

INDIAN LEAP NEWSLETTER

HARVEST GATHERING

The annual Harvest Gathering on November 7th at the Mohegan Fire Department in Oxoboxo River (Uncasville), CT, was a huge success, as usual. There were over 80 members in attendance this year. Darlene Currier led with a prayer prior to dinner. There was plenty of food for everybody. Needless to say, nobody went home hungry. A special thanks to the Elders' Council for coordinating the food and to everybody in the kitchen for preparing the food as it arrived.



Pat Knapp prepares for the always enjoyable raffle.

The raffle table, which was full of items, yielded many happy winners. Thanks to everybody who donated gifts that were raffled.

The annual "Volunteer of the Year" award presentation was made by last year's winners and Tribal Leader, Darlene Currier, (see related article).

Tribal Leader, Darlene Currier (Eyes of the Wolf) performed a naming ceremony for a number of members. Among those receiving native names were

Dennis Borkman (Strong Bear), Deborah Mounds (Babbling Brook), Anna Jackson (Spotted Turtle), Donald Palardy Sr. (Screaming Eagle), Judy Egan (Peaceful Spirit), and Sandra Palardy (Mountain Spirit). Many of the Tribal Council witnessed the naming and congratulated the members.

As the day came to a close there were a number of people helping to clean up, do the dishes, put the tables and chairs away and take out the trash. Thanks to all the helping hands.

We look forward to seeing you at the next social, April 10, 2011 (see related calendar schedule)!



It's early but the firehouse is beginning to fill up with Tribal Members.



The Elders are the first to eat!



The Corey Clan!

**ANNA JACKSON AND DEBRA MOUNDS RECEIVE THE 2010
“VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD”**

At the Annual Harvest Gathering that was held on Sunday, November 7, 2010, at the Mohegan Fire Department in Oxoboxo River (Uncasville), CT. The Annual Native American Mohegans’ 2010 “Volunteer of the Year Award” was presented to Anna Jackson and Debra Mounds by Tribal Leader, Darlene Currier, for their continued efforts in the support of the Tribe. The selections were made by last year’s recipients, Pat Knapp and Donald Palardy Sr.

Tribal Council would like to recognize and thank Anna Jackson and Debra Mounds for their contributions.



Last Year’s winners, Pat Knapp and Donald Palardy Sr, and Tribal Leader, Darlene Currier Fowler (far right), present annual “Volunteer of the Year” award to Anna Jackson and Debra Mounds (far left).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

FAMILY GATHERING

A Family Gathering will be held at the Mohegan Fire Department on April 10, 2011, from 12:00-4:00pm.

Please come and enjoy the social. It's great to get together with all of our Native American families and friends. Hope to see you there.

It’s a potluck, so don't forget to bring a dish, a dessert, or both!

Directions: I-395 to exit 79A, CT-2A; take CT-2A East for 0.5 miles to exit 1, CT-32 (Norwich New London Tpke); turn right onto CT-32 and go South. The fire department will be on your left. To park take a left onto Occum Lane. Mohegan Fire Department parking is to the left and CVS is on right. The address is 2029 Norwich New London Tpke, Oxoboxo River, CT (860) 848-3004

2011 POWWOW CALENDAR

This year’s Powwow Calendar has been added to the “Events” page of the web site.

2011 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE

Tribal Council would first like to thank all Tribal Members for their financial support through 2010. As a result of your support, we were able to maintain our Tribal Office, pay for the function halls we use for meetings and gatherings.

Send your dues (\$36) to Toni Cook at the address below and if you do not know where you stand with respect to your dues obligation, call Toni at (781) 944-3580.

Tribal Council continues to offer "Active" Tribal Members an opportunity to purchase a "Lifetime" membership. No more worrying about whether your dues are paid up, no more worrying about future increase in dues.

In order to qualify today, your dues must be paid-up through the end of 2010. Then for a one-time fee of \$150, you can become a "lifetime" member of the Tribe. Just send a simple note requesting a "Lifetime" membership along with a check made out to the Native American Mohegans to:

Mrs. Toni Cook
94 Salem Street
Reading, MA 01867

"LIFE IS SACRED - CELEBRATE HEALTHY NATIVE COMMUNITIES."

