



**MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR
NATIVE AMERICAN AWARENESS, INC.**

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MCNAA TurtleTalk: January–March 2023

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING AT MCNAA

MCNAA RECEIVES GRANT FROM MASS. CULTURAL COUNCIL

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.



We are delighted to report that the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA), is the recipient of a “Cultural Sector Recovery for Organizations grant” from the Mass Cultural Council. Notification of the \$13,020 award was received on February 2, 2023.

Thanks to vigorous advocacy from the cultural sector, the state legislature again showed strong, bipartisan support for the Mass Cultural Council, including a \$60.1 million one-time appropriation to assist artists and cultural organizations, like MCNAA, with COVID recovery needs.

We are very fortunate to have these funds for general operating support but please know that by receiving this small grant, it does not mean that MCNAA no longer needs your support. On the contrary. We need financial help for our other programs that are not funded (scholarships, cultural arts, social change initiatives, etc.) So please, don't let this good news stop you from giving to MCNAA. ■

*May the stars carry your sadness away
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty.
May hope forever wipe away your tears.
And above all, may silence make you strong.
- Chief Dan George*

MCNAA HOLDS VIRTUAL TALKING CIRCLE

by Anthony SkyHawk, Board Member. Photo by Claudia Fox Tree



On February 25, 2023, MCNAA held a Virtual Talking Circle, its first of the new year. Despite being held at 10 AM on a Saturday morning, there were a number of participants eagerly looking forward to this opportunity to share freely in a safe space where everything spoken stays within the Circle and is not spoken or repeated outside the Circle. Although most in attendance knew one another, many hadn't connected in person for a very long time.

People were invited to share anything that was important to them, including struggles and concerns, as well as positive things that they were doing. Many of the participants were also able to share activities and events that were going on in their area of Indian country. Unless they chose not to, everyone in the Circle was given the opportunity to speak with no interruption. For many, this was a great opportunity to stay connected throughout the continuing pandemic. ■

MCNAA BOARD MEETING

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member. Photo by Claudia Fox Tree

On Saturday, February 25, 2023, after the virtual Talking Circle, a meeting of the board of directors was held. The purpose of the meeting was to get a financial update on the organization. Since Kim, MCNAA board treasurer, was absent from the meeting due to a prior engagement, Tony and Burne gave specific details and updates on the financial picture of the organization showing good-standing and financial health. ■



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE OFFICE!

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.

* With Covid-19 still in the forefront of our minds, we remain reluctant to fully open our doors to visitors, including walk-ins. However, over the past several months, we began to loosen up a little and allowed for a few visits in the office with a number of allies who scheduled time to visit and connect us.

* Through our Social Assistance Program, we continued to assist needy Native families and Elders with food and utility bills. For the past several years, we have found that families, and especially the Elders, need help not only with heating bills but in some cases with other bills such as electricity, cable & wifi, water bills, cell phone service, furnace and/or water heater repairs, gasoline to run their vehicles, etc. We were able to help a little in this way.

* Through our Scholarship & Educational Resources Program, we provided culturally sensitive mentoring and vital resources, wrote letters of recommendation and offered other support to our college students during the current 2023 Spring semester.

* We explored new grant opportunities as well as submitted impