



Win Awenen Nisitotung

August 20, 2025
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Bahweting Bidajimowin • Official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians



PHOTO BY JOSEPH STREET

Sault Tribe held three annual Employee Appreciation Day events across the service area Aug. 8. The Sault Ste. Marie/St. Ignace gathering was held at Sherman Park in Sault Ste. Marie. Participants enjoyed grilled hotdogs and hamburgers by grillmasters Doug Goudreau and Scott Brand, and plenty of good eats were also located inside the pavilion. Games included a human slot machine, cake walk, and scavenger hunt, among others.

Sault Tribe's SORNA program strengthens public safety

BY BRENDA AUSTIN
Sault Ste. Marie, MI — In a community-wide effort to ensure safety and transparency, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians continues to lead the way in implementing and maintaining the federal Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA).

Since its initial implementation in 2013, the program has matured into a comprehensive and accessible system for monitoring sex offenders who live or work within the tribe's jurisdiction—regardless of tribal affiliation.

At the heart of the program is SORNA Coordinator Christina Causley, who has taken on the vital task of managing registration procedures, interagency coordination, and public outreach.



SORNA Coordinator Christina Causley

"As the SORNA Coordinator, I ensure that sex offenders living on tribal land or working for any tribal entity are compliant with the

law," said Causley. "It's about protecting our communities with consistency, accuracy, and integrity."

SORNA, enacted as part of the 2006 Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, is a key federal mandate designed to standardize sex offender tracking and increase public safety. The Sault Tribe's implementation was officially reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2013, earning praise for thorough compliance and thoughtful integration of federal standards. According to the DOJ's SMART Office review, the tribe's registry covers all required offense tiers, registration procedures, and community notification practices.

Notably, the tribe's online registry, accessible at <https://saulttribe.nsopw.gov>, includes both Native and non-Native individuals who live, work, or attend school on tribal trust land across its seven-county service area in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula. The site is linked with the national Dru Sjodin database, allowing residents to receive automated alerts and perform name or location-based searches.

"Public access is a crucial part of the process," Causley said. "Families want to know who's in their community, and our goal is to provide that information clearly, safely, and in real time."

Causley, who stepped into her role in June, brings over a decade of experience in public service and customer engagement to the position. She's already attended three community events and has several more planned, distributing educational materials and answering questions about the SORNA process.

Her goals for the program extend beyond compliance. "I want

to strengthen interagency collaboration, increase registry accuracy, and continue improving public safety through outreach and education," she said.

The tribal registry is maintained through the Tribe and Territory Sex Offender Registry System (TTSORS), a federal tool that facilitates information sharing across jurisdictions.

According to the Department of Justice report, the Sault Tribe meets every one of SORNA's requirements, including registration timelines, tiered offense categorization, public registry standards, and

community alerts.

"This is meaningful work that directly contributes to public trust," Causley added. "It's about holding people accountable and making sure the laws are applied fairly and consistently—no matter who you are."

The tribe's SORNA program is a model of proactive community protection and cooperative law enforcement, ensuring that every resident has the tools they need to stay informed and safe.

For more information or to access the registry, visit: <https://saulttribe.nsopw.gov>.

Sault Tribe elder turns 100 this month



Happy 100th birthday to Elaine (Schmitz) Kosecki, shown above with her granddaughter Jessica Dumbuck. Elaine was born Aug. 13, 1925, in DeTour, Mich.

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Elder Advisory Committee announces 2025 scholarship recipients, Weber and Russo

The Elder Advisory Committee is pleased to announce the 2025 Elder Advisory Committee Scholarship winners. In a field of eight very impressive applicants this year, Brooke Weber and Lilly Russo will each be receiving a \$500 scholarship toward their continued education.

Weber, who hails from Fowler, Mich., plans to pursue a degree in Accounting at Central Michigan University. In her application essay, Weber outlined the importance for her to pursue the next level of education. “A college education offers numerous benefits that go along with my career objectives. It provides complete understanding of accounting principles, financial analysis and auditing standards. These skills are essential for my future role as a professional accountant.



Brooke Weber

Beyond the technical skills, college offers skills such as problem solving, communication, and critical thinking. These traits are essential for managing complex financial data. Additionally,



Lilly Russo

Central Michigan University offers opportunities for internships and networking with professionals, which are crucial for gaining real life experience and building a professional repu-

tation.” With a long-term goal of becoming a Certified Public Accountant, the Elder Advisory Committee is proud to be able to assist Weber with reaching that goal.

Lilly Russo is a graduate of Sault Area High School, and shared her career goals in her application essay as well.

“I recently decided to attend Saginaw Valley State University in the fall of 2025. I plan to study chemistry on a pre-dental track and hopefully become a pediatric dentist in the future! My career is something that I am very devoted to and I believe this scholarship will help me relieve a small amount of the financial burden that a college education brings, which I would be forever grateful for. I did not always want to be a pediatric dentist, but currently

in school this year, I spend my morning with the most amazing first grade class. You never really know what children are going through at home so if I can just bring them a small slice of joy in their day, it would truly make me appreciate the career I chose so much.” Russo hopes to attend the Medical University of South Carolina for dental school after she completes her undergraduate program at SVSU.

The Elder Advisory Committee is comprised of elder sub-committee members from each of the nine elder sub-committees in the five units across the seven-county service area. The committee is currently working on putting more funds together to be able to increase the amount of scholarship funds available in the future.

Unit I elders celebrate birthdays



Unit 1 celebrated their August Elder Birthdays at the Unit 1 meeting. Celebrating another year are Dianne Compo, Joann Nault, and Nancy Lowes.

Elder interviews being conducted

Are you a Sault Tribe elder? Are you interested in participating in a video series? Interviews will be shared on the Sault Tribe TV YouTube page, as well as on video displays throughout the service area.

Topics may include: Growing up as a Sault Tribe member; How things have changed with the tribe over the years; What it’s like being a tribal elder.

If interested, call Elder Services at (906) 635-4971.

Alternate position available

There is an alternate position available to represent Sault Tribe elders in the Michigan Indian Elders Association.

Meetings are typically held in April, July and October at various locations throughout Michigan. Potential candidates should submit a letter of intent, and three supporting letters of recommendation from elders in their unit.

Interested elders may reach out to Katie Peabody for more information, by calling Elder Services at (906) 634-4971, or email kpeabody@saulttribe.net.

Unit V elder sub-committee meets



Photo by Katie Peabody

Unit 5 Munising had four previous directors in attendance at the recent elder sub-committee meeting. Back, L-R: Joanie Anderson, Anita Nelson, Rita Glyptis. Front, Shirley Petosky.

HONOR A LOVED ONE WHO ATTENDED A NATIVE AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL BOARDING SCHOOL



PLEASE SEND ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER YOUR LOVED ONE'S INFORMATION:

NAME: ESTHER JOHNDROW-ROBERTS-COOPER

SCHOOL/DATE ATTENDED:
ASSININS ORPHANAGE FROM AGE 12-15 (1911-1915)

SOMETHING SPECIAL:
Esther had 6 children and lived to be 98 years old. She never mentioned her time at Assinins.

Your loved one’s name and photo will be added to a display on September 30, Orange T-Shirt Day, to honor and remember our loved ones who attended residential boarding schools. Names and photos will also be added to the Sault Tribe’s “Win Awenen Nisitotung” monthly newspaper to honor your loved one.

Send photos and information to ARC’s Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King at jgillotte@saulttribe.net or comment on the post on ARC’s Facebook page with your photo and information.

www.facebook.saulttribeARC

Committee vacancies — volunteers needed!

The following Sault Tribe Committees have vacant seats. Sault Tribe members interested in filling these vacancies should submit one letter of intent and three letters of recommendation (forms available online or contact Lona/Ashlee) from other members to Lona Stewart at 523 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, or call 906-635-6050 with any questions.

Anishinaabe Cultural Committee — Two vacancies:

males (one 4-year term, one term expires July 2028)

Child Welfare Committee — One vacancy (4-year term); one vacancy, term expires November 2026; one vacancy, term expires January 2027

Elder Advisory Committee

Unit I — Sault: One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit II — Newberry: One regular vacancy, one alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Unit II — Naubinway: One

regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit III — St. Ignace: Two alternate vacancies (4-year term)

Unit IV — Escanaba: One regular vacancy, term expires August 2026

Unit V — Marquette: One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Elder Subcommittees

Unit I — Sault: One regular vacancy, term expires September 2027

Unit II — Naubinway: Two

regular vacancies, one term expires October 2026 and one May 2027

Unit III — St. Ignace: One regular vacancy, term expires April 2027; one alternate vacancy, term expires March 2028

Unit IV — Escanaba: One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit IV — Manistique: One regular vacancy, term expires November 2026

Unit V — Munising: Two alternate vacancies (4-year term)

Unit V — Marquette: Two alternate vacancies, one term expires December 2027 and one 4-year term

Food Sovereignty Committee — Five vacancies (4-year terms); one vacancy, term expires February 2027

Special Needs/Enrollment Committee (2-year term)

Unit I — One vacancy

Unit II — Two vacancies

Unit III — Two vacancies

Unit IV — One vacancy

Tribal gas and cigarette discount locations

The following gas stations are offering discounts to Sault Tribe members.

Tribal owned gas stations offering gas and cigarette discounts:

- MidJim Convenience Store, 2205 Shunk Road, Sault Ste.

Marie, MI 49783

- MidJim Convenience Store, 3045 Mackinac Trail, St. Ignace, MI 49781
- White Pine Lodge and Convenience Store, 7889 E. W. M-28, Christmas, MI 49862

Tribal owned gas stations

offering gas discount only:

- University BP, 301 W. Fair Ave., Marquette, MI 49855

Not tribal owned stations offering gas discounts only:

- Kinross BP, 4440 Tone Road, Kincheloe, MI 49788
- Cedar Pantry, 159 W. M-134,

Cedarville, MI 49719

- Sunoco, 13975 M-28, Newberry, MI 49868
- Manistique Oil Company, 216 Deer Street, Manistique, MI 49854
- Carnes Eco Fuels, 2300 Ludington St., Escanaba, MI 49837

Sault Tribe News offers digital edition

Tribal members and subscriber’s receiving the print edition of the newspaper can switch to digital to receive the “early” digital edition. A link will be sent to digital subscribers the same day the print edition goes to press. Read your paper at least 6 days early!

Write to slucas@saulttribe.net to switch or get details.

WIOA accepting applications

The Sault Tribe WIOA Department is accepting applications for the Work Experience Program. Must be Native American between the ages of 16 to 21 and reside within the seven-county service area (Marquette, Alger, Chippewa, Luce, Mackinaw, Delta and Schoolcraft counties). To apply for after school employment, applications may be picked up at the WIOA office at 2 Ice Circle, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., or call Brenda Cadreau at (906) 635-4767 or bcaureau@saulttribe.net. Deadline is Sept. 25, 2025.

Fall Fasting Camp


Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program is holding Fall Fasting Camp 2025 Oct. 1-5 at the Mary Murray Culture Camp, 266 Homestead Rd., Sugar Island, Mich.

Must be at least 18 or accompanied by an adult.

To register call Lori, Katrina or Autumn at (906) 632-0236.

Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information about Missing and Murdered Sault Tribe Members:

In an effort to maintain the Sault Tribe MMIP database for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), the Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information regarding missing and murdered individuals who are members of the **Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians**. Please message or call the ARC at 906-632-1808 with information that can be entered into the database. The information provided does not have to be current information. The ARC is seeking information for ALL missing or murdered tribal members including the seven county service areas and tribal members across the world. Please ask for Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King (extension 73104) when calling the ARC. If messaging the ARC Facebook page, please leave the following information:



First/Middle/Last Name

Date of Birth

Date of Death

Murdered/When/Where

Perpetrator Name if known:

If Missing:


Nickname/Alias

Date Last Seen/Went Missing

Physical Description

Distinctive Physical Features

Vehicle Information



Any information would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this matter. Please feel free to share this information. Miigwech!

Sault Tribe Member Newspaper Subscription Form

To receive a FREE tribal newspaper subscription in the mail, tribal members under 60 are asked to complete the form below and send it to: Win Awenen Nisitotung, 531 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783, or email it to slucas@saulttribe.net. Those 60 and over do not have to fill out this form. Those who prefer to get their newspaper online do not have to complete this form.

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State and Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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☐ change of address

☐ digital subscription

OR

☐ print subscription

Age: _____

Win Awenen Nisitotung

The official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

August 20, 2025

Raspberry Picking Moon

Mskominike Giizis

Jennifer Dale-Burton.....Editor

Sherrie Lucas.....Secretary

Brenda Austin.....Staff Writer

Scott Brand.....Staff Writer

Win Awenen Nisitotung welcomes

submissions of news articles, feature stories, photographs, columns and announcements of American Indian or non-profit events. All submissions are printed at the discretion of the editor, subject to editing and are not to exceed 400 words. Unsigned submissions are not accepted.

Please note the distribution date when submitting event information for our community calendar. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. The distribution date is the earliest the newspaper can arrive in the seven-county service area.

Win Awenen Nisitotung is funded by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and is published

12 times a year. Its mission is to inform tribal members and the public about the activities of the tribal government, membership programs and services and cultural, social and spiritual activities of Sault Tribe members.

Win Awenen Nisitotung, in Anishinaabemowin, means, “One who understands,” and is pronounced “Win Oh-weh-nin Nis-toe-tuhng.”

See our full, online edition at www.saulttribe.com.

Subscriptions: The regular rate is \$18 per year, \$11 for senior citizens and \$30 to Canada. Please call for other foreign countries.

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Advertising: \$8.50/column inch.

Submission and Subscriptions: Win Awenen Nisitotung Attn: Communications Dept. 531 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 Telephone: (906) 632-6398 Fax: (906) 632-6556 E-mail: slucas@saulttribe.net or jdale-burton@saulttribe.net.

Michelle Moore

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mmoore@saulttribe.net

Clarence Hudak

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chudak@saulttribe.net

Mary Jenerou

Manistique Tribal Center, (906) 341-8469. Munising Tribal Center, (906) 450-7011

mjenerou@saulttribe.net

Board meets in August - passes resolutions

The Sault Tribe Board of Directors met at the Kewadin Casino on Aug. 5 where it passed a long list of resolutions including:

- Established a fiscal year 2025 budget for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) 1836 Treaty Waters Commercial Sampling Program with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) monies totaling \$12,163.18.
- Established a fiscal year 2025 budget for GLRI Adaptive Management with \$18,655.75 from the BIA.
- Established a 2025 budget for Wild Rice Coordination with \$104,521.76 from the BIA.
- Established a 2025 budget for the Waverly Environmental Grant totaling \$36,102.26.
- Approved the Regional

Transit Program Operations Manual and the purchase of four SUVs from O'Connor's Chrysler in Pickford for \$212,180 for the Rides to Wellness Program.

- Approved a \$64,932.31 expenditure for Upper Peninsula Carpet Mart to replace flooring at the Anishnabek Community and Family Services (ACFS) Lodge for Hope and another \$71,500 for Sailor Creek Contracting to replace the roof at that facility. Both projects were funded through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- Revised Tribal Code Chapter 11 to drop the number of members on the Enrollment Committee from 12 to seven with one representative from

each unit and one from outside the five units if possible. The board also established 4-year terms for those representatives.