National Native American & Alaska Native Heritage Month

November 10, 2010

Our very own Edith Cornish (Happy Dove), representing the Native American Mohegan Tribe, was honored as the Special Guest at the Dallas Military Entrance Processing Station's observance of National Native American and Alaska Native History month.

The nation celebrates Native American and Alaska Native History month every November in an effort to recognize the contributions made by the first Americans to the development of the United States. The story of how this month came to be designated as Native American and Alaska Native Heritage month began at the turn of the century.

Arthur Caswell Parker, a Seneca Indian, was the Director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York, and was one of the very first individuals to advocate for a day to honor the contributions of Native Americans. He

worked with the Boy Scouts of America, and in 1912 persuaded them to designate a day to recognize the "First Americans." For three years, they adopted such a day. Parker's efforts with the Boy Scouts were influential to the



Happy Dove

September 1915 proclamation, issued by the Congress of the American Indian Association that declared the second Saturday of every May as American Indian Day, and called upon the country to observe this day.

Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, was another instrumental figure in the early development of a day to recognize the contributions of Native Americans. He spent much of 1915 traveling from state to state and generating support for the approval of a day to honor Indians. On December 14, 1915, he visited the White House and presented endorsements from 24 state governments.

Of those states, New York was the first to formally recognize American Indian Day, declaring the second Saturday in May 1916 a day of observance. Today, several states recognize the fourth Friday in September, while others designate Columbus Day, as Native American Day. The observance has never been recognized as a national legal holiday.

However, in 1976, President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation that was proposed by Jerry Elliott High Eagle of the Cherokee/Osage tribe. The legislation declared the week of October 10-16, 1976 Native American Awareness Week. Nearly fifteen years later, President George H. W. Bush declared November 1990 National American Indian Heritage Month. Every year since 1994, a similar proclamation has been issued, which has led to our November 2010 celebration of National Native American and Alaska Native Heritage month. The 2010 theme was "Life is Sacred - Celebrate Healthy Native Communities."

THE 'MORE PERFECT UNION': ANALYSIS VS. WISHFUL THINKING

By Peter D'Errico, February 23, 2011

When Jefferson Keel, newly elected president of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) delivered the 9th Annual State of Indian Nations Address on January 27, 2011, he opened his remarks with the notion of an "Era of Recognition," of "Responsibilities Met, or of Promises Kept." He said, "it brings us closer than ever to the true Constitutional relationship between the United States and Indian nations.

...to what the Constitution calls a 'more perfect union.'"

President Keel went on to say, "America's founders recognized the inherent sovereignty of Indian tribes and the special relationship between tribes and the federal government, and they affirmed it by putting it into words in our Constitution." His evidence for this assertion, he said, was the fact that Indians are mentioned in Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution, in the company of "foreign Nations" and "the several States." This is the clause that gives Congress power to "regulate Commerce."

While it is true that Section 8 lists "Indian Tribes" in the same sentence as foreign Nations and the States, it is not true that United States law places these on the same level. In fact, this very question about Indian nationhood was decided negatively in 1831 in the case of *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*. We need to look at that decision to understand what the Supreme Court says the "true Constitutional relationship" is. Ironically, President Keel's argument that Indian Tribes are equivalent to foreign Nations is what the lawyers for the Cherokee Nation argued in the Supreme Court. And with even more irony, it was Section 8 that Chief Justice Marshall cited to knock down that argument!

Here's what the court said: "The objects to which the power of regulating commerce might be directed are divided into three distinct classes—foreign nations, the several States, and Indian tribes. When forming this article, the convention considered them as entirely distinct. ... Had the Indian tribes been foreign nations in the view of the convention, this exclusive power of regulating intercourse with them might have been, and most probably would have been, specifically given in language indicating that idea, not in language contradistinguishing them from foreign nations. Congress might have been empowered 'to regulate commerce with foreign nations, including the Indian tribes, and among the several States.' This language would have suggested itself to statesmen who considered the Indian tribes as foreign nations...."

In other words, the U.S. Supreme Court said “the true Constitutional relationship” is that Indian nations are not equal to foreign nations, precisely because they are listed separately in Section 8. To make matters worse, the Supreme Court went a step further in *Cherokee Nation* and suggested that the Indians “may, more correctly, perhaps, be denominated domestic dependent nations.” The court’s suggestion (“may... perhaps”) soon became a controlling idea in federal law: namely, that the “relation [of Indian nations] to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian. ...[T]hey are in a state of pupilage.”

The ward-guardian-pupilage image is the core of the “special relationship” between Indians and the federal government. It is shorthand for the basic principle of federal Indian law: namely, as Justice Marshall put it, “They [the Indians] occupy a territory to which we [the United States] assert a title independent of their will....”

As to being part of the “union,” the Supreme Court knocked that down in a 1991 case, *Blatchford v. Native Village of Noatak*, where the court referred to the argument as “absurd,” and said the Constitution is “a convention to which [the Indians] were not even parties.” This may be an uncomfortable conclusion, but it is accurate: neither the founders of the United States nor the highest U.S. court consider Indian nations part of the “union,” except insofar as the “union” claims ownership of Indian lands.

We may wish it were true that the United States recognized Indian nations as fully sovereign and equivalent to foreign nations, but wishing doesn’t make it so. The strongest position for Indian nations is sovereignty in international law, rather than being subsumed within another nation’s structure. This is the promise of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That would be a “new era” to celebrate.

Peter d’Errico graduated from Yale Law School in 1968. Staff attorney in Dinebeiiina Nahiilna Be Agaditahe Navajo Legal Services, 1968-

1970. Taught Legal Studies at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1970-2002. Consulting attorney on indigenous issues.

A statue of an American Indian is silhouetted against the rising moon as it stands atop the Kansas State Capitol building in Topeka, Kan. Tuesday, January 25, 2011. Kansas celebrated its sesquicentennial with a series of events starting on Kansas Day Jan. 29.



Photo by Charlie Riedel

INVITING THE WOLF INTO THE HEN HOUSE: TRIBAL CITIZENS AND AMERICAN ELECTIONS

By Ray Cook, February 19, 2011

The conventional philosophy behind voting is clear. Through the collective action of casting ballots with equal value—one person, one vote—citizens elect a government committed to their welfare.

But in our reality, the conventional philosophy is skewed. A single vote seems to matter more where populations are small, communication limited, and facts stubborn. Push population into the hundreds of millions, saturate those millions with communications outlets, and load up on anywhere from four to seven PR specialists per reporter of facts—and suddenly your vote

begins to seem more like an act of faith than direct action.

For Indigenous people accepting of dual citizenship, with one foot in the boat and the other in the canoe, all that comes with complications. In tribal nation elections, “one person one vote” still stands for direct action; we can cast a vote with every confidence that our part in collective action matters.

But before voting in U.S. elections, how unconscious, or deluded would one have to be not to ask ourselves whether a U.S. government can ever be honestly committed to our Indigenous welfare?

Secondly, is that where our faith belongs anyway? And finally, given our small number in relation to all voters, will our votes really affect off-reservation outcomes, or would that job be better left to money and lobbying and the recruiting and management of voting allies?

The answers will be varied and they will vary with individuals. But two guidelines should be considered for Indian voters. Tribes survive in America for two reasons above all others: their territorial sovereignty and the concern of tribal citizens for one another. If voting in American elections compromises either, our ballots should be cast in tribal nation elections only.

What we need, then, is a sure guide to knowing when a vote in American elections would weaken territorial sovereignty and our concern for one another. And each of us can be our own guide based on some pretty basic observations.

For one thing, is your tribe’s territorial sovereignty under direct threat from off-reservation politicians or national party-supported tribal opposition groups? If so, at the very least, you should strategize against that direct threat. Obvious as it seems, it can’t be said too often: territorial sovereignty, our authority to live under our own laws on our own lands, has been the only safe harbor for tribes. Supporting territorial sovereignty where it is

directly threatened in American elections is a reasonable duty of tribal citizens.

Of course, tribal governments may organize a tribal response; in that case the duty may be fulfilled in other ways.

And then there is our duty toward one another. If you can look around yourself and see that your fellow Indian citizens truly do depend on the American federal government for many of the essentials in life, you may owe it to them to cast a ballot in American elections. If not, or if it seems that an unnecessary or dwindling dependency hangs on from force of habit, why play into its hands by participating in American elections? It would be much better, in those circumstances, to stake out some high ground and strengthen your tribal community at its own ballot box.

Beyond those guidelines—a direct threat to territorial sovereignty or a true dependency on federal resources—we should recognize that voting in American elections undermines tribal standing in the most basic way: Non-Indian Americans must surely come to wonder why tribal citizens can vote in American elections when non-Indian Americans can’t vote in tribal elections? It’s a question we can rebuff at law thanks to our dual citizenship. But to put ourselves in that position would be to risk the citizenship that matters most.

Given the millions of customers our retail businesses, hotels and casinos cater to why have we not figured out a way to guide them to vote in our stead?

The time is right to anticipate the court of public opinion. Except on the narrow grounds of direct threats to territorial sovereignty and genuine dependency on federal resources, tribal citizens should refrain from voting in American elections. Elect to take on a strategy that leads to putting both of your feet in your canoe. And consider other strategic actions that would support and contribute to the success of your American political (candidate) ally.

WOUNDED KNEE II REDUX

By Charles Trimble, February 22, 2011

I read with great interest the Lakota columnist Tim Giago's column on the 1973 American Indian Movement's occupation of Wounded Knee village (WKII), and the militants' nearly three months standoff with the FBI, U.S. Marshals, Tribal police, and the vigilante Goon squad. (See "Wounded Knee occupation was serious AIM blunder," Indianz.com)

There are two books that I think present the most accurate and least biased accounts of WKII. One is *Wounded Knee II* by Rolland Dewing, a well-researched and dispassionate account of the events leading up to, during, and following WKII. The other is *Like a Hurricane* by Native authors Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior.

What caught me in the Chaat Smith/Warrior book is the Preface: "We came to write *Like a Hurricane* out of a profound dissatisfaction with the existing narratives of this crucial period in Indian and American history, one that we believe too often saw Indian people as mere victims and pawns. Our focus is not on the U.S. government's failed policies or on police repression, but on how Indian people, for a brief and exhilarating time, staged a campaign of resistance and introspection unmatched in this (20th) century. It was for American Indians every bit as significant as the counterculture was for young whites, or the civil rights movement for blacks."

This, to me, is what Tim Giago continues to miss: the widespread exhilaration among Indian people, and the significance of their resistance and revolution. I was able to witness some of it when I went to Pine Ridge as NCAI Executive Director to offer technical and political assistance to the tribal government (which was essentially President Dick Wilson). Although I was disheartened at what I saw happening in what was left of tribal government there, I also

saw and heard a new sense of pride among the people, and much praise for AIM.

I have never been a supporter of the AIM, or an apologist for their actions. But, I do have an appreciation for what AIM meant to do and what they did, in fact, accomplish.

There was indeed much destruction at Wounded Knee during WKII, by the AIM occupiers as well as by the federal and Goon forces. Dewing's book provides the BIA's financial estimates of the losses and damage to the homes that were occupied by the militants, who in many cases were invited by local people to share their homes. And he also includes government reports on recovery of household items that were missing. Nothing that I have read or heard gives credence to Giago's telling of AIM occupiers evicting families, looting their homes, then setting them afire when they left. Even the burning of the Gildersleeve's trading post, it appears, was the result of an accident with a kerosene lamp, when the village's electricity was cut off by the Federal siege. It was not a torching of the building.

In 1981, Giago had a different view of WKII. Dewing's book tells the following: "Looking back on Wounded Knee II from the perspective of ten years, Tim Giago, editor of the *Lakota Times*, saw some positive outcomes. According to Giago, the confrontation focused national attention upon the ineptitude of the BIA and the Interior Department. 'It caused the Indian people themselves to demand changes within these bureaucratic structures and put bureaucrats on notice.' Giago also said the encounter made reservation inhabitants more aware of whom they selected to fill elected office."

I appreciate the objectiveness and fairness of the Chaat Smith/Warrior book. It tells of how the campaign of resistance was carried out. And the telling includes anecdotes of Oglala Sioux Tribe President Dick Wilson that are not demeaning but show him as an embattled and frustrated tribal leader. And they tell of inflated egos of

certain AIM leaders and how their internal bickering threatened to tear apart the movement.

Both of the above books will give important historical perspective to the 1970s era, which was the most exciting and troubling, yet the most productive era in Indian history.

The Indian story was smothered in the excitement of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the anti war movement of the 1970s. Love them or hate them, AIM put Indian affairs on the front pages of newspapers and in prime time on TV.

I recall testifying before Congressional committees during those years, and seeing the change in attitudes of Senators or Representatives. I could see that they appreciated NCAI for presenting positive approaches to helping solve the problems of poverty and federal colonial control of reservation life. But AIM provided a dramatization of what we were trying to tell Congress and the White House. The pressure they applied to the United States and world consciousness helped in getting the most significant positive legislation in Indian history.

This is the kind of perspective and context we need in telling our history, especially to our young people. As the Chaat Smith/Warrior book says, Indian people were not "mere victims and pawns," but were active participants in carrying out a revolution, in the trenches and on the streets and in the halls of Congress.

Charles "Chuck" Trimble, Oglala Lakota from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. He is retired and lives in Omaha, Nebraska. He can be contacted at cchuktrim@aol.com. His website is iktomisweb.com.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The First Peace

"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us."

Black Elk
Oglala Sioux 1863-1950

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chaplain/CSO/Sr Vice Commander Robert D Eldridge Jr. (Little Rabbit), would like to announce that his son Christopher M. Eldridge is getting married to Julie on the 27th of August. In addition, he would like to announce that his son, Christopher, made E-6, Technical Sergeant, in the Air Force at Springfield, Mass.

Jim Lathrop (White Owl) would like to report that his daughter, Sarah Lathrop (Summer Fawn) was invited to join the Rhode Island Fencing Academy Team this fall. She has been fencing for 3 years. She competes in the Sabre weapon. In January she came in third at the Kentucky Super Youth Tournament in the Girls Sabre, 14yrs old and younger group. This was the first time she has medaled in a national tournament. Congratulations Sarah!

(If you have any announcements you would like printed in the next newsletter, send them to the office at 77 East Town Street, Norwich, CT, 06360, or call (860) 892-1039 or email to:

info@nativeamericanmohegans.com.



Special Remembrances



JOSEPH ALEXANDER MENDES
March 20, 1995 - January 28, 2011



Joseph Alexander Mendes (Spring Shadow), 15, of Oakdale, died on Friday, January 28, 2011. Born on March 20, 1995 in Norwich, Connecticut, he was the son of Jose J. Mendes and Lisa Allard. Joseph was an honor student in his second year of high school. He will be sadly missed by his loving family and will be remembered as being a great kid with a wonderful sense of humor who loved to make people laugh. In addition to his parents he is survived by two sisters, Angela Emilia Mendes and Andrey Brown; brother Marcus Brown; maternal grandparents Betty (Whispering Butterfly) and Paul Allard; and paternal grandparents Joao and Emilia Mendes.

JENNA LYNN SMITH
November 17, 2000 - October 30, 2010

Jenna Lynn Smith 9, of Blissville Rd., Lisbon died Saturday at her home surrounded by her family. Jenna was the daughter of Mark and Sandy Smith and a student at the Lisbon Central School. Besides her parents she is survived by two sisters Kayla and Sarah Smith, her grandparents Joseph and Charlene Millovitsch of Lisbon, Newton and Claire Shaffer of Jewett City, Ernest and Adriann Smith of Jewett City, and several aunts, uncles and cousins.



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