Minnesota Indian Council of Elders

The Minnesota Indian Council of Elders held a statewide meeting at the Shooting Star in Mahnomen, Minnesota, on July 22nd. The White Earth Tribal Council, Elderly Nutrition Program, and Home Health Agency hosted this meeting.

Approximately 180 seniors attended from Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, White Earth and Indian Family Services and the Leech Lake Twin Cities Office also brought a number of elders.

MICOE Chairperson Helen Cummings called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. and gave the invocation. An “Ice Breaker” by Amy Flocken helped everyone get acquainted.

Luella Seely introduced the Minnesota Board on Aging Minority Affairs Committee. The members are Gerrit Van Hunnik, Walter Tofelanda, Dr. Jim Tchou, Jerry Hayes, Mariotte Jamieson, and MBA Chairperson fielen Johnston. The Minority Affairs Committee discussed the purpose and background and gave a brief presentation to MICOE members.

Emily Peake introduced the new Minnesota Board on Aging board member who is from the Sioux communities, Jola Columbus. Emily led a discussion on general elder concerns and issues, including the need for more interest in the Minnesota Indian Historical Society and the need for Indian Guardian Ad Litem.

The National Indian Conference on Aging to be held in Spokane, WA, August 25-27, 1994, was discussed. MICOE would like to have as many seniors as possible attend this conference. It is a prelude to the White House Conference on Aging which is scheduled for May 1995. Many issues and concerns facing Indian seniors will be discussed in Spokane. The seniors drew up a list of issues they would like further discussion on as follows: Transportation; Handicapped access buildings; Elder Abuse; Improve doctors on reservations; Title VI funding; Fix-up privately-owned homes; Urban rest-homes; Home and community based care; Clarify health care reform and IHS (how do they go together); The environment, and Employment.

Some of the purposes of the White House Conference on Aging are:

1) Shapes national policy on aging for years to follow.
2) Emphasis will be placed on seeking way to promote wellness and the connection between all (ages) generations.
3) Will increase public awareness of the interdependence of the generations and the essential contributions of our elders.
4) IMPORTANT - developing recommendations for coordination federal, state, local and tribal governments.

Each reservation and the urban areas will make plans on how to get to the National Conference and will select delegates.

Helen Cummings was elected by a majority vote as the Minnesota area candidate to be seated on the NICOA board. It is important to have a number of members in Spokane to vote for her.

Darrell “Chip” Wadena, White Earth Chairman, attended the meeting after lunch and welcomed MICOE to the White Earth Reservation.

Larry Aitken and John Morrow of the Leech Lake Tribal College discussed Ojibwe Language Instructors and the importance of having a panel of elders to certify that these instructors are teaching the Ojibwe language with the proper pronunciation. A resolution was passed requesting institutions of learning to a Screening Committee of Elders to certify instructors are proficient in the language, culture, and traditions of the Anishinabe people. This resolution will be expanded on further for presentation at the National Conference.

Door prize drawings of dreamcatchers and rolls of nickels and quarters were held throughout the day.

The White Earth Tribal Council provided everyone attending -- young and old -- with a complimentary lunch at the Shooting Star buffet. Everyone enjoyed themselves feasting on wild rice, fry bread, fish, a fine Chinese cuisine, Mexican, and traditional Chumash food (roas, mashed potatoes, gravy, etc.). Mi-Gwitch to our excellent hosts, the White Earth Reservation, for the hospitality, fine dining, and coupons to the casino. Also, to the elders themselves for making this a very productive and successful meeting.

The Minnesota Indian Council of Elders is certainly growing in numbers and it is gratifying to see our elders taking an active role by participating in meetings that affect their "quality of life."

”America’s Indian Elders” showed their ingenuity and sense of humor in the cover it chose for the National Indian Conference on Aging, to be held in Spokane, WA, August 25-27. The cover simulates one of those old fashioned tablets -- "Big Chief Tablet" -- which reads; “Dear Chief -- We’re planning a little pow-wow to discuss our future. It’s a White House Conference on Indian Aging.."

The national conference is sponsored by the National Indian Council on Aging, the Washington State Indian Council on Aging/ Northwest Tribes, the Spokane Hotel, the Spokane Pow-Wow, and Traditional Northwest Feed.