- Approved an appropriation of \$500,000 from the Opioid Settlement fund to the tribal court for various programs.
- Approved the expenditure of up to \$150,000 to Rhyno Electric to upgrade electric service at the Sugar Island Powwow Grounds.
- Named Danielle Fegan as Interim Natural Resources Director for period not to exceed six months.
- Amended a previously approved resolution with M&D General Contracting to nearly \$2.9 million as it works to restore 42 homes at Sawyer Village in Gwinn, Mich., contin-

gent of a \$1.7 million financing package through the Sault Tribe Housing Authority.

- Reallocated \$400,000 from the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF) away from a solar development project and funneled those monies into Sawyer Village improvements.
- Approved, with contingencies, a 10-year note with the Sault Tribe Housing Authority for \$1.7 million at 5% interest.
- Adopted Tribal Code Chapter 93 establishing the Sault Tribe Enterprise Authority Chapter to take effect immediately and rescinded a non-profit ordinance to assist in this effort replacing all mentions of Economic Development Commission with Enterprise

Authority and all mentions of Chapter 40 with Chapter 93.

- Amended Chapter 14 allowing for the Gaming Authority and Enterprise Authority to call special meetings with 24 hours notice and amended Chapter 94 so those meetings will be conducted in accordance with Chapter 14: Rules of Parliamentary Procedure.
- Authorized the Interim Human Resources director to negotiate an offer to Ryan Mills to serve as the Sault Tribe's general counsel.
- Tabled a resolution for up to 60 days that would have required the chairman and board members to get approval for any out-of-state travel in order to be reimbursed.

Marquette Tribal Community Center completes renovations

BY SCOTT BRAND

With renovations essentially complete at the Marquette Tribal Community Center, an informal tour was held on July 24 allowing potential inhabitants the chance to see the new facility and envision their potential future at this location.

“We renovated 9,000 square feet of the 17,000 square foot facility,” said West End Facilities Manager Ryan Bosley. “Three thousand feet was renovated for office space, while the other 4,000 square feet is for community use including a commercial

kitchen and storage.”

The former National Guard Armory, located at 204 Cherry Creek Drive in Harvey, has been named Gidinawendimin, which means “We are all related,” and will serve as a gathering place for events such as birthday parties, cultural activities and community gatherings.

“The kitchen is fully-refurbished with all new equipment,” said Tyler Beun, a full-time maintenance worker at the location as the tour moved into the shiny new kitchen. “We just turned everything on to test it

today.”

Those in attendance seemed pleased with the new facility even planning which room they hoped to claim and picturing where their desks and decorations would go once they were approved to move in to their new offices.


With a footprint of 17,000 square-feet, the building has ample room for future growth to meet future needs. The 5-acre parcel, which is enclosed by a tall chain-link fence, also holds promise for additional improvements to the grounds.



Photo by Scott Brand

An informal tour was held July 24 at the Marquette Tribal Community Center, allowing potential inhabitants the chance to see the facility and envision their potential future at the location.


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Carolyn S. Dale, Ph.D., superintendent of JKL Bahweting Anishnabe PSA, graduates from HKS

BY JENNIFER DALE-BURTON
Carolyn S. Dale Ph.D., superintendent of JKL Bahweting Anishnabe PSA, graduated from the Harvard Kennedy School of Public Leadership program this July, earning a Public Leadership Credential (PLC). Designed by the Harvard Kennedy School faculty, the PLC is an online professional credential program that gives its graduates the skills and knowledge necessary to advance the public good and make an immediate impact in their communities. The program consists of six 6-week courses in three curricular areas: Evidence for Decisions, Policy Design and Delivery, and Leadership and Ethics.

Harvard Kennedy School Director of Public Affairs, Daniel Harsha, said the PLC can reach people who, for practical reasons, can't drop everything to attend Harvard's Kennedy School (HKS). "Not everyone, in the middle of their career path, with families, living around the globe, can just relocate to Cambridge," he said. "HKS took the heart of leadership training and made it more accessible online throughout the country and the world."



According to Harsha, the program is relatively new, only five years old. Its graduates have access to the HKS alumni network from around the world, from all walks of life and professional backgrounds, and that's "incredibly beneficial."

He said, "Those that enroll are largely drawn to the idea of public service and public leadership in different ways — non-profit, government, public office, private enterprise."

The program has been a great success, said Harsha, who is "thrilled" Dale enrolled and had an amazing experience. "Harvard

can be everywhere in everyone's community, not anchored to a campus. Carolyn is an excellent example of how that plays out in the real world," he said.

Dale interacted with hundreds of students from around the world throughout her courses, but was assigned to a small work group of six or seven in each of the six courses. With such small group sizes, the classmates formed bonds, some for the duration of the course, some perhaps for a lifetime.

Classmates in the cohort were from all over the world and from all walks of life — Singapore, the Philippines, Mumbai, Nigeria, Malawi, Dublin, Australia, Poland, and several from the U.S. Some worked in government — anti-corruption, public health, border management, teaching, aging advocacy, immigration. Several were climate scientists and one worked in renewable energy. Two were economists. Still more were involved in politics — as elected officials or political parties.

"The people I met were just incredible," Dale said.

Dale said many of her classmates were working on large-

scale policy, economic planning, or advocacy—things that "felt huge." But their values were surprisingly aligned. "Whether it was education, government, or nonprofit work, we were all thinking about access, justice, and sustainable change. Our tools and platforms looked different, but the goals weren't so far apart," she said.

Dale realized most of them were dealing with similar problems across the globe. "What I learned is that so many of us—regardless of where we're from—are wrestling with similar issues: poverty, education access, marginalization, inequality, and the fight to preserve cultural identity."

Dale saw how deep and overwhelming those problems are in some places. She said, "Some of my classmates described communities where girls are still denied education, where people live in pop-up settlements that are basically permanent but have no legal status or infrastructure. Some people have zero access to medical care. I've always known these things intellectually, but it hit differently when I heard about them from people I now consider peers and friends. I felt it in my

heart, and honestly, it hurt."

At JKL, Dale's team works hard to ensure students have their basic needs met—and more. "We take that responsibility seriously. I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to make a positive impact on over 600 students each year."

But she also worries. "Reductions in SNAP benefits and Medicaid are going to hurt," she said. "We're already asking: What can we do? How can we continue to show up for our students if some of those safety nets disappear?"

But thanks to the PLC, Dale has a new toolkit that might help solve issues. "Now, when I look at an issue, I don't just think about it from an educational lens. I think about policy, law, equity, community impact, and how it aligns—or conflicts—with my own personal values. I use frameworks I learned to test ideas, map out decisions, and reflect on outcomes. And I've landed on a personal leadership standard that guides me every day: Respect, Integrity, Compassion, and Humility."

She added, "I'm excited about applying these skills within our community."

Celebrating Indigeneity art exhibit at Purdue University

BY JENNIFER MERZDORF, PURDUE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Purdue University's "Celebrating Indigeneity" spring art exhibit featured works from indigenous scholar-artists from academic units across campus – including the College of Education's Stephanie Masta.

Masta, professor of curriculum studies in the College's Department of Curriculum and Instruction, created a mixed media collage piece called Feedback. In the piece, Masta juxtaposed feedback she received from educators with photos of herself at various stages from kindergarten through high school.

"Originally, I wanted to reflect my experiences mentoring graduate students, which is an important part of my professional life," explained Masta. "But as I considered my mentoring relationship, I realized much of what

drives my mentorship was rooted in the interactions I had with the K-12 school system. So, I decided to lean into those interactions and create the collage."

The resulting artwork explores how schooling influences people even after they leave the classroom. "All of us start as awkward children trying to make our place in the world," Masta said. "I wanted to highlight the messages we receive from schooling and how those messages might mean something different to Indigenous people."

For Masta, the concept of Indigeneity is the myriad ways that Indigenous people embody and live their identity. "I wove this concept into Feedback by highlighting how I learned that success in school meant abiding by a set of rules that didn't always include Indigenous

expression," she said.

While she does not consider herself highly creative, Masta decided to participate in "Celebrating Indigeneity" to demonstrate an appreciation for the vulnerability of the other artists in the show. She said, "If they were going to share large pieces of themselves, I wanted to do that, too!"

Masta says she is considering exploring additional collage forms in future artwork, and she encourages other Indigenous people to regard creating art as one way to honor their ancestors.

"Art is such an important medium and our ancestors have been artists since time immemorial. Don't let your fear of not being an artist hold you back!" she said. "While I do not think of myself as an artist, I had a lovely time making Feedback. It was a

true expression of my love for myself and the community around me."

Displayed in The ALab in Schleman Hall of Student Services, "Celebrating Indigeneity" spotlighted works of various mediums and expressions, including digital and physical materials, as well as recycled components, paint, faux glass, and beading.

Sponsored by The ALab, The Native American Education and Cultural Center, and The Sloan



Purdue University/D. Starr
Stephanie Masta with the collage she created, "Feedback," for Purdue's "Celebrating Indigeneity" art exhibit.

Foundation Indigenous Graduate Partnership, the exhibit celebrated the artists and their individual and collective connections to places and people in their lives.

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Anishinaabemowin 2025

Nature is the greatest teacher. To be a good learner we need to take time, to pay attention and connect up new ideas with what we already know. The very same with language. . .

Gnaajiwan giizhigad nanga!
N’wii baamase.
N’da gkendaan mino-miikanaans.
G’daa baa wiijiw na?
G’wii kinoomawin aanind Anishinaabe kidwinan.

It’s a nice day today!
I want to go for a walk.
I know about a good trail.
Do you want to go with me?
I will teach you some Anishinaabe words.
OK then! Let’s go!
Hang on. Wait a second!
You see that? (living being)
You see that? (not alive)

Nahaaw dash! Aambe!
Bekaa!
G’waabamaa na wa?
G’waabndaan na wi?



Mitig aawi wa.
That is a tree.



Gaak aawi wa.
That is a porcupine



Waabooz aawi wa.
That is a rabbit.

Mashkode maanda.
This is a clearing.

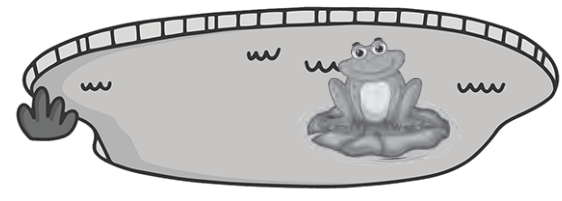


Zhigaak aawi wa.
That is a skunk.

Aasaakamig maanda.
This is moss.



Waanzhibiiyaa maanda.
This is the pond.



Magkii aawi wa
That is a frog
miinwaa bbiig-magkii yaa odi.
and a toad is over there.



Miskominagaawanzh aawi wa,
That is a raspberry bush
miinwa miskomin aawi wa.
and that is a raspberry.



Waagosh aawi wa.
That is a fox

Miikanaans maanda.
This is the trail.



Goongsenh aawi wa.
That is a chipmunk.



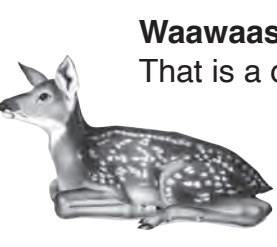
Naaganashk maanda.
This is a fern.



Jidmoonh aawi wa.
That is a squirrel.



Bineshiinh aawi wa.
That is a bird.



Mskwaadesiinh aawi wa.
That is a painted turtle.

Bikodinaa odi.
There is a hill over there.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| bird | pond |
| chipmunk | porcupine |
| deer | rabbit |
| fern | skunk |
| forest | toad |
| frog | trail |
| moss | tree |

Find Anishinaabemowin words for these:

MAGKII ZOBAAWL
KHSANAGAANCAG
HNI IHSENIBLSA
WAANZHIBIIYAA
FGITIMZHIGAAK
MIIKANAAANSRKL
CHSEKHSAAWAAW
BBIGMAGKIIICMU
LUXIKAANGITIM
QFCHNESGNOOGL

Pronunciation?? You’ll find the Anishinaabemowin words used here as well as those in the calendar, pronounced at our FaceBook link:

www.facebook.com/SaultTribeLanguageAndCulture.

You can also use the guide shown below!

Making our Sounds Most letters sound like they do in English. Here are the exceptions.
aa sounds like the a in *awesome* **a** sounds like the a in *about*
ii sounds like the e in *be* **i** sounds like the i in *dip*
oo sounds like the o in *go* **o** sounds like the oo’s in *book*
e sounds like the e in *Ed* **g** sounds only like it does in *go*
Pronounce all the letters. Big deal: ‘nh’ in a word has no sound!
It’s only a sign to say the previous vowel nasally - as if you have a stuffed-up nose!

Aambe, baapin! (Come on, laugh!)

Why shouldn’t you ask a skunk for their opinion?
They’re likely to give you their two scents.
What do you call a squirrel who’s in charge of a bank?
A branch manager.
What did the duck say when she bought lipstick?
Put it on my bill.
Why don’t bears wear shoes?
What’s the use? They still have bear feet!
What happens to a frog’s car when it breaks down?
It gets toad away.
Why did the fox hunt rabbits last night?
It was in the mood for fast food.



Manoomin Giizis
Grain/Rice Moon

aka: **Miskominike Giizis**
Raspberry Picking Moon

by Susan Askwith

Fun Fact!

Anishinaabek (Ojibwe and Odaawe people) divide the objects in our lives as *alive* (with a beating heart or in spirit), or *not alive* (and never was). Words that tell the actions of those objects, or words that describe them often have different endings, depending on those categories. Look for that.

Word Find Puzzle

Find Anishinaabemowin words for these:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| bird | pond |
| chipmunk | porcupine |
| deer | rabbit |
| fern | skunk |
| forest | toad |
| frog | trail |
| moss | tree |

MAGKII ZOBAAWL
KHSANAGAANCAG
HNI IHSENIBLSA
WAANZHIBIIYAA
FGITIMZHIGAAK
MIIKANAAANSRKL
CHSEKHSAAWAAW
BBIGMAGKIIICMU
LUXIKAANGITIM
QFCHNESGNOOGL



SAAC holds Native art exhibition this November

The Sault Area Art Center is holding an exhibition, “Celebrating Indigenous Culture Through Art,” Nov. 6-22 with a reception Nov. 14 from 6 to 8 p.m.

The Great Lakes Region is home to over 20 Indigenous Tribes and Canadian First Nations, each with a rich history and artistic legacy. This exhibition celebrates Indigenous culture, inviting artists to share works inspired by Native American heritage, experiences, and traditions. Artists working in traditional and contemporary styles are encouraged to apply, with submissions welcome in 2D

and 3D fine arts and crafts.

The jurors for this exhibition will be Gerard Sagassige and Bill Morrison.

First place is \$200, second place is \$100, third is \$50 and viewers choice is \$50.

Opportunities

Category: 2D Art. Including, but not limited to: photo, print-making, painting, birchbark art, collage, and digital.

Category: 3D Art. Including, but not limited to: clothing, basketry, quilting, jewelry, wood-working

Important Dates

Sept. 17: Online submission due.

Sept. 25: Notification of selected work.

Oct. 21 - 25: Artwork delivery (11 a.m-4 p.m.)

Nov. 14, 6 - 8 p.m.: Opening Reception

Nov. 22-26: Pick up artwork

Details

— Native and non-Native artists may apply

— You must reside in the Ontario District of Canada or one of the following U.S. states: Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and New York.

— There are no size limitations. If needed, size may become a determining selection

factor.

— Artwork must be original. No reproductions, patterns, or prints accepted.

— SAAC will retain 30% commission on all works sold for SAAC non-members

— SAAC will retain 20% for \$100 level members. To become a member.

— Artwork may not be removed from the exhibit prior to the closing date.

SAAC is dedicated to maintaining an inclusive environment for the Native community and beyond. If you have any questions about this exhibition

or Indigenous themed classes at SAAC, please contact our Gallery Director Raulaniesa Aranda at saultartcenter@gmail.com.

This art exhibition is in compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. If you are claiming your Native descendency AND selling your artwork, you must provide your Tribal ID card or a written certification from your tribe, identifying your Indian lineage.

SAAC thanks the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan and Ben’s Electric Contracting for sponsoring this exhibition.

Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program



WOMEN'S FAST FOR MOTHER EARTH

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4TH 2025

- Fasting begins at sunrise and ends at sunset, followed by a sweat lodge and feast
- Please be mindful of moontime teachings.
- Must be 18 years or older, anyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

@MARY MURRAY CULTURE CAMP, 266 HOMESTEAD RD. SUGAR ISLAND, MI

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL LORI, KATRINA, OR AUTUMN @906-632-0236

Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program

Fall Fasting Camp 2025

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1ST - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5TH
@Mary Murray Culture Camp,
266 Homestead Rd. Sugar Island, MI
MUST BE 18 YEARS OR OLDER, ANYONE UNDER 18
MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT



TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL LORI, KATRINA, OR AUTUMN @906-632-0236

Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program

GERARD SAGASSIGE

2025 SEPTEMBER CLINIC HOURS

September 8,9,15,16,22,23
Sault Ste. Marie Health Center
(906)632-0236










Wednesday, September 10th
Munising Health Center
(906)387-4721 or (800)236-4705

Wednesday, September 17th
Hessel Community Center
(906)484-2727

Wednesday, September 24th
Manistique Health Center
(906)341-8469 or (866)401-0043

ANY QUESTIONS, OR TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM AT
906-632-0236 OR 906-632-5268

WAABAAGAA GIIZIS - SEPTEMBER 2025

NIIZHWAASO GIIZHIGAT	NTAM GIIZHIGAT	NIIZHO GIIZHIGAT	NSWO GIIZHIGAT	NIIWO GIIZHIGAT	NAANO GIIZHIGAT	NGODWAASWO GIIZHIGAT
	 1 E-nokijig Giizhigat (Labor [the ones who work] Day)	 2 kinoomaadii-gamig ([the institution of] school)	 3 E-kinomaa-gozid n'daaw. (I am a learner/student.)	 4 zhiibiigenaatig (writing tool)	 5 mziniganan (notebooks, books, papers)	 6 jidmoonhag (squirrels)
 7 mitigwaab (bow)	 8 Mooshkaneshin Dibiki Giizis (It is a full moon.)	 9 sipinigan (scissors)	 10 mijimenjigaanhs (laptop)	 11 zaag'iganing (at the lake)	 12 Pkibinaan. (S/he is picking fruit [other than berries].)	 13 zasweminan (chokecherries)
 14 kajgaatewin (umbrella)	 15 bashkizigan (gun)	 16 bkokan (arrows)	 17 mishiiminak (apples)	 18 jiishkaam-igagan (rake)	 19 Aangwaamzin! (be careful)	 20 Ashiishmaajii! (Good grief!)
 21 Ntam Dgwaagin (First day of Autumn)	 22 Giiwse. (S/he is hunting.)	 23 binewag (ruffed grouse)	 24 mookmaan e-giinaag (sharp knife)	 25 waawaashkesh wiiyaas (venison)	 26 Giigoonhke. (S/he is fishing.)	 27 mshkiigominan (cranberries)
 28 manoomin (wild rice)	 29 Zaawmingaande Bagwan Giizhigat (Orange Shirt Day)	 30 mashkodewashk (sage)				

Michigan’s confidential student safety tip line reports a 20% surge in tip volume over last year

FROM MICHIGAN STATE POLICE
LANSING, Mich. – OK2SAY, Michigan’s confidential student safety tip line, reported a 20% surge in tip volume compared to the previous year, according to the program’s 2024 annual report. With an unprecedented 11,671 tips received, the program has reached its highest reporting level since its inception in 2014, underscoring the vital role it plays in safeguarding Michigan’s youth.

Reducing the risk of avian influenza

As waterfowl hunting season nears, health and wildlife professionals are urging hunters to take precautions against risks posed by avian influenza. Avian influenza, often called “bird flu,” is caused by viruses that spread rapidly among birds, particularly waterfowl such as ducks and geese. Many infected birds show no obvious signs of illness, which makes the virus difficult to detect in the wild. However, some strains (e.g., H5N1) can cause severe illness in birds and pose health risks to humans who come in contact with infected animals.

Hunters face an increased risk of exposure due to activities like handling, cleaning, and processing waterfowl. Fortunately, with simple safety measures, hunters can continue their traditions while protecting their health, the community, and local ecosystems.

Safe Hunting Practices to Reduce Risks

Avoid Contact with Sick or Dead Birds: If you encounter birds that appear sick or find multiple dead birds in an area, do not touch them. Such sightings could signal an avian influenza outbreak. Immediately report these findings to local wildlife authorities who monitor bird health and manage outbreaks.

Wear Protective Gear: Always wear disposable gloves when handling game. Consider wearing an N95 mask and eye protection while cleaning or field dressing to minimize direct exposure to the virus.

Process Game Outdoors: Clean and dress game in an open-air environment, not indoors, to reduce the risk of contamination of enclosed spaces.

Clean and Disinfect Thoroughly: After handling birds, discard disposable gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Disinfect knives, cutting boards, and any clothing that may have come in contact with the game.

Cook Waterfowl Properly: To eliminate any potential viral contamination, cook waterfowl to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C). Avoid consuming undercooked or raw bird meat.

Report Unusual Bird Deaths: If you notice unusual mortality among waterfowl or wild birds, report it promptly to local wildlife officials.

Stay Informed: Keep up to date with local wildlife and public health agencies updates.

“The Michigan State Police is proud to champion OK2SAY, a program that transforms students into active partners in their own safety,” said Col. James F. Grady II, director of the Michigan State Police (MSP). “That’s the power of OK2SAY. This isn’t just about reporting concerns; it’s about fostering a culture of courage. Every tip, every act of speaking up, is a testament to a student’s commitment to their community. It’s a student saying, ‘I care, and I want to make a difference.’ This courage is the very foundation of safer schools and stronger communities.”

The 2024 OK2SAY Annual Report shows the program received 11,671 tips spanning 25 categories, with the top five types of tips being:

- Bullying: 2,005 tips
- Suicide: 1,608 tips
- Other (e.g., anxiety, stress, depression, harassment): 1,376 tips

OK2SAY is Michigan’s confidential student safety tip line that’s available 24/7 — tips can be submitted in the following ways:
Call: 8-555-OK2SAY (855-565-2729)
Text: 652729 (OK2SAY)
Email: OK2SAY@mi.gov
OK2SAY website: www.ok2say.com
OK2SAY mobile app: Available for download in app stores for iPhone and Android.
OK2SAY reports record-breaking tip volume, highlighting critical need for student safety and mental health support.

- Drugs: 1,301 tips
 - Sexual assault/misconduct/exploitation: 1,059 tips
 - Other findings include 25 tips involving the confiscation of weapons and 228 tips resulting in the seizure of drugs or alcohol. Additionally, 343 schools conducted a comprehensive behavioral threat assessment or a suicide assessment because of an OK2SAY tip.
- OK2SAY is available 24/7 and tips can be submitted in the following ways:
- Call: 8-555-OK2SAY (855-565-2729)
 - Text: 652729 (OK2SAY)
 - Email: OK2SAY@mi.gov
 - OK2SAY website: www.ok2say.com
 - OK2SAY mobile app: Available for download in app stores for iPhone and Android.
- Michigan law requires every public and nonpublic school to provide the MSP with at least one school official’s emergency contact information biannually. Contact information can be reported or updated here.
- OK2SAY program outreach is housed within the MSP Grants and Community Services

Division, Office of School Safety (OSS). The OSS is committed to delivering quality services to schools that promote safe and secure learning environments to reduce threats, build trust and improve the quality of life for K-12 students in Michigan. Created under the authority of Public Act 435 of 2018, the OSS works in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education to do the following:

- Assist in the development of model practices for school safety and engage with local law enforcement agencies to assess school buildings for which emergency operations plans are being developed.
- Seek and apply for federal funds relating to school safety and reducing violence and disruptions in schools.
- Provide staff support to the School Safety Commission, which is responsible for making recommendations to the OSS.



FREE LSSU Basketball Ticket Application
FOR SAULT TRIBE MEMBERS
APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 5, 2025

NAME

PHONE

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

EMAIL

IN HOUSEHOLD

FILE #

Indicate the number of tickets requested for each game, this cannot exceed number in household.
AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE, you will receive a detailed email indicating which game tickets are available for you at the LSSU Norris Center for pick-up.

Please note, tickets are limited and are not guaranteed for all games requested.
Incomplete applications may not be processed.

# Tickets	Date	Opponent
<div></div>	11/15/25	Indianapolis (M)
<div></div>	11/26/25	Minnesota-Duluth (M)
<div></div>	12/22/25	Kuyper (M)
<div></div>	12/30/25	Fanshawe (M)
<div></div>	01/02/26	Wayne State (M)
<div></div>	01/04/26	Saginaw Valley State (M)
<div></div>	01/09/26	Davenport (M)
<div></div>	01/11/26	Grand Valley State (M)
<div></div>	01/23/26	Michigan Tech (M)
<div></div>	01/25/26	Northern Michigan (M)
<div></div>	01/30/26	Ferris State (M)
<div></div>	02/01/26	Roosevelt (M)
<div></div>	02/20/26	Wisconsin-Parkside (M)
<div></div>	02/21/26	Purdue-Northwest (M)

Attach or Insert
Copy of Tribal
Card

Email or mail copy of Sault Tribe membership card AND application to:
Email: bookthebear@saulttribe.net

Big Bear Arena
ATTN: Laker Tickets
2 Ice Circle Drive
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Applications available online at: www.bigbeararena.com
Select the FORMS tab (have digital file of tribal membership card available for upload)

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date & Time Received:

Email / Mail / In Person / Website

Membership Verified:

Staff:

Early Childhood Programs and child care for children from infancy through pre-school

2025-2026 Applications are available for the Child Care Center, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Program Overview. All classrooms are staffed by a full-time instructor, who is supported by full-time and part-time aides. All classrooms follow the Creative Curriculum; expose children to Ojibwe teachings, and Anishinaabemowin (our Ojibwe language). Children also receive nutritious meals. Children receive these services in a safe, nurturing, educational, culturally-appropriate setting. Our classrooms provide children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally and physically. Services are offered to meet the special needs of children with disabilities.

Earn your GED, prep for free!

This program is open to all residents of Chippewa County who have not completed high school and are at least 18 years of age. The Sault Tribe has a collaborative agreement with Consolidated Community School Services so adult learners can attend free General Educational Development (GED) preparation classes. Costs for GED testing, study materials and classroom supplies are provided at no cost to Sault Tribe members. (However, there may be a small fee associated with re-testing.) Adult students are also provided educational consultation, resumé writing and referral assistance for higher education. The GED was developed in 1942 at the request of the U.S. Armed Forces Institute. The purpose was to give those who fought in World War II before completing high school a way to demonstrate their knowledge and get civilian jobs after the war. Over 15 million people have earned a GED since then. The GED test is designed so that over one-third of all graduating high school seniors would not pass. Previously, the test involved recalling general facts. Now, the emphasis is on socially-relevant topics and problem-solving skills. GED graduates are eligible to receive Pell grants and other types of financial aid. One in 20 college freshman earned a GED rather than a high school diploma. Famous people who have earned a GED include Wendy’s founder Dave Thomas, Bill Cosby, Michael J. Fox, Danica Patrick, Jerry Garcia, Chris Rock, Peter Jennings, and former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

For more information email Tanya Pages, Adult Education Coordinator, tpages@eupschools.org. Or, contact Consolidated Community Schools main office for all program locations, dates and times at (906) 495-7305.

Child Care Center
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Child Care Center is a licensed child care center that offers high quality infant through pre-school age care. It is located at 4 Ice Circle and is open from 6:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Child Care Center is open to all tribal families, tribal employees, and surrounding community members. However, priority for enrollment in the Child Care Center is given to tribal members who are need of full time child care. Families can apply for subsidized child care through the Department of Human Services and Anishnabek and Community Family Services to assist in paying for the cost of care. The center has an agreement with the Tribal Head Start program to provide care for children

enrolled in the Head Start and Early Head Start program from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., parents assume the cost of before and after care for the extended care services that are provided to children enrolled in either Head Start or Early Head Start. As a result of this partnership all children receive the same educational services as children attending Head Start or Early Head Start, see program descriptions and eligibility requirements below. For more information regarding the Child Care Center and cost for services please call (906) 632-5258. **Early Head Start** Early Head Start is a federal program for infants and toddlers from low-income families. Early Head Start provides high quality child and family development services. The center based program serves 34 children and is located

at 4 Ice Circle, Sault Ste. Marie, MI. Children are provided healthy meals and snacks. The program is open to infants, toddler’s ages 0-3 years. Eligibility requirements: Applicants must meet federal income guidelines and preference given to members of a federally recognized tribe. For more information, please call (906) 635-7722. **Head Start** Head Start is a federal program for preschool children from low-income families. Head Start provides high quality child and family development services. Head Start serves 80 children with locations at 4 Ice Circle, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and 225 WaSeh, St. Ignace, Mich. Head Start provides breakfast, lunch and limited bus transportation. The Sault Ste. Marie program provides part-day, part-year class-

rooms that operate September through May and the Sault Tribe Child Care Center offers a full-day, full-year classroom. St. Ignace is an extended day program offering 7-hour sessions, September through June, Monday through Thursday. Head Start strives to ensure that its children are prepared to enter elementary school ready to learn and succeed. At Head Start, children socialize, solve problems and learn other experiences that help them become self-confident and successful in life. Head Start Eligibility: Children must be 3 years old by Dec. 1 of each school year. Applicants must meet federal income guidelines and preference is given to members of a federally recognized tribe. For more information, please call (906) 635-7722.



FREE LSSU Hockey Ticket Application FOR SAULT TRIBE MEMBERS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 5, 2025

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ # IN HOUSEHOLD _____ FILE # _____

Indicate the number of tickets requested for each game, this cannot exceed number in household. **AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE**, you will receive a detailed email indicating which game tickets are available for you at the LSSU Norris Center for pick-up.

Please note, tickets are limited and are not guaranteed for all games requested. Incomplete applications may not be processed.

# Tickets	Date	Opponent	# Tickets	Date	Opponent
_____	10/10/25	Lindenwood	_____	01/03/26	Northern Michigan
_____	10/11/25	Lindenwood	_____	01/04/26	Northern Michigan
_____	10/24/25	Bowling Green	_____	01/23/26	St. Thomas
_____	10/25/25	Bowling Green	_____	01/24/26	St. Thomas
_____	11/14/25	Minnesota State	_____	02/13/26	Michigan Tech
_____	11/15/25	Minnesota State	_____	02/14/26	Michigan Tech
_____	11/28/25	Augustana	_____	02/26/26	Ferris State
_____	11/29/25	Augustana	_____	02/27/26	Ferris State



Attach or Insert
Copy of Tribal Card



Email or mail copy of Sault Tribe membership card AND application to:
Email: tgraham@saulttribe.net

Big Bear Arena
ATTN: Laker Tickets
2 Ice Circle Drive , Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Applications available online at: www.bigbeararena.com
Select the FORMS tab (have digital file of tribal membership card available for upload)

OFFICE USE ONLY:			
Date & Time Received: _____	Email / Mail / In Person / Website _____	Membership Verified: _____	Staff: _____

Piper Bernier balances health, school, and cultural leadership through online learning

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

For most high school freshmen, the first year is about adjusting to new routines. For Piper Bernier, a 9th grade student from Sault Ste. Marie, it’s been about much more — balancing chronic health needs with academic progress and cultural leadership, all made possible by the flexibility of online learning.

Bernier enrolled at Highpoint Virtual Academy of Michigan (HVAM) last year to better manage her ulcerative colitis and fibromyalgia, conditions that make traditional in-person schooling difficult. The online format has allowed her to keep up with classes during regular medical infusions, appointments, and days when migraines keep her homebound.

“I can watch recorded classes if I miss something due to appointments or migraines, so I



can still keep up,” Bernier said. “We found Highpoint online, liked what we saw, and I started there in ninth grade. I’ve been a student for one year now, and I like how flexible it is.”

That flexibility has also given her space to pursue a passion for cultural advocacy. Bernier is one of the founding student members

of the Indigenous Education Youth Collective (IEYC), a student-led organization dedicated to connecting Anishinaabe youth to their culture and preparing them for higher education. The group was started by Chloe Kannan and is not affiliated with any school.

Through IEYC, Bernier has conducted original research and presented her findings at two statewide conferences — one in Manistee and one in Mt. Pleasant — in front of audiences ranging from 100 to 200 people. Her most recent project, *How Does Culture Affect Leadership in Youth?*, was completed in collaboration with two younger students and explored how traditions and values shape leadership in Native communities. Bernier’s mother has posted videos of both presentations on her YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@tabithabernier3121>.

com/@tabithabernier3121.

IEYC members participate in research projects, skills training, and cultural activities. She has earned high school credit for learning her Native language, made traditional items like ribbon skirts and shirts, and participated in powwows, ceremonies, and other cultural practices.

Bernier has also connected with the Michigan Education Justice Coalition Youth Collective, serving as a virtual panelist three times.

“I’ve been connected to my Native culture for as long as I can remember,” she said. “These opportunities have strengthened my leadership skills and deepened my cultural connections.”

Looking ahead, Bernier plans to continue her education at HVAM through graduation. She’s already begun dual enrollment, starting with a college-level biology course through

Davenport University. Her long-term goal is to become a forensic scientist — an interest sparked in sixth grade after taking CSI-themed classes through a gifted and talented program at Purdue University and later in middle school.

“I’ve been interested in forensic science since watching crime shows with my mom and trying to solve the cases along with the show,” she said. “I’m not yet sure which college I’ll attend, but Lake Superior State University is a possibility since my aunt went there.”

Whether she’s tackling advanced coursework, managing her health, or representing Native youth on statewide stages, Bernier is determined to keep moving forward — and to make her first year at Highpoint Virtual Academy just the beginning of a much bigger journey.

Myah McKerchie competes in Miss Michigan USA

BY SCOTT BRAND

The Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians was represented in the 2025 Miss Michigan USA Pageant on Aug. 8-9, as Myah McKerchie joined more than two dozen other competitors seeking the crown.

“I think it went pretty well,” said Myah after returning home. “I like the idea of probably doing it again. It was definitely a great experience for the first time.”

Most of the women who showed up for the Port Huron competition had previous experience, but this was the first time Myah had ever been in a beauty pageant.

“I was probably like one of six or seven that was new to the competition,” said Myah. “My dance performance background really helped me have the stage presence I needed. That confidence is still there.”

Myah said the competition was



split into categories. There was a three-minute interview before the judges, an evening gown round and a swimsuit competition.

“It’s a special moment for our family,” said her mother Christin McKerchie leading up to the competition. “She will be representing our hometown, Sault Ste. Marie, and the Upper Peninsula—where she was born and raised with

the strength, compassion, and purpose she’s carried her whole life. This opportunity is deeply meaningful—not just for her, but for the young women and girls in small towns who rarely see themselves reflected on a stage like this. Myah has always led with integrity, empathy, and quiet determination—whether working in the Governor’s Office, studying abroad, mentoring others, or showing up for her community in ways both big and small.”

Myah is the daughter of Christin (Dennis Rutledge) and Michael (Christina) McKerchie.

She is a 2020 graduate of Sault High and earned a political science degree from Michigan State University in 2024.

Myah currently works for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the Gaming Commission.

Eddie Montgomery at Kewadin Casino Sault Dec. 13

Montgomery Gentry ft. Eddie Montgomery will be hitting the DreamMakers stage on Saturday, Dec. 13. Celebrating 25 years, Montgomery Gentry’s Eddie Montgomery is having a good time, and he doesn’t plan to slow down any time soon. Montgomery Gentry ft. Eddie Montgomery will be bringing that good time to Kewadin with your favorite songs — *My Town*, *Hillbilly Shoes*, *Hell Yeah* and more.

Hotel packages are available by calling 1-800-KEWADIN before buying tickets.

For just \$256.25 you’ll get a one-night stay in a newly renovated room at Kewadin Casino Hotel Sault Ste. Marie, two tickets to Montgomery Gentry ft. Eddie Montgomery and \$20 Kewadin Credits per adult in room.

Once booked, a non-refundable deposit of \$110 is due at the time of booking for tickets. Package is based on double

occupancy, night of the show - Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025. Value of the tickets is \$55 per ticket.

Tickets start at \$35 USD. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show starts at 8 p.m.

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Kitchi Miniss Jiingtamok held in Munising



YEA representatives from Escanaba, Manistique, Munising, St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie gather for a photo.



Emcee Josh Homminga mentors 8-year-old Harper Mae Miron of Manistique.



Mary Winowiecki and Sandy Tahtinen with their Best Buds Crafting merchandise.



Alex Howard, 9, of Munising took home a \$20 bill.



Jordana Matson-Brady of Minneapolis, Minn., and 10-year-old Mary Goetz of the Sault won T-shirts in the spot dance.



Phoebe St. Andrew and Marion Belonga, both 11 and from St. Ignace, don protective raingear.



Above, Alison Gauthier, Kathy Nord, Heather Nord and Melissa Carlson visit before the powwow with Grand Island in the background.



Dancers make their way around the circle.



The Teal Lake Singers served as the host drum for the powwow.



Above, the Ice Circle Singers and below, Mukkwa Giizhik performing.



Preparing to make the grand entry.



Rain clouds roll in over Lake Superior's Munising Bay delivering sporadic downpours infused with loud thunder.

28th Annual Sugar Island Powwow “Ziisbaakwad Minising Jiingtamok” held in July



Afternoon grand entry at the Sugar Island Powwow.



Karyn Finley and Melissa Bergstrom, daughter and mother, attended their first powwow while they were visiting the Upper Peninsula from downstate Michigan.



Native Bead Arts & Supplies - Levon Hart (back) and Sheila Hart with Shane Hart at their vendor booth.



Food vendors Faron Smith and Wendy Griffin of Farendy Farms.



Elder Linda Jones carrying the Canadian flag during grand entry.

Photos by Brenda Austin



Future emcee Wyatt Bouschor, 5.



From left, Adeline Derwin, owner of Braids by Adeline, with T.J. Derwin, Tim Derwin, and Stacie Chambers (front), who is getting her hair braided.



Mukwa Giizhik drummer Charles “Chuck” Forgrave.



Halden Shipp and his son Korbin Shipp.



Rosemary Larson enjoying afternoon grand entry from the drummers circle.



Jingle dress dancer Shelby Rae Boggs.



Sheena Burnside



Wynter Rose Belonga with baby Lillith Rose Marie Murphy, 2.



Women's traditional dancers Rita Boulley, Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson, and Patricia Shackleton.



Abe Bouschor dances during grand entry prior to posting of the colors.



Bahweting Drum drummers play an honor song during grand entry.



Little shawl dancer.



Young lady shawl dancers.



Young men dancing during afternoon grand entry.



Jingle dress and fancy shawl dancers during afternoon grand entry.



Grandmother Windy Lovin of Dafter, Mich., (back left), with her family from Georgia. Alisha McCormick, 30, (center), Dakota McCormick, 4, Elizabeth McCormick, 5, Catileya McCormick, 9, and Madilynn McCormick, 8.



Beatrice Menase Kwe Jackson (right) visits with her guest from Peru, Huayra Forster.

Apply to Michigan Reconnect to pursue postsecondary education or skill certificate tuition-free

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) is joining community events across the state this month to connect with Michiganders 25 and older who are interested in earning a tuition-free college degree or skill certificate through Michigan Reconnect. As back-to-school season kicks off, adult learners can explore how Reconnect helps them save money and offers the guidance and support they need to return to school, advance their careers, and take the next step toward unlocking their full potential.

“Michigan Reconnect removes barriers and opens doors—and since its launch, the program has helped hundreds of thousands of Michiganders take that first step toward earning a degree or certificate,” said Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea, director of MiLEAP. “These are everyday people who are choosing to invest in themselves and build brighter futures right here in Michigan. Reconnect meets learners where they are, honors their lived experience, and provides a real path forward.” Since 2021, more than 200,000 Michiganders have applied for Michigan Reconnect to pursue the opportunity to earn a tuition-free postsecondary education credential at one of the state’s public or Tribal community colleges, with more than 10,000 having graduated. To support students along their educational journey, a team of Reconnect Navigators offer personalized, one-on-one support to help prospective students identify career goals, explore educational programs, apply for financial aid, create a plan to graduate and more.

“Michigan Reconnect represents a commitment to expanding access and creating meaningful opportunities for adult learners to continue their education,” said Michelle Richard, deputy director of Higher Education at MiLEAP. “Whether someone is returning to college after time away or considering it for the first time, Navigators walk alongside them every step of the way—helping them through the process from the application process to their first class.”

Throughout August, Navigators will be bringing their support directly to communities and campuses across Michigan, offering interested adults an accessible way to connect with the program, enroll on-site, and take the next steps to achieving their lifelong education goals. Institutions and organizations can also invite Navigators to attend their event to share information and connect with potential students.

The Navigator team also holds online drop-in office hours every Tuesday from 12-2 p.m. and Thursday from 5-7 p.m. to offer one-on-one support.

Michigan Reconnect is a central part of achieving Michigan’s Sixty by 30 goal, which aims to increase the percentage of working-age adults with a postsecondary credential to 60% by 2030. By eliminating tuition costs and offering personalized support,

Reconnect helps expand access to education and empower adult learners across the state.

Learn more about earning a

degree or tuition-free certificate through Michigan Reconnect at Michigan.gov/Reconnect.

In addition to Michigan

Reconnect, MiLEAP offers scholarships that support Michiganders at every stage of their life and with different education goals. Eligible

students may also qualify for other state financial aid programs. Learn more at Michigan.gov/MiStudentAid.

Sault Tribe Community Health

2025 Flu Clinics

Check flu & COVID clinic schedule for your area and Mark Your Calendars!

FREE flu shots for:

- Sault Tribe members
- Members of a federally recognized tribe
- Health Division Employees

Flu Shots are a \$10 Co-Pay for Non-Native Spouses



Please wear short sleeves

SAULT STE. MARIE AREA

Big Bear Arena, 2 Ice Circle Dr.

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 10 a.m. -2 p.m. (Health Fair)

Nokomis-Mishomis Bldg., 2076 Shunk Rd.

Wednesday, Oct. 15, 11 a.m. -1 p.m.

Kewadin Casino, 2186 Shunk Rd.

Friday, Oct. 17, 1-4:30 p.m.

(Kewadin Casino Employee Clinic)

Sault Tribe Health Center, 2864 Ashmun St.

Wednesday, Oct. 22, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 24, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

KINROSS AREA

Kinross Rec Center, 43 Wood Lake Rd.

Friday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m. -2 p.m. (Health Fair)

ESCANABA AREA

Gladstone Tribal Health Facility, 2002 Minneapolis

Friday, Oct. 3, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Escanaba Community Center, 3721 Jingob St.

Friday, Oct. 17, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Health Fair)

NEWBERRY AREA

Newberry Tribal Health Center, 4935 Zee Ba Tik Lane

Sunday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 15, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Health Fair)

MARQUETTE AREA

Marquette Tribal Health Center 1229 W Washington St.

Saturday, Oct. 4 ... 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

(DRIVE THRU - Flu & COVID Clinic.)

DETOUR, DRUMMOND AREA

DeTour Municipal Bldg., 260 Superior

Thursday, Oct. 2, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (Health Fair)

DeTour Tribal Health Center, 200 S. Superior St.

Thursday, Oct. 16, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 30, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

HESSEL AREA

Hessel Tribal Health Center, 3355 N. 3 Mile Rd.

Friday, Oct. 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Health Fair)

Tuesday, Oct. 14, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 28, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

MANISTIQUE AREA

Manistique Tribal Health Center 5698 W. HWY 2

Monday, Oct. 6, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. & 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Health Fair)

MUNISING AREA

Munising Tribal Health Center 622 W. Superior

Monday, Sept. 29..2 - 5 p.m.

Thursday., Oct. 2 .11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 8 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ST. IGNACE AREA

Kewadin Casino Tent, 3015 Mackinac Trail

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Health Fair)

Elder Meal Site

Tuesday, Oct. 28, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

St. Ignace Health Center, 1140 N State St. (CONFERENCE ROOM)

Friday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1 - 4 p.m.

If you are not able to attend our flu clinics or health fairs, please call your clinic below to schedule an appointment.

Gladstone Health Center341-1836

Hessel Tribal Health Center.....484-2727

Manistique Tribal Health Center ...341-8469

Marquette Tribal Health Center ...225-1616

DeTour Health Center.....442-0111

Munising Tribal Health Center387-4721

Newberry Tribal Health Center293-8181

Sault/Kinross Community Health..632-5210

St. Ignace Tribal Health Center643-8689, ext. 34531

CLIP & SAVE



Walking on...

CARLA JEAN (FISHER) HITE

Carla Jean (Fisher) Hite, 60, of St. Ignace, Mich., died at her home July 26, 2025, after a short battle with cancer. She was born May 15, 1965, on Mackinac Island to Rhoda Fisher.

Carla was born on the island and lived there up until she was in the sixth grade when her family moved downstate. She met Thomas Bailey, and they married on July 12, 2025, at their home.



Carla loved doing crafts, flower gardening, and searching for beach glass, which she often used to create beautiful handmade pieces. She especially enjoyed quilting and could often be found working on a new project to share with family and friends. Carla had a generous heart and was always ready to help others in any way she could. Her quick wit and wonderful sense of humor never failed to bring smiles and laughter to those around her.

Carla is survived by her husband, Tom; son, Hayden VanRavenswaay; and brothers, Donald Vanier, Jimmy Vanier, Raymond Vanier and Josh Eaton.

Carla was preceded in death by her mother, Rhoda Fisher.

Per Carla's wishes, cremation has taken place, and no services are being held at this time.

Family Life Funeral Homes – St. Ignace assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

DAVID PAUL LAMYOTTE

David Paul Lamyotte, 50, of Belmont, N.C., passed away unexpectedly at his home on July 12, 2025.

David was born on July 23, 1974, in St. Ignace, Mich., to the late Brenda (Martin) Schlesner and the late Paul Thomas Lamyotte. He was named in honor of two men who meant the world to his family — his grandfather, David Willard Lamyotte and his father, Paul.



David spent his childhood between Wisconsin and Menominee, Mich., where he graduated from high school. He later went on to earn an Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice from the Community College of the Air Force, and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the American Public University System.

David proudly served his country in the United States Air Force for 20 years. His time in service shaped his strength, discipline and deep sense of duty that he carried with him throughout his life.

He will be remembered for so many things: his incredible work ethic, his bright and contagious smile, his unwavering loyalty to

the University of Michigan, and, yes, his famously stinky feet that always made those around him laugh. David had a love for life and a playful spirit. Whether he was out hunting, fishing, or simply catching up with loved ones, he showed up with presence and heart. He never let too much time pass without checking in on those he loved.

David is survived by his children, Chelsey Neuschwander, Amaya Lamyotte, and Coral Thorton, and his grandchildren: Charlie, Cayson, Tristan, and Paisley. He also leaves behind his loving sister, Sabrina (Jeff) Rensink and their two children, as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who loved him deeply.

David's absence will be deeply felt, but his spirit will live on in the laughter, strength, and memories of all who knew and loved him.

The family celebrated the life of David and his mother Brenda on July 24 at the Moose Lodge in Watertown, Wisc.

Another memorial was held for David and Brenda on July 26 at the Moose Lodge in St. Ignace, Mich.

DEBORAH ANN MCCALL

Deborah Ann McCall, 72, of St. Ignace, Mich., died July 21, 2025, in her home. She was born Oct. 23, 1952, in St. Ignace, to Jack and Yvonne (Robinson) Hanson.

Deborah was raised in Moran, Mich. After graduating from LaSalle High School, she began working at the Travelers Hotel in St. Ignace, where she met the love of her life, James McCall, in 1979. They married in September of 1984, and made their home in St. Ignace, where they started and raised their family together.



Deborah spent many years working in the community she loved, including ten years as a waitress at the Zodiac Restaurant, followed by another decade at the Shell Gas Station. She was known for her warmth, her easy laugh, and her strong work ethic. A devoted member of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Deborah found great comfort and strength in her faith. She cherished time spent with her family and friends, especially watching her grandchildren grow. She loved playing cards with her friends and listening to music. During the summer, you could often find her outdoors, happily feeding the squirrels, and watching them play.

Deborah is survived by her children, Jeffery Bird of Orlando, Fla., Jamie (Travis) Pearson of Alanson, Mich., and Genifer McCall of St. Ignace; grandchildren, Angela Bird, Elaine Bird, James (Michaela Titus) McCall, Gavin (Morgan Clark) McCall Emrich, and Kayleigh McCall; siblings-in-law, Michelle Hanson, Sharon Closs, Diane (Jeff) Cavner, Joni (Andy) Johnson, Barbara McCall, and Kenny Brown; and many nieces and

nephews who will all miss her dearly.

Deborah was preceded in death by her husband, James; parents, Jack and Yvonne; brothers, Joseph Hanson and Charles Hanson; sister-in-law, Jeanie Edelman; and brother-in-law, Donald Closs Sr.

Per Deborah's wishes, no services will be held.

Family Life Funeral Homes – St. Ignace assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

MICHAEL “MIKE” JOHN TAZELAAR

Michael “Mike” John Tazelaar, 61, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., died June 19, 2025, at the Ball Hospice House in Sault Ste. Marie. He was born Feb. 11, 1964, in Mariemont, Ohio, to Paul and Barbara (Dietz) Steinkohl.



Michael grew up in Sault Ste. Marie and was a proud member of the 82nd Airborne. He was a car hauler truck driver for many years.

Mike was happiest when surrounded by his family and friends. He never met a stranger—his generous spirit and kind heart left a lasting impression on everyone he met. Always willing to lend a hand, he loved helping others and bringing joy to those around him. Mike had a knack for fixing just about anything. Over the years, he worked as a plumber, carpenter, and semi-truck mechanic. He especially enjoyed restoring old cars, riding his motorcycle, and casting a line to fish whenever he had the chance.

Michael was a proud member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. His family and friends will miss him and his bigger-than-life personality.

He is survived by his wife, Alicia Tazelaar, of Sault Ste. Marie; mother, Barbara Dietz of Sault Ste. Marie; children, Nicole (Denzel Hampton) Steinkohl of Kennesaw, Ga., Michael Tazelaar Jr., and Miles Tazelaar of Mahwah, N.J.; stepson, Takoda Hauri of Sault Ste. Marie; two stepdaughters; grandchildren, Joshua Sanchez of Las Vegas, Nev., Silverio Sanchez of Kennesaw, Ga., Isabella Hampton, of Kennesaw, Ga.; siblings, Paul (Charity Zimmerman) Steinkohl, Sherrie (Allen) Lucas, Roger (Heidi) Steinkohl, Anthony Rogers, Barbara (Kyle Slater) Rogers, Jay (Cara) Tazelaar, and Paul Rogers, all of Sault Ste. Marie, and Michel Steinkohl of North Carolina; aunts and uncles, Hon. Elisabeth (Harvey Bell) Dietz of Sault Ste. Marie, Leah (Tom) VanAman of Ohio, Howard Steinkohl of New Jersey, Richard Steinkohl of New York; special nephews, Michael McLeod and Allie Rogers; his many nieces, nephews, great-nephews, great-

nieces, cousins, dear friends from New Jersey; and the many friends he met trucking across the country.

Michael was preceded in death by his son, Michael Steinkohl Jr.; father, Paul Steinkohl; sister, Dawn Steinkohl; grandparents, Orval and Delphine Dietz; and aunts and uncles, Elvin “Sonny” (Margaret) Dietz, Elizabeth (Alford) Clark, Mary (Forrest) Poole, Orval Dietz, Rita (Bill) Dale, William Dietz and Anita Steinkohl.

A Memorial Service was held at Family Life Funeral Home at 4951 S. M-129, Sault Ste. Marie, on June 27, 2025.

The family would like to thank the Ball Hospice House and McLaren Hospice for their care of Michael.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Ball Hospice House, 308 West 12th Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

DEBRA JEAN OBESHAW

With heavy hearts and deep love, we announce the passing of Debra Jean Obeshaw, 67, Aug. 3, 2025. Born

July 28, 1958, to Lawrence and Charlotte (Huyck) Belonga, Debra spent the majority of her life in St. Ignace, Mich., where she rooted her family, shared her strength, and brought light to all who knew her.



Debra was a proud member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and her spirit reflected the vibrant, enduring strength of her heritage.

Debra lived life with bold joy, unfiltered honesty, and a radiant spirit. She loved being near or in the water, where she could truly relax and feel at peace. Music was in her soul, she could

be found dancing to her favorite songs, drinking a cold Hard Mike's Lemonade, and making everyone laugh until they cried. She was the life of the party, the loudest cheerleader, and the most fun person in any room. She loved romance novels, reality shows, family gatherings, and a good, sassy conversation. No matter what the day held, Debra never left the house without making sure her hair looked perfect, even on her last day. Debra was the most stubborn woman you had ever met, but we wouldn't have wanted her any other way.

Debra was the loving mother of two sons, Duane “Chris” Obeshaw and Bill Obeshaw, and the cherished Nana of Dakota, Tiffany, Jade, Ryker, and Kayleigh. To her grandchildren, she was more than a grandmother, she was our other parent, our nurturer, our protector, and our best friend.

She was always there with a listening ear, a comforting hug, or the right words when we needed them most. Nana would have done anything for us. Her love for us was endless, and we felt it every single day.

Debra is survived by her four beloved sisters, Laura (Bill) Schwiderson, Dorrine (Buck) Smith, Cheryl Lavake, and Sylvia Belonga, each of whom shared a lifetime of memories, mischief, and sisterhood with her.

She will also be deeply missed by many other loved ones, including nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, extended family, and dear friends who were blessed by her presence and her heart.

Debra was preceded in death by her sisters, Beatrice “Peanut” LePire and Norrine Herbst; brother, Lawrence “Jack” Belonga; mother, Charlotte “Peggy” Belonga; father, Lawrence Belonga; and her former husband and father of her children, Duane “Dude” J. Obeshaw. She now joins them in eternal peace.

See “Walking on” Pg. 16

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Solomon named Region One Teacher of the Year

Susan Solomon, Gifted and Talented teacher at JKL Bahweting Anishnabe Public School Academy, has been honored as the 2025 Michigan Region One Teacher of the Year.

The award was bestowed during a Michigan State Board of Education meeting, where she was recognized by Dr. Michael F. Rice, state superintendent, and Dr. Pamela Pugh, president of the State Board of Education.

Solomon was accompanied by JKL Superintendent, Carolyn

Dale, Ph.D., and JKL Principal, Heather Purple.

“This prestigious distinction celebrates Susan’s exceptional dedication and creativity in nurturing the unique talents of all students,” said Dale, Ph.D. “Her work embodies the heart and innovation of effective teaching.”

Solomon is the second educator from the school to earn the Region One Teacher of the Year title, following Tan-A Hoffman, who received the honor in 2020-

21. “Being named Region One Teacher of the Year is a tremendous honor,” said Solomon. “I’m deeply grateful to the students, families, and colleagues who inspire me every day.”

Right (L-R): JKL Bahweting Anishnabe Public School Academy Superintendent Carolyn Dale, Ph.D., Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., JKL Teacher Susan Solomon accepting her award, Pamela Pugh, Ph.D., and JKL Principal Heather Purple.



FDA is taking steps to restrict 7-OH opioid products

BY THE U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is taking a bold step to protect Americans from dangerous, illegal opioids by recommending a scheduling action

to control certain 7-hydroxymisragynine (also known as 7-OH) products under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).

The FDA is specifically targeting 7-OH, a concentrated byproduct of the kratom plant; it

is not focused on natural kratom leaf products. 7-OH is increasingly recognized as having potential for abuse because of its ability to bind to opioid receptors. The FDA is releasing a new report to educate the public about the health

concerns of 7-OH and its distinction from the kratom plant leaf.

This recommendation follows a thorough medical and scientific analysis by the FDA and is one of several efforts to address the agency’s concerns around the

growing availability and use of 7-OH opioid products. There are no FDA-approved 7-OH drugs, 7-OH is not lawful in dietary supplements and 7-OH cannot be lawfully added to conventional foods.

Walking on continued..

From “Walking on” page 15

A public celebration of life will be held in her honor and details will be shared with family and friends. Please honor Debra’s memory by sharing a laugh, turning up the music, raising a glass, and dancing without shame, just like she would have.

Family Life Funeral Homes in St. Ignace assisted the family with arrangements.

RONALD DEAN LEASK

On Sunday, March 23, 2025, Ronald Dean Leask passed peacefully in his sleep at home in Hastings, Mich. Our family lost a son, a brother, an uncle, a friend with deep relationships that went far beyond family ties. Ron’s passion for life brought him many close friends. He will be deeply missed and always remembered. Born in Fort Dodge, Iowa on Nov. 22 1949, Ron grew up in Battle Creek, Mich. A member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Upon reaching the age of 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served from 1-04-1968 through 10-30-1970. A Vietnam veteran Nov. 11 1968 - Nov. 10 1969. When he returned home he took up the trade of cooking. That skill brought him many experiences including a move to Bellingham, Wash. where he loved living. After few years he returned to Michigan to be near family again.



Preceded in death by his mother, Margaret Leask; father, Edward Leask; brother, Marvin Leask; and nephew, John Leask. He is survived by brothers, Rodger (Sue) and Doug (Rose); sister Mary, 8 beloved nieces, nephew; and 14 greats.

A Funeral was held at the Fort Custer National Cemetery, 15501 Dickman Rd, Augusta, MI 49012 on May 2.

THOMAS “TOM” EDWARD MALLOY

Thomas “Tom” Edward Malloy, 88, of Brimley, Mich.,



died on July 22, 2025, at MyMichigan Medical Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. He was born Nov. 11, 1936, in Sault Ste. Marie to Melvin and Margaret (Sylvester) Malloy.

Tom lived fully, loved deeply, and served humbly in his devotion to God. As an avid storyteller, his stories will echo into the hearts of all who loved and knew him. His legacy will live on through the lives he touched with his words, his kindness and his unwavering faith. Tom cherished his family and close friends. Later in life one of his favorite questions to his grandchildren when they came to visit was “Do you belong to me?” or “Are you mine?” He will leave a profound absence in their lives. Tom is survived by his children, Kathy Malloy, Thomas M. (Marcia) Malloy, Phyllis Malloy, Michelle (Frank) Bernier; grandchildren, Douglas Malloy, Daryl (Jeanie) Malloy, Rachel (Devin) Keys, Jacob Barnes, Tonya Malloy, Heather (Shane) Ullman, Erin (Dan Lothrop) Forrester, Ryan Malloy, Sam Malloy, Madeline (Rick Miller) Gallegos, Alina Gallegos, Danielle Gallegos; great-grandchildren, Maddy Malloy, Alyvia Malloy, Shiloh Brown, Stella Hulbert, Rainee Malloy, Alyssa (Adam) Ciuk, Daniel Malloy, Audie Keys, Morgan Barnes, Logan Barnes, Hannah Barnes, Kaedence Chaplin, Rylan Ullman, Terin Forrester, Nathaniel Malloy, Zakary Forrester, Charles Forrester, Colin Forrester, Blake (Elizabeth) Salisbury, Dane Ullman, Remy Bennett, Ember Miller, Oscar Miller, Aroua Barbeaux; great-great grandchildren, Eli, Ricky, Ryker and Amelia; siblings, James “Bert” Malloy, John “Bobo” Malloy, and Joan (Roger) Crane; brother-in-law, Daniel White; and many loved nieces and nephews. Tom

was preceded in death by his wife, Geraldine (Marble) Malloy; son, Daniel Clow; daughter, Tina Malloy; grandson, Daniel Malloy; parents, Melvin (Dee Parr Malloy) and Margaret; sister, Lucille White and best friend Frank “Honeyboy” Parr.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Family Life Funeral Homes, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

JAMES EDWARD MYERS

James Edward Myers, 72, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., died July 22, 2025, at his home. He was born Sept. 9, 1952, in Sault Ste. Marie, to Floyd and Edna (Filer) Myers.

James spent much of his life in Flint, Mich., where he grew up and later worked in a variety of construction jobs throughout his life. After retiring, James returned to his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie to care for his mother.



A proud member of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, James embraced his heritage and community. He loved a good poker game. He found joy in fishing and spending time visiting with his friends and family.

James will be remembered for his loyalty, generosity, and the warmth he brought to those around him.

James is survived by his sisters, Linda (Don) Snyder of Sault Ste. Marie and Beth Ann Knighten of Sault Ste. Marie; and several nieces and nephews.

James was preceded in death by his parents, Floyd and Edna; and sister, Diane Myers.

A memorial gathering was held Aug. 16, 2025, at 2210 Riverside Drive Apt. E 1, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes of Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the

family at www.familylifefh.com.

LOIS JOAN (DEMERSE) SWENDSEN

Lois Joan (DeMerse) Swendsen, 94, of Brimley, Mich., passed away peacefully July 27, 2025, in the Long-Term Care Unit at MyMichigan Medical Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. Lois was born July 25, 1931, in Racoon, Mich., to the late William “Jack” and Thelma (Parish) DeMerse.



Lois grew up in Dollar Settlement, Mich., and was a graduate of Superior High School in Brimley. Lois enjoyed working as a telephone operator for Michigan Bell in Sault Ste. Marie and Detroit, Mich. While in Detroit, Lois met her husband of 49 years while he was serving in the United States Coast Guard. Several years later they moved up north and made Dollar Settlement their home. In her later years, Lois could be found in the kitchen of Tinker’s Restaurant making delicious cakes and pies.

Lois was a devoted member of the Gospel Chapel Church in Dollar Settlement and was a woman of deep faith and strong values. She was also a proud member of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Lois had a lifelong love for gardening and canning, taking great joy in nurturing her garden. She and her fellow 1948 graduates kept in touch, enjoying enduring friendships for over seventy years. Lois enjoyed working on crossword puzzles, knitting, and making maple syrup. Her favorite thing was time spent with her family, especially in her last years all gathered around the table for Sunday dinners.

Lois is survived by her daughter, Denise Kennedy of Brimley; sons, Keith (Mary) Swendsen of Brimley and Bill (Mary) Swendsen of Brooklyn, Mich.; grandchildren, Melissa (Nate) Case, Mikaela Swendsen,

Keith (Randilynn) Swendsen, Darick (Ashley) Bowen, Amber Swendsen, and Krystal (Robert) Pirone; great-grandchildren, Wyatt, Hannah, Sadie, Trey, Kade, Diem, Alexis, Gavin, Taylor, Paige, and Ruthie; sister, Shirley Schwiderson; sister-in-law, Jean Bach; close nephew, Richard Clow; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Lois was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Claude (Dick) Swendsen; sister, Maxine Clow; parents-in-law, Birger and Virginia (Rice) Swendsen; in-laws, Robert and Dolores Berry; brothers-in-laws, Earl Clow and John Schwiderson; and son-in-law, Ward Kennedy.

Lois will be remembered for her kindness, strength, and dedication to her family. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

There was a graveside service on Aug. 8, 2025, at Mission Hill Cemetery in Brimley, officiated by Pastor Rodney Case. A celebration of life followed at the Bay Mills Township Hall.

Memorial contributions may be made in Lois’s name to the Gospel Chapel Church, C/O Lynn Gillies, P.O. Box 625, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes - Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

DARLENE BROWN

Brown funeral service Sept. 4 A funeral service to celebrate Darlene Brown’s life will be held on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2025, at the St. Ignatius Loyola Church, 120 Church St., St. Ignace, Mich. Visitation will be 10 - 11 a.m. and the Funeral Service 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., immediately followed by the burial at the Wequayoc Cemetery, Hessel, Mich.



Learning lodge built for Rudyard students



Volunteers working on the lodge frame. Despite the heat, the group had an amazing time.



Volunteers stand proudly under the finished lodge. When in use, the frame will be covered with tarps.



Build leader Jesse Bowen (left) and volunteer Nate Beeler test the pliability of a sapling.



Youth Services Assistant Julie Perry lifts the sizeable saplings like a professional weight lifter.



Nate Beeler judges the width of a sapling. The saplings need to be strong yet bendable, which requires them to be a certain width.



Jesse Bowen harvests the first sapling for the new lodge.

Photos by Aimee Spring

BY AIMEE SPRING,
COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

A two-day project has recently concluded just in time for the start of the school year. A brand-new teaching lodge was constructed by community volunteers for the students and staff of Rudyard Area Schools.

The project was kick-started by Jackie Minton, Youth Service Coordinator for the Sault Tribe. The school previously had a lodge built back in 2023, but it had since fallen into disrepair. Wanting students to have a place where they could connect with tribal culture, Minton decided that a new, stronger lodge should be built. It will act as another classroom setting and a place where cultural teachings can be held.

To lead the build, Minton contacted Bay Mills tribal member Jesse Bowen. Bowen, who works in the cultural field and has built several lodges for almost 16 years, had a previous experience

building a sweat lodge on Sugar Island with some of Minton's Rudyard students. Bowen had never built a lodge for a school before, but he was enthusiastic about Minton's suggestion.

"Really, these lodges are for helping kids, helping people, reclaim their culture," said Bowen.

Volunteers from the Rudyard and Sault Tribe communities gathered on Aug. 6 and 7 at the school behind the pool building, on a hill where the old lodge stood. After tearing down the old lodge, the group offered semaa and harvested maple and ironwood saplings at the Rudyard School Farm. Approximately 40 saplings were harvested over the course of both days.

Despite the hot and humid weather, the roughly 15 volunteers that showed up throughout the two days were cheerful, enjoying food, friends, and a shared love and appreciation for tribal culture. People of all ages

attended, even some children, pleasing Minton.

Sault Tribe member Kaitlynn Nelson volunteered because she was excited hearing about a new building for cultural teachings being offered to students, especially since she did not grow up in a traditional household and has a daughter she wants to pass the culture on to. She hopes that she can teach her daughter and become more involved with the culture herself with the help of this new lodge.

Baige DeWitt, Native American Culture teacher for Rudyard, also volunteered. DeWitt hopes to use the learning lodge with her students this year, and getting involved with and receiving teaching is something she is passionate about.

"This is a great and unique opportunity for our students at Rudyard to learn. It's another outdoor learning environment, a great way to receive cultural teachings, and I'm really excited

about it," DeWitt said.

The lodge only needs an addition layer of ribbing to be attached, then it will be ready for students. Bowen and Minton will complete this at a later date.

Minton stressed that the lodge is for every student, Native and non-Native. All teachers have to do is go to Minton and request for their class to use the lodge for any type of lesson. As long as the building is respected, anyone can

enjoy it.

"My hope is that it's valued and that it's supported," Minton said near the end of the build. "I'm hoping that all of the school districts...all across the nation see this and they mimic it. And they do it in whatever way their culture [would], whatever their learning lodges are, and that that is shared with their students...so it can be carried on."

Invasive Asian Longhorned Beetle

BY CHERYL NELSON, MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES FOREST HEALTH
FORESTER

Michigan's Invasive Species Program is joining with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in asking the public to look for and report signs of the invasive Asian longhorned beetle.

The Asian Longhorned Beetle, or ALB for short, is a non-native, wood-boring beetle considered invasive in North America because it attacks at least 12 types of hardwood trees, including maples, elms, horse chestnuts, birches and

willows.

In its larval stage, the insect feeds inside tree trunks and branches during the colder months. The beetle creates tunnels as it feeds, and then it chews its way out as an adult in the warmer months, creating large, round exit holes approximately 3/8 to 1/2-inch in size.

The adult beetle has markings that are easy to recognize: A shiny, black body with white spots. Its body is about 1 to 1.5 inches long; Black and white antennae that are longer than its body; Six legs with feet that can appear bluish.

If you think you found a beetle or tree damage, report it by call-

ing the ALB hotline at 1-866-702-9938. Or submit an online report through the ALB web page. Try to photograph the beetle or tree damage. If you can, capture the beetle in a durable container and freeze it. This helps preserve the insect for identification.

ALB can and has hitchhiked to new areas in untreated firewood. When traveling, leave firewood at home and purchase what you need locally or choose certified, heat-treated firewood.

For more information, call the USDA at 1-866-702-9938 or visit APHIS.USDA.gov/Plant-Pests-Diseases/ALB.

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1 Heaping Scoop of a Nurturing Environment

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Equal Parts: Love, Empathy & Understanding
Add 1 or more Children

Sprinkle all ingredients within your home, stir to combine.
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Scan the QR Code or contact us:
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Acfs-fosterhomes@saulttribe.net



Golden oyster mushrooms invading Michigan forests

JOANNE FOREMAN, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES INVASIVE SPECIES COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

What started as a fun and tasty culinary trend – growing exotic mushrooms at home from a simple storebought or online kit – has become another threat to Michigan’s natural resources.

A recent article published in The Conversation describes U.S. Forest Service researchers’ findings regarding the impact of golden oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus citrinopileatus*) on Wisconsin forests.

Native to Asian and Russian hardwood forests, these imported mushrooms are now growing in the wild in areas of the Midwest, including Michigan’s southern Lower Peninsula.

Golden oyster mushrooms, known for their bright yellow caps and nutty flavor, are featured on restaurant menus and in cooking videos. The mushrooms became popular among DIY enthusiasts with the introduction of grow kits

in the early 2000s. By 2010, they began appearing in U.S. forests.

According to Aishwarya Veerabahu, a graduate student in the Department of Botany at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “No one knows exactly how golden oyster mushrooms escaped into the wild, whether from a grow kit, a commercial mushroom farm or outdoor logs inoculated with golden oysters – a home-cultivation technique.”

To assist with research efforts, Michiganders are encouraged to report any sightings of golden oyster mushrooms in the wild. Observations can be recorded at iNaturalist.org.

Why be concerned?

Veerabahu and colleagues sampled fungal communities in forests around Madison, Wisconsin, and determined that in logs colonized by golden oyster mushrooms, only half the expected diversity of native fungal species was present.

“Fungi are sources of revolutionary medicines, including anti-

biotics like penicillin, cholesterol medication and organ transplant stabilizers,” said Veerabahu. “The value of undiscovered, potentially useful chemicals can be lost when invasive species push others out.”

What can be done?

Veerabahu recommends that people consider refraining from using golden oyster mushroom grow kits to prevent any new introductions.

“For people who make a living selling these mushrooms, consider adding a note that this species is invasive and should be cultivated indoors and not composted,” she said. “If you enjoy growing mushrooms at home, try cultivating safe, native species that you have [lawfully] collected in your region.”

To avoid introducing or spreading species that may be invasive, never release pets, aquarium plants or other species into the wild, choose native species for gardening, and keep exotic plants – and fungi – indoors.



Fungal ecologist Aishwarya Veerabahu stands beside a patch of golden oyster mushrooms growing on a stump in a Wisconsin forest.

Reclaiming resilient Michigan streams: Over 140 miles of streams reconnected so far in grant project

BY KESIREE O’BRIEN, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, with help from many conservation partners, is half-way through completion of a \$5 million grant project to remove 27 stream barriers, including 16 DNR-managed dams. Efforts to date have reconnected more than 140 miles of streams.

Funding for this work was awarded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s America’s Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (formerly the America the Beautiful Challenge), which seeks to conserve and restore aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, improve resilience to flooding and other threats, and expand community access to nature.

What’s been accomplished

The DNR was awarded grant funding in 2022, and work on the project began in June 2023. Since that time, the following components have been completed:

Crawford County: removal of Hulbert Road Dam.

Emmet County: replacement of 5 Mile Creek Road-stream crossing and Wycamp Creek Road-stream crossing.

Jackson County: removal of Portage Creek Trout Pond Dam.

Luce County: removal of Spring Creek Trout Pond Dam.

Mackinac County: removal of McAlpine Trout Pond Dam (expected completion September 2025).

Mecosta County: removal of Altona Dam.

Oceana County: removal of Marshville Dam.

Oscoda County: removal of Mio Walleye Pond Dam (expected completion September 2025).

“Funding from this partnership helped us restore connectivity to two major fisheries (Five Mile and Wycamp creeks) for LTBB citizens,” said Samuel Day, Great Lakes fisheries research specialist at Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. “The new crossings make it easier for native fish like suckers to migrate from



Photo courtesy of Huron Pines

McAlpine Trout Pond Dam is planned for deconstruction in 2025, a project planned in partnership with Huron Pines. The dam is located on DNR-managed land in Mackinac County and has been drawn down since the early 2000s. Removal of the dam will reconnect 1.17 miles of coldwater habitat.

Lake Michigan to their spawning grounds and will help sustain these fisheries for generations to come.”

Other completed aspects of the project also have yielded positive ecological and community effects. Removal of the Altona Dam on the Little Muskegon River has helped reconnect 116 miles of streams and tributaries and restore natural stream function. Native grasses and shrubs were installed in fall 2024, and native shade trees were planted in spring 2025. According to the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, which partnered with the DNR on this effort, a public-access kayak launch is planned at the site, and additional ways to improve public river access on the Little Muskegon are being explored, too.

Funding from this grant also allowed the Conservation Resource Alliance and West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission to implement critical stream restoration and sediment mitigation efforts for the removal of Marshville Dam on Stony Creek in Oceana County.

“With this funding, over 4,000 cubic yards of sediment were prevented from washing downstream, and more than 130 habitat structures were installed in a section

of the stream impacted by the dam,” said DJ Shook, senior project manager and biologist at the Conservation Resource Alliance. “Early feedback from anglers indicates that this investment has led to larger and more abundant fish being caught in this hidden gem of a stream.”

What’s next

An additional 11 projects are slated for action in 2026. The outcomes from all of these projects will serve to address public safety, protect valuable natural resources, and improve the ability of the DNR to focus management efforts and resources on dams in places that provide high-quality resource benefits and public use.

Many of the removal projects that are called “dams” aren’t really serving as dams but are barriers that require removal for public safety and better fish movement upstream and downstream. The following four projects slated for removal are located in the channel but serve no useful purpose and prevent fish from moving upstream: Carr Creek Fish Barrier (Delta County), Big Trout Lake Fish Barrier (Marquette County), Buckhorn Creek Dam (Mecosta County) and East Branch Dam (Oscoda County).

An additional four projects are remnants of the state’s fish hatchery and production program. The structures are no longer needed for contemporary production, and their removal is necessary to restore stream banks and also to improve stream connectivity for fish. These project locations include Dana Lake Pike Marsh Dam (Delta County), Thompson Creek Blocking Weir (Schoolcraft County), Almena Hatchery Dams 1–5 and a diversion dam (Van Buren County) and Rapid River Pike Marsh structure (Delta County).

On the North Branch of Cole Creek Road (Lake County), perched and undersized culverts will be replaced with a timber bridge that will span the stream and allow for free movement of fish upstream and downstream and result in less sediment to the stream.

A strong public/private partnership led to a project on Apple Creek, a tributary to the Boardman-Ottaway River (Grand Traverse County). The partnership will remove two dams that, if they were to catastrophically fail, would threaten the health of the watershed.

Lastly, as a matter of public safety and long-term infrastructure planning, Roberts Lake Dam in Cheboygan County will be removed and a culvert meeting modern standards for this location will be installed. The last inspection of the dam showed that it was in poor condition. That, combined with debris accumulation, jeopardizes the road that goes over the dam and increases the risk of flooding. Historical maps and documents suggest that a wetland complex should remain after removal of this dam, which was constructed in the 1940s to raise water levels 2-3 feet. Roberts Lake will be lowered incrementally, using best management practices to protect downstream habitat. The drawdown will not affect Cochran Lake, upstream of this location.

The availability of grant funding has enabled organizations

working with the DNR on upcoming construction to pursue these high-priority projects. “The award of America the Beautiful funds has allowed Michigan Trout Unlimited to expedite the removal of two dams, with many more to come, providing invaluable benefit to coldwater streams in Michigan,” said Kristin Thomas, stream restoration director at Michigan Trout Unlimited.

“The Superior Watershed Partnership is pleased to be working with the Michigan DNR to remove three obsolete dams in the Upper Peninsula,” said the partnership’s senior planner, Geraldine Grant, referring to Big Trout Lake Fish Barrier, Carr Creek Fish Barrier and Dana Lake Pike Marsh dams.

“Removal of these dams will benefit recreational users, address concerns with aging infrastructure, eliminate public safety risks, and improve river connectivity, aquatic organism passage and climate resiliency.”

Upon completion, nearly 200 upstream miles of Michigan rivers and streams will be reconnected, benefiting at-risk species like the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, pickerel frog, and fluted shell and elktoe freshwater mussels, along with countless other aquatic species.

All of the work for the America’s Ecosystem Restoration Initiative project is expected to be completed by January 2027.

Looking ahead

This project may be halfway to the finish line, but dams remain a big challenge for the state of Michigan.

The DNR currently manages over 200 dams statewide, most of which were built well before modern construction techniques, engineering standards or regulatory safety guidelines. One bright spot is the \$15 million Gov. Gretchen Whitmer proposed in her budget for next fiscal year to remove, maintain and conduct engineering studies on critical dams, improving safety, restoring river health and enhancing wildlife habitats.

Board needs meaningful checks and balances



AUSTIN LOWES
TRIBAL CHAIRMAN
Separation of Powers

Earlier this summer, the board of directors authorized a survey to gather member feedback on constitutional reform—specifically, whether the tribe should separate its powers into multiple branches of government to provide checks and balances.

Currently, all power in the tribe is vested in the board of directors. Key employees report directly to the board, and the board has veto power over all terminations through the appeal process. The board has a proven history of interfering in operations—especially when family and friends are involved—and it approves every dollar spent by the tribe.

Several years ago, a constitutional committee was formed to recommend changes to our governing structure. After years of work, the committee proposed a three-branch government for the obvious checks and balances it

would provide. I fully support this model. I do not believe a part-time lay board—whose members often have other full-time jobs—has the qualifications or commitment to effectively supervise our professional staff. This lack of proper governance has contributed to significant attrition among key staff in recent years.

A resolution passed months ago to conduct a key employee satisfaction survey, aimed at identifying better management practices. When this survey goes out and the results come in, I am confident they will confirm what many already know: the current system is not working and hasn't for many years.

Attendance habits further illustrate the problem. Some board members attend at least 50% of meetings via Zoom, with cameras off and little contribution—likely because they are at their other jobs. When they return, they're out of the loop and often govern based on rumors rather than facts.

The tribe does not currently have a balanced budget, and we are far from it. Our fund balance is covering the shortfall, but it won't last forever. Instead of focusing on fiscal responsibility and revenue generation, the board has been arguing over two used sheds, likely constructed by Amish children, being moved

from our property at JKL to our property at the Sugar Island Powwow grounds for cultural purposes. The reason is because they're motivated by politics more than anything.

Our board needs meaningful checks and balances, including limits on their unchecked authority, to protect the future of our tribe. Without this, I feel that another major lawsuit will happen given our tribe's history.

Opioid Settlement

The Sault Tribe was a plaintiff in the class-action lawsuit against opioid manufacturers. Recently, \$500,000 of the settlement funds were allocated to support our Drug Court. This investment will help provide families with the resources they need for recovery—a cause for which I am deeply grateful.

Donation from Indian Energy

Indian Energy, a company the Sault Tribe invested in years ago, recently made another generous contribution to our community. They donated two large drums, funding for our youth powwow, and \$15,000 toward bison purchases.

Last year, the company purchased three bison for the tribe. This year, one drum was presented to Sault Tribe member Michael Hatch, who is deeply engaged in his culture, and the second will go to the Escanaba Elder Center, where it will serve as the heartbeat of the community.

Chi Miigwech to Indian Energy for its ongoing generosity and support of our culture and food sovereignty.

Sault Tribe Golf Scholarship Classic

Our recent Sault Tribe Golf Scholarship Classic was a tremendous success, raising \$110,000 for higher education scholarships for Sault Tribe students. This event gives leadership an opportunity to personally thank donors for investing in our students' futures. Special thanks to Director Isaac McKechnie for stepping up to assist me with this year's Classic.

Team Building Day

I was glad to attend our Team Building Day at Sherman Park. This well-attended event was a great way to show our employees how much they are valued. Looking ahead, I will advocate for allowing employees to bring their families next year. I believe our organization should be as family-friendly as possible, and this would be a step in that direction.

Long Term Care Donation

The tribe recently purchased a large Blackstone Grill for residents at MyMichigan's Long Term Care facility, which provides skilled nursing services to many Sault Tribe members. Delivering this gift was a



rewarding experience, and I know it will be well used.

Unit 1 Elder Garden

This summer, several gardens have been created throughout the tribe. I've been closely involved with the Unit 1 Elder Garden, located on 16th Avenue East on the way to the Big Bear, due to its proximity to

my home. This is a "you pick" garden—tribal elders are welcome to stop by and take what they need. Next year, I plan to request fencing materials from the board to make the garden deer-proof. I will install the fencing myself to save the tribe money while protecting this valuable resource.



Over 3,000 new tribal members have been enrolled



TYLER LAPLAUNT
DIRECTOR, UNIT V

Aanii, Boozhoo,
This month, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on all of the beautiful powwows that are happening across our tribe and the community and culture that they help bring together. The Teal Lake Singers have been honored to be invited as co-host drum at the Sugar Island Powwow and host drum at the Grand Island Powwow, where I was able to join and take part in the activities.

Let's start with Sugar Island. It was my first time ever drumming at that site and the energy and medicine was incredible. That's where my ancestors are from and you could feel the energy of the powwow grounds. Yes, it rained the first day, but we all danced and sang right through it. The second day was just gorgeous.

One of the greatest parts of the entire weekend was a teaching a very young man passed along to everyone at the event. He said something along the lines of "I love this Earth, I love all of the people, and I love all of you." Yes, a simple message, but it hit home pretty hard. This is what we are all about. This is what we fight for as leaders and as a people. One of our very first teachings, love. Love for our planet, love for each other, and love for the community that we bring together. No, I'm not getting old and soft, this message just really hit my heart in the right spot, because I was at a place where I needed a little bit of guidance and directions and our ancestors presented it in this young man. Knowing that these children are taking part in our culture and the strength that the next generation will bring to our tribe is more powerful than words can describe.

The Grand Island Powwow in partnership with the Youth Empowerment Powwow from the YEA was equally as beautiful. The thunderbirds soared in and we had a few rain breaks, but again, nothing could stop our community from having a good time. It was so refreshing to see so many youth running around, laughing, playing in the water, and just having a good time being a part of their culture and community. They really make a special event something extra. Nothing but good energy and vibes from everyone.

I want to send a special thanks to Vicki Walden for her hard work and dedication as the Powwow Committee chair to get this up and running after an almost 6-year hiatus, and a huge chi miigwech to everyone from the Powwow Committee and all of the vendors that helped

make this day special. All of those smiles, all of those songs, prayers, dances, and dives into Gichi gami were because of you and the effort you put into this. I cannot wait to see what the future brings to this beautiful powwow. Again, miigwech, miigwech, miigwech, to everyone who helped. We couldn't have done any of this without you.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE
As of July 25, 2025, there are 5,172 adult applications entered into the tracking system. A total of 184 adult applications have been denied and 3,078 new members have been enrolled, including children. The total membership in the tribe is currently 52,371. Simultaneously, enrollment is also working with a vendor to update the artwork and security features on our Tribal IDs. Hopefully, that will also be moving forward very soon. We appreciate all of your patience during this process.

HOUSING UPDATE: MUNISING
The infrastructure buildout is currently underway at the Wetmore reservation for six tiny homes and the tiny homes are being developed in a warehouse downstate. The estimated time of completion for this project is still early Fall. We are really hoping to get keys in some of our members hands before the holidays so they have a new beginning to celebrate with. This is an exciting time and we hope that we don't run into any huge delays. Put your asemma down and prayers up that we can get some folks in need housed before the winter months.

An update to the Wetmore reservation, as I mentioned in my last report, there are roughly 10 acres undeveloped on the existing reservation. Housing is using some of the remaining ARPA money to have engineering plans designed to increase our housing on that property. That is currently going out for bid, then from there, we can begin building it into the Sault Tribe Housing Plan to get future development on the Wetmore reservation.

The next and final goal is to begin moving past HUD housing and diversifying the reservation for people who want to stay and be a part of the community. We are a tribe, and just because someone is able to get on their feet shouldn't mean that they have to move out of low-income housing. We need to diversify our housing portfolio across the tribe to allow people to remain in their community and not be forced out if they go a dollar over the income requirements. Yes, low income is some of our most important needs in the tribe, but more and more we are hearing of people just getting on their feet and being forced to find housing outside of our reservations where housing is also extremely scarce and far beyond what they can afford. We are a tribe and need to keep our people together whenever we can and allow people to move home. Again, this is a long-term issue and something that we need to begin to address.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES UPDATE
We are still waiting for confirmation of a new hire for the Unit 5 Culture Coordinator position.



In the meantime, we are going to start moving forward with scheduling a few activities. Keep an eye out. We will begin announcing them very soon. We just need to confirm with our knowledge keepers on some dates and times, and go from there.

The Elders in Marquette did move forward with another presentation by Jim Paquette. It will be held on Sept. 20 at the Marquette Community Center at 204 Cherry Creek Rd. from 1 to 3 p.m. This presentation will focus on "Discovering the Ancient Caribou Hunters of Silver Lake." This event is open to all. We will have snacks and refreshments available, and it will provide you with an opportunity to come check out our new center. No registration required. Just show up.

ADVOCACY
While much of my time in July and August was spent hopping between powwows and community events, September will bring quite a bit of work on the advocacy front. First, I will be attending the NIHB's National Tribal Health Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. Here I will be connecting and networking with Native public health professionals from across the country, as well as federal agencies. It's important to continue to have a solid understanding of the current impact law and policy is having nationwide, both to prepare and prevent issues from happening at home, and to advocate at the national

level.

Towards the end of September, I will be attending the HHS STAC with Secretary Kennedy for a week. Here I will be able to meet with and consult with each of HHS' division directors, as well as the Secretary himself. This is one of the most important positions to be in, especially with the rapidly changing environment of HHS and the policy coming down. We were able to protect many tribal rights through our advocacy with Secretary Kennedy prior to the One Big Beautiful Bill being passed, and I will continue to advocate fiercely to protect our rights as tribes, and the health and well-being of our people.

The NIHB is a great precursor to our meeting with the Secretary and will help provide a lot of context to my talking points. Representing the entire Bemidji Area, I also like to reach out to other tribes and inter-tribal organizations to get solid data points to further strengthen my arguments at this important meeting. So far, Secretary Kennedy has lived up to his promises for Indian Country, and it's my job to continue to be loud and advocate for us as a people. I will continue to be optimistic and hopeful that we will continue to be heard.

ELDERS
The next Munising Elder meeting and meal will be held on Thursday, Sept. 4 from 11 a.m.

to 1 p.m. at the Munising Tribal Health Center Community Room. If you are an Elder ages 60-plus and living in Unit 5, you are welcome to show up and attend. New faces are always welcomed.

The next Marquette Elder meeting and meal will be held on Thursday, Sept. 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Marquette. If you are an Elder ages 60-plus residing in Units 4 or 5 in the Marquette County area, you are welcome to show up and attend. New faces are always welcomed. We are a few months out from moving on over to our new community center. Once opened, we will be sure to reach out to everyone and notify them of the location change. Katie is also looking for potential caterers to bring in to cook for you. If you know of any, please reach out. We are compiling a list and the Elders will get to decide.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss something with me, please use my contact information below. You can also reach out to Unit 4/5 Liaison Mary Jenerou at mjenerou@saulttribe.net or (906) 450-7011 or (906) 341-8469.

Chi Miigwech,
Tyler Migizii Migwan
LaPlaut
Unit 5 Director/Vice-Chairman
tlaplaunt@saulttribe.net
(906) 440-8294

Transparency in tribal governance is a must



AARON PAYMENT
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

At 17, I decided I wanted to make myself useful to our tribe and our people. In the time I was raised by my grandmother, I learned a traditional teaching of knowing the difference between right and wrong and the obligation to do what's right. This instilled in me a strong ethical core which I have strived to put to good use as an elected tribal official.

Despite being a high school dropout, I went on to earn a bachelor's degree, then a master's in Public Administration to learn about good governance over politics. My first master's is similar to a master's in Business Administration but focused on public policy and government administration. It is the degree most policy analysts and legislative staffers earn. While I considered a law degree at University of Michigan, I went the PhD route in Political Science at Michigan State University and completed my coursework but did not write my dissertation as I got elected

to the board and dedicated my efforts to cleaning up the corruption I found once elected. I did go on to earn two more master's in Administration and a doctorate. My goal all along was to learn as much as I could to serve our people.

When first elected to the board, I was shocked to learn of the widespread nepotism and cronyism. It was way worse than you can imagine. In my first year on the board, I discovered that some were hired in top positions with no job posting and no job descriptions. Too often, nepotism meant that some got raises of up to 30% annually while the average raise was 3%. Recall the race car, the \$1 million barge purchase with no vote of the board, and routinely giving away 50% ownership of tribal companies with no money down from business partners. I'd be surprised if there weren't kickbacks as you don't just give away 50% ownership. I am proud that I have spent my career exposing this kind of corruption. Still, I recognize this upsets the apple cart and makes me a threat. Watch for retribution for even mentioning it here.

To this day, the tribe still does not have a real Conflict of Interest or Ethics Code. The current "Ethics Resolution" was designed to remove a board member who was exposing corruption. With no standing in Tribal Court to bring a cause of action against a corrupt government, tribal citizens are left to the benevolence of the board to protect our assets. This should not be a discretionary board decision. Without a separation of powers, and no mecha-

nism to hold the governing body accountable, you can expect the worst as our current form of government breeds it.

Recall on election night in 2004, when \$3 million was spent to payout so-called "severances" for individuals who were not actually fired? This expenditure occurred from budgets that did not exist. In 2010, we saw an expenditure of over \$300,000 for a bankruptcy attorney not related to the tribe with checks cut under \$50,000 to avoid tribal board detection. Just what has the board enacted to prevent this from happening again?

If there is no consequence, you can anticipate it will continue. This was evident in 2021, when the former EDC executive fractionated disbursement vouchers of a total cost over \$80,000 to less than \$30,000 to avoid detection from the board. When Accounting brought this to me, I reported it to the board. Tribal Legal, the government CEO and the tribal CFO determined this to be a gross violation of policy. Still, no discipline or remediation occurred. This is like giving permission for it to happen again.

TRANSPARENCY WITH FEDERAL FUNDS?

I was not in office when the so-called investigation related to the modular home took place (total cost greater than \$80,000). However, I was supplied with a copy of the final report before I returned to office, which acknowledges the purchase happened outside of any policies or procedures using federal Cares Act funds. Prior to the purchase of this modular home gifted to

a non-Sault Tribe individual, I alerted tribal Legal and the board to caution them that no such purchase should occur without first establishing eligibility criteria like Sault Tribe membership, low income need, ownership of the property in which to place the modular home, etc. As I understand it, none of these criteria or any other known criteria were used. I have my original emails sent to tribal Legal to prove that before the purchase was made, that eligibility criteria needed to be established to comply with federal Cares Act regulations. The purchase was made anyway and no one was held accountable. The reason I was given for not prosecuting was that the EDC executive erased his emails prior to leaving employment. This is an excuse, not a valid reason.

At the Aug. 5, 2025, tribal board meeting, I requested copies of all communications with the U.S. Treasury or any other federal entity regarding this matter, as it appears to be a misappropriation of funds over \$50,000 or larceny by conversion, which are both federal crimes under federal jurisdiction. I am not aware that any report was ever done to the BIA Criminal Investigator or FBI, which is the normal course in handling such situations.

To make matters worse, I understand that the beneficiary of the \$80K modular home is not a Sault Tribe member. Whether or not this is a matter of political patronage should have no bearing on and should not prohibit an investigation by a federal agency or prosecuted if a crime occurred.

FORENSIC AUDIT

Rather than a defensive response, the board of directors should vote to compel an independent forensic audit of this situation and any other for which allegations related to the governing body are made. If we existed in a government with a true separation of powers, an attorney general or solicitor would have the requisite authority to investigate and hold accountable anyone who would steal from our tribe. As I noted above, I was supplied with a copy of the modular home report while out of office so I am not revealing any confidential or closed items to which I was privy as a board member.

