At that time, he invited MCNAA to present a Native American Cultural Program at the Park, which was well received by the public and was the beginning of a long association and friendship.

Over the years, Dave remained an active member and supporter of the organization having discussions with us about our programs. Then, in one of our conversations in 2013..... before his retirement, Dave suggested the idea of MCNAA holding a full-fledged, traditional pow-wow at Endicott Park a perfect setting for the event. Planning began with a site visit to the Park with Dave and MCNAA officials. He then went on to secure the support of the Town of Danvers to host the event which was the first of many successful pow-wows held at the Park.

Dave was a lifetime educator teaching natural resources at Essex Agricultural School as well as Endicott Park. But most of all, he was a very supportive member of MCNAA and our mission and helped the organization in many different ways. We will miss his kindness and his sincere interest in our organization as well as his inspiration for nature and avid support of Native Peoples in general.

Staff at Endicott Park, as well as Dave's wife, Joan, will hold a celebration of his life on Friday, July 28, 2023 at 4pm at the Park (57 Forest Street, Danvers, MA.) A personal invitation has been extended to MCNAA. Please let us know if you'd like to join us by sending an e-mail to: mcnaa@aol.com We will then make plans for a time and location (at the Park) for everyone to meet. ■

"Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens."

— Khalil Gibran

Harriett Mulligan Bullock

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member, with excerpts taken from the obituary posted by the Hathaway Funeral Home

Harriett Mulligan Bullock, wife of Paul Bullock, passed away peacefully on June 9, 2023 with her loving family by her side. She was born in Attleboro, a graduate of Attleboro High School and graduate of the College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ. She had been employed as a Social Worker for her adult life.

She and her husband Paul (Wampanoag) founded The Wandering Bull, Inc., which continues to be owned and operated by the family. She attended many Native American powwows throughout the US and in Canada. She and Paul were long time members of MCNAA supporting the organization and attending many of our pow-wows and special events for over 33 years.

Harriett also designed and produced a line of Eastern Woodland clothing featured by the company. Harriett assisted in the writing and publication of Whirling Thunder One Man's Journey Through Native America in 2015 in tribute to her husband of many years. She is survived by two daughters, four sons, 14 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.



Our condolences go out to the entire Bullock family. We are thankful and happy to have shared so many great times over the years at the many events she and Paul came to. She always had a smile on her face and was so welcoming to everyone!

A funeral mass and interment was held on Friday, June 16, 2023 in Attleboro. ■