The preliminary conference schedule includes events such as a Health Walk, Traditional Northwest Feed and Fashion Show, Plenary Sessions, and Spokane Pow-Wow.

The 1994 Conference will bring together Indian elders, tribal leaders, health care reform experts, the national aging network, policy makers, and service providers. Key issues expressed by NICOA’s National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future will be examined. The agenda outlines the most critical needs of America’s Indian elders. As America focuses its full attention on health care reform, the debate lends added urgency to minority health care needs.

The tentative list of those elders attending from The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe includes: Helen Cummings, MICOA Chairperson; Joe James, vice-chairperson; Edna Whitefeather, Nutrition Program Advisor; Don Robinson, Si and Dorothy Howard, Ardith Morrow, Luella Seely, Josie Simons, George Thompson, Lorene Beaulieu, Josephine Dunn, Alan and Ella Wilson, Rose James, Marion Horton, and a number of others. The elders will travel by air, Amtrak, bus, and in vans.

Just in...Another group which has signified it will be traveling to Spokane includes Carrie Day-Aspinwall, Josephine Stanley, Margaret Perber, Lorrainy Tibbetts, with the Leech Lake Twin Cities flying them.

The National Indian Council on Aging will be extending its services into Minnesota. Twenty-three jobs will be provided through the agency throughout Minnesota, principally in the metro area through sub-contracting to OIC. The representation will concentrate on older employment availability and on economic needs of elders.
1994 Wee-Gitchi-Ne-Me-E-Dim Invitational Softball Tournament

Saturday & Sunday September 3 & 4, 1994
Veterans Memorial Grounds
Cass Lake, MN

Double Elimination, Slow Pitch

Men’s Tournament

1st - $1,000 15 Jackets & Trophy
2nd - $700 & Trophy
3rd - $500 & Trophy
4th - $200 & Trophy
Entry Fee: $150

Women’s Tournament

1st - $500 15 Jackets & Trophy
2nd - $300 & Trophy
3rd - $200 & Trophy
Entry Fee: $100

Entry Fee Deadline:
Friday August 26, 1994

Bank Draft or Money Order Only

Send To:
Henry Harper
Bx 295
Cass Lake, MN 56633
(218) 335-8289 9 AM - 6 PM
(218) 335-2121 8 PM & Later

All Players, Officials and Fans Must Purchase a Pow Wow Button - No Exceptions
No Drugs or Alcohol Allowed on the Grounds
White House Conference on aging

Minnesota commenced sub regional conferences throughout the state to prepare for the White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) which will be held in May 1995 in Washington, DC.

The statewide WHCOA will be held October 31 through November 1 in St. Paul. Local WHCOAs will provide the opportunity for seniors and others to openly discuss their concerns on issues related to the health and social well-being of the aging population in their areas.

Congress identified six primary purposes for the WHCOA, as follows:

1) to increase public awareness of the interdependence of generations and the essential contributions of older individuals to society for the well-being of all generations;
2) to identify the problems facing older individuals and the commonalities of the problems with those of younger persons;
3) to increase the well-being of older persons, including the impact of the wellness of older individuals on our aging society;
4) to develop such specific and comprehensive recommendations for executive and legislative action as may be appropriate for maintaining and improving the well-being of the aged;
5) to develop recommendations for the coordination of Federal policy with state and local needs and the implementation of such recommendations; and
6) to review the status and multigenerational value of recommendations adopted at previous WHCOAs.

The 1992 National Indian Conference on Aging held in Green Bay, WI, established an Agenda regarding Indian aging issues and concerns. These were to be presented at the 1993 National WHCOA, however, it was postponed to May 1995.

The 1994 National Indian Conference on Aging, to be held in Spokane, will provide the opportunity for further recommendations and/or changes in the 1992 Indian WHCOA agenda.

The Minnesota Indian Council of Elders held a meeting on January 22, at Mahnomen, MN. There were approximately 200 elders attending. Les Northrup, Director of Fond du Lac Senior Services Program, introduced information regarding the purpose of the WHCOA and led the group in a brainstorming session on concerns of the older Indian population in Minnesota.

Those in attendance helped prepare the following list of concerns:

A. Health related:
   * Clarify health reforms as it relates to health care for Indian people, what will be the role of IHS? How will HCR and IHS work together?
   * All IHS facilities/hospitals should have Hospice and Respite care available.
   * Preparations for entering nursing home.
   * Home and community based care.
   * Alcohol and drug abuse programs.
   * Prescription drugs/availability.
   * Urban Indian Board and Care Homes.
   * State Indian Ombudsman.
   * Geriatric care.
   * Improved communication between health care providers and patient.
   * Health promotion activities.

B. Housing:
   * Increased funding for HUD housing for seniors.
   * Discontinue Home Loan discrimination because of age.
   * Available funding for repairs of privately owned homes.
   * More security in housing and apartment complex areas.

C. Employment:
   * Increase job availability for older persons.
   * Consideration and preference for older applicants when vacancies occur in OAA projects.

D. Supportive Services:
   * More readily available transportation services.
   * Advocacy projects.
   * Legal Assistance.
   * Increased information and referral within the local communities - grassroots outreach.
   * Homemaker/Chore Services.

E. Other:
   * Increase Title VI funding so Tribes can also offer homemaker assistance, health aides, health promotion, transportation, services for the frail, advocacy, ombudsman, and senior center development similar to Title III/B, Title III/D, Title III/G, Title III/F and the Older Americans Act Ombudsman Program.
   * Improve handicapped accessibility.
   * Senior Centers.
   * Discontinue use of degrading Indian terms and slogans.
   * Elder Abuse Awareness and protection.

Senior happenings — by Emily Peake

GOOD NEWS

Our state Indian desk is soon to be a reality. The governor never disapproved of it, but it was attached to a larger bill that he vetoed. But, thanks to Jim Varness and Ms. Gomez, at the state level, a temporary position can get that person started as a “desk,” a central person to refer matters to.

Iola Columbus has replaced me on the State Board.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, former President Bush remarked that his dog, Millie, knew more about foreign affairs than “those two bozos,” meaning the opposition.

Recently, it was reported that a dog was seen being ushered into the oval office. On her briefcase was a sign reading “Millie, Consultant in Foreign Affairs.”

To the person who spoke out in the local media against the word squaw - this question of its source has bothered me for some time. I don’t think it came from the French word for vagina. Frenchmen were usually very respectful of Indian women, as they were their wives and the mothers of their children.

However, it could have come from a corruption of the Ojibwe word for women - equay - to the form equwa (perhaps spelled equois in French).

Anyway, I think we should begin by getting rid of those squaw dog signs at pow-wows.

As was noted in the last issue, Senator Durenberger helped pass the legislation for the $80 million Pembina claim. What was not made clear was that the legislation passed in 1988, and now the process of claims is completed.

AIOC SPIRIT
August 1994
Honoring the Ogichidag Ikwe

NI-MI-WIN

INTER-TRIBAL GATHERING

AUGUST 26, 27, & 28
SPIRIT MOUNTAIN
DULUTH, MINNESOTA

MC: BILLIE JOE MORRISON, DULUTH, MN.
ARENA DIRECTOR: TOM SHEEHY, DULUTH, MN.

CO-HOST DRUMS: HERON BAY- ONTARIO CANADA
WIND EAGLE- KESHENA WISC.

HEAD MAN DANCER: DENNIS WHITE, LCO, WISC
HEAD WOMEN DANCER: BESSIE TOM, BIG ISLAND, CANADA

FRIDAY: WARM-UP
SATURDAY: GRAND ENTRY 1:00 PM & 7:00 PM
SUNDAY: GRAND ENTRY 1:00 PM

SUNRISE CEREMONIES SATURDAY & SUNDAY

FEAST SATURDAY 5:30 PM
CAMPING & VENDOR SPACE AVAILABLE

KINGBIRD FAMILY 1ST ANNUAL TEEN-GIRL
FANCY SHAWL CONTEST - PRIZES TBA.

ADMISSION: $4.00 PER BUTTON (FAMILIES NEGOTIABLE)
DANCERS AND FIRST 10 DRUMS PAID

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