Sharing the information herein does not violate any client-based confidentiality as the \$80,000 expenditure occurred outside of any program and services criteria. The next step should be to turn over the investigation and cooperate with federal investigative officials to prosecute.

SEPARATION OF POWERS UPON US?

Next month, I will detail the need for a separation of powers constitutional amendment, which after 18 years of waiting may finally come to fruition. We have heard excuse after excuse after excuse ad nauseum. It's time to move forward as there are NO GOOD REASONS not to proceed, only thinly disguised EXCUSES to retain unitary and unchecked power.

Tribal Members, please take Care and love yourself, your family and your Tribe!

Chi McGwitch, ~ Aaron
Phone: (906) 440-8946
aaPayment@saulttribe.net

Reporting on board travel, tribe's Golf Classic



ISAAC MCKECHNIE
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

Public statement regarding FOIA board travel report

The recent release of the FOIA report detailing board of directors' travel expenses is an important step in maintaining transparency and accountability within our tribe. These records reflect reimbursements for official duties — including attendance at board meetings, workshops, elder gatherings, community events, state and national advocacy meetings, and conferences that directly impact our governmental operations and member services.

Each travel entry is documented in accordance with our established policies and approved budgets, and all expenditures are subject to oversight and audit. Travel is undertaken to represent

the tribe's interests, advocate for our sovereignty, secure funding, strengthen intergovernmental relationships, and address community needs.

We welcome the community's review of these records and remain committed to openness in how your elected leaders conduct tribal business. Our goal is to ensure every trip serves a purpose that benefits the membership as a whole.

Below is the FOIA-documented travel reimbursement total for each board member:

- Austin Lowes – \$29,026.71
- Aaron Payment – \$12,973.73
- Kim Gravelle – \$1,603.62
- Isaac McKechnie – \$15,339.05
- Mike McKerchie – \$17,669.26
- Robert McRorie – \$17,128.72
- Bridgett Sorenson – \$42,739.48
- Shaun Borowicz – \$5,357.78
- Kim Lee – \$28,253.66
- Lana Causley – \$5,609.71
- Larry Barbeau – \$22,077.03
- Kim Hampton – \$28,467.30
- Tyler LaPlaunt – \$72,865.03
- Total Board Travel Expenditures: \$299,111.08

While some of these expenditures reflect necessary representa-

tion of the tribe, others raise concerns about whether the privilege of elected office is being used for personal benefit rather than the collective good. As leaders, we must be vigilant in ensuring travel decisions are both justified and in the best interest of all members. Transparency is not just about releasing numbers — it's about holding ourselves accountable to the people we serve.

2025 Sault Tribe Golf Classic Highlights

- 24th Annual Event
- Hosted in summer 2025 with 32 registered teams, making it one of the best-attended years to date
- \$117,000 raised through sponsorships, with contributions from tribal enterprises, local businesses, and individual donors
- Features included:
 - Corporate sponsor recognition packages
 - Hole-in-one competitions, raffles, and team prizes
 - A banquet dinner and awards ceremony recognizing scholarship recipients and top-performing teams.

"The energy at this year's Classic was incredible. You could feel the pride and purpose in every team that came out."

Sponsorship and Community Engagement

The Golf Classic offers multiple levels of sponsorship, includ-

ing:

- Title Sponsors
- Hole Sponsors
- Team Sponsors
- In-kind Donations (merchandise, raffle items, etc.).
- Sponsors receive:
 - Public recognition at the event
 - Inclusion in press releases and social media
 - A direct role in supporting the education of tribal youth.

"Our sponsorship isn't just about visibility—it's about giving back to the people who've supported us all along."

Long-Term Vision

The Sault Tribe Board of Directors and event organizers are committed to growing the Educational Trust Fund beyond \$2 million, increasing the number and size of scholarships in coming years. The Golf Classic is central to that mission and a testament to the Tribe's commitment to investing in the next generation.

"This is more than a tournament—it's a legacy of hope, education, and community strength."

Respectfully,
Isaac McKechnie
imckechnie@saulttribe.net
(906) 440-6661

MOVING?

When you move, let us know where you are headed! That way you won't miss one issue of your tribal paper.



Call (906) 632-6398 or email slucas@saulttribe.net.

Unit 3 director reports on Lansing meetings



**BRIDGETT SORENSON,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

On July 14, many of the board and chair met with our lobbyist in Lansing as well as a few state departments providing updates in their areas. In the evening we held a membership meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. There were about 40 tribal members who attended.

Some of the member concerns were wanting to be able to learn and participate in cultural activities such as language and crafts, the lack of communication, and services or opportunities that are available to them such as access to health care. The chair gave many updates on divisions of the tribe, our businesses and new projects. The members were very grateful that the board and staff traveled down to meet with them.

On July 15, we held our meeting in Lansing as well. There were a few campaigning resolutions on this agenda that were specific to the area and at large. I absolutely hate it when people try to prey on people's emotions for votes.

The board voted to approve changes to the Purchasing Policy, granting an internal loan so that the EDC could remodel 42 homes at Sawyer Village in Gwinn. This is partially financed by the Housing Authority loaning \$1.5 million for 10 years at 5% interest to the EDC. There was a MOU

with Mackinac County approved that will provide an easement to our Savard property where we are doing infrastructure work for our future housing site in St. Ignace. The 2025, Health Division budget finally approved for almost \$65 million. Dr. Madam Saluja (former LSSU professor) was re-appointed to our Internal Audit Committee.

There was a resolution to appoint me to another term on the HUD TIAC that turned into a circus for about 40 minutes. To be clear, I did not ask to be appointed initially a few years ago, as the chair of the Housing Commission, I was asked to. The board at that time voted for me to be appointed.

There was some confusion, so it did not make the July 1 agenda deadline. I talked to Austin about getting it added and he said he would ask without objection when the agenda was read on July 1. The meeting began and he did not ask without objection but rather did a roll call and conveniently a couple of board members were out of the room and one voted "no," so there were not nine votes to get it added. I was later told that it was said if the resolution passed the chair wouldn't sign it. This is not acceptable, you don't get that choice but Aaron as chair did that a few times and the vice chair signed instead.

So, during that discussion at the meeting it was all over the place with Aaron saying that was supposed to be his seat because he helped create the TIAC, now Austin wanted the appointment because as chair he ranks higher than me and then he even wanted to list his resume and have a trivia contest with me. Never has this happened before with any board member's appointment; many times we don't even get a say in who is getting appointed. The vote finally took place with me being the TIAC representative

and Austin being the alternate. This still needs to be voted on by HUD, as my seat expires in December.

I will say that I did call out Austin prior to the July 1 start of the meeting as well as during the Lansing workshop. So apparently, that was my payback. He also confronted me in Lansing during the day while we happen to both be exiting our respective bathrooms and I was thanking Tyler for his professionalism. Austin says to me, "What kind of ice cream did you have with Senator Slotkin?" I had no idea what he was talking about so when we both returned to the room, I asked him what he was talking about. He said weren't you getting your nails done and getting ice cream that night, we were supposed to meet with Senator Slotkin? I said yes, I did see your girlfriend as we were both there at the same time getting our nails done and yes, I did see you taking a picture of me while I was leaving the Alpine Chocolate place in the Soo. He said that meeting was on your calendar, I said and I met with Senator Slotkin earlier in the day in St. Ignace where she held a community meeting. He said that was because of your job and what did you say to her. I said regardless I did meet with her and discuss my concerns with her. I asked how many other board members attended, he started naming staff and maybe four board members. So why was my attendance so important when a majority of the board didn't meet with her at all and at least I made an effort to see her earlier in the day.

The other big discussion of the night was the Constitution. It was decided that the Legal Department will work on a two-branch government and a three-branch government and the members will be able to decide which they prefer.

I do want to touch on the

issue of the board travel that was released due to a FOIA. I personally have nothing to hide and always write when I do attend a conference. This number also includes the weekly travel to workshops and meetings in the Soo. Since a majority of the meetings happen in the Soo, the others in Units 2, 3, 4 and 5 have to travel to the Soo.

When I travel for the HUD TIAC, my travel is paid for through the federal government. Sometimes if I attend a conference on behalf of Housing, the Housing Authority pays that out of its budget. I have for the past few years also attended NCAI (National Congress of American Indians), Self-Governance as well as G2E (Gaming) held in Las Vegas.

I enjoy attending the workshops and learning what other tribes or casinos are doing. I spent 10 years working in the Shores Casino before getting elected. Aaron says he doesn't see the value in it for board members. I disagree, it is our number one revenue source. I have an interest in business, that is what my degree is in. So, some have different interest or specialties, that should be a good thing.

There have been comments of some going to Vegas twice in one month. Last year, NCAI and G2E were both held there in October. October is a huge convention month and many conventions are held in Las Vegas. I have also heard some stories of things that happen on trips. I am nobody's babysitter. I can only account for my own actions. What is comical is those who act like they are saints, when clearly, they are not.

I do know that when I first got on the board, Aaron brought forward a similar resolution out of spite and it passed and a board member had to pay their travel back. I am sorry I was used in that maneuver. I just know if the majority of the board votes on

individuals' travel, that it will boil down to when a person is liked by a majority or not.

I am definitely not opposed to discussing travel, or providing a report, because like I said, I write about it in my unit report. What does bother me is those who did things and now want to judge others that go for the right reasons. The travel resolution has been referred to a workshop.

At the Aug. 5 meeting the board passed a resolution to use transportation dollars to purchase vehicles to provide tribal members rides to wellness. Stay tuned to the newspaper and or website/Facebook for more information. The drug court asked and received \$500,000 out of the opioid settlement dollars for the Healing Court. There were several resolutions to clean up different code chapters pertaining to the EDC. The EDC will be separated further with the board operating like the Gaming Authority over the casinos.

We will soon be doing interviews for the CEO, Kewadin CFO and Government CFO. Many team members are working to fill these currents gaps. The CIO began working at the beginning of the month.

A quick update on the St. Ignace housing projects, we are currently clearing the Savard parcel of timber and then will begin phase 1 of that project. Across the road on our other property the old house and buildings will be demolished and tree damage from the ice storm will be cleaned up on Boundary Rd.

I am working with some others to plan a Boarding School Survivor Walk on Sept. 30 for Orange Shirt Day, at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture. Times and agenda in the next report.

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, bridgett91@yahoo.com or (906) 430-0536.

Always get both sides of any story you hear



**MICHAEL MCKERCHE,
DIRECTOR, UNIT I**

As our tribe continues to move forward in replacing several vacant key positions, we recently hired a new Chief Information Officer, William Travitz, and a new General Counsel, Ryan Mills. We still have several openings as we try and re-build our tribe's executive team and we continue to do interviews. I will continue to express my concerns and provide guidance on how the board interacts with key employees/any employees, as we still do not have a constitutional amend-

ment to separate the board from our court system.

Why does that matter? Right now, the board has full authority over everything. Some things would require us to change law and prevent interference but many things still need more protection. There has been some discussion on changing tribal law to allow our courts to hear constitutional issues that impact our members. I fully support this. It won't be a perfect system as whatever the board gives it can take away, as we've seen in the past with voiding special elections and nullifying constitutional appointments. But it's a start until an amendment passes that allows for a two-branch government of the board and the courts.

You will hear many sides of this argument of what our tribe needs to move forward and what system works best; two-branch vs. three-branch. Many members will automatically think three-branch, as that is what has been taught to us since elementary, but I disagree. First and foremost, we are a tribe; and as such many tribes have opted for one-branch

government of the council. That style of government can and has worked for many tribes, but it can also lead to corruption and abuse of power that our tribe has seen first-hand. Three-branch government will only lead to the executive branch fighting the legislative branch and the court system bombarded with lawsuits.

Several Midwest tribes have gone to a three-branch and many others have a two-branch system; I urge you to contact others and do some digging. Those that have gone to three-branch style are feeling the effects and are in constant state of bickering back and forth and many issues have to go in front of judges because councils and chiefs get so tangled and can't agree on how to move forward that it bogs down the court system. We have enough of that that we don't need more. But members do need protection from the board, from bad decisions, politically motivated decisions, decisions that are based on personal gain, and from unlawful employee terminations.

The "good ole' boys club" of years past cannot continue to

plague our tribe. No one board or even group of members have control nor can they make decisions outside of a duly called meeting for all the members to see and weigh in on. Next year's election is fast approaching and campaign season will be in full swing. Hold your leaders accountable and

make sure your voice continues to be heard. As always, I urge members to get involved, join a committee, attend events when you can, and get both sides of a any story you hear.

Please reach out to me to discuss issues. I can be reached at (906) 440-7768. Chi Miigwech.

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Recovering stolen trailer on my own time, dime



SHAWN BOROWICZ,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III
Boozhoo,

Before any rumors get started as they do in this tribe, I'm going to explain the stolen trailer incident from the Shore's casino site. A 1-year-old tandem axle

enclosed trailer was stolen from our casino that was used mainly in Shipping and Receiving. Everyone was notified of the incident and a police report was made and sometime later insurance paid for the purchase of a new trailer.

Several weeks later the Sidney Ohio police department contacted us and stated they recovered our stolen trailer. There was talk of going to get it, leaving it there for them to auction off since insurance bought us a new one, or who was going to get it and how were the details going to be worked out with pay, per diem, hotel rooms and etc.

Since we were having our Lansing meeting I volunteered to go pick up the trailer free of charge to the tribe since I was down that way. I drove over 3

hours into Ohio and recovered our property free of charge to the tribe and then drove 10 hours back to St. Ignace. My point to this story is I cleared this with our CFO and our director of Insurance before doing this and I just didn't freelance — I had permission beforehand. Since we are self-insured and actually pay our own losses, it only made sense to go pick up our property. Again, I would like to state I used my own truck, my own fuel, my own time and nothing was charged to the tribe in anyway to recover this property.

When I was first elected to this board, I made a promise to not cover up any wrong doings and within the first several months when some expected me to vote to cover up some election irregularities, I did not vote their way.

I've always tried to vote with the best interest of the tribal members involved and will continue to do so. This tribe has entered into a lot of contracts over the years, and one in particular was mutually agreed upon, signed and executed. Sometime later the contract was violated by the other party and notice was sent and unanimously agreed upon by this board. I'm not covering or sweeping this contract under the rug, this money needs to be paid back to the members since the violations occurred, it's as simple as that. Certain people will blow smoke and say it has to be a big investigation, no it does not, it was a contract, again voluntarily signed by both parties and I kind of felt this would be blown out of proportion and some would say the investigation would cost

money, hence the clause was added that if an investigation occurs those monies will be paid by the other party and not the tribe. Honor the contract, plain and simple.

My other travel resolution was tabled and will be added to workshop within 60 days to be discussed further. As stated numerous times, this was not put in place with any particular BOD member. I attempted to add it because I feel the members should know where their money is being spent. We need to be more transparent in all departments as to where the money is going and if it is being spent for worthwhile causes with the benefits to our members at the forefront. Until next time.

sborowicz@saulttribe.net
(906) 430-7612 or (906) 379-8511

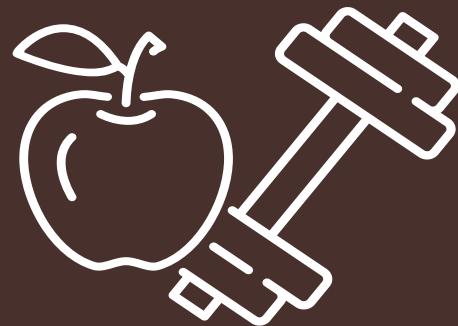


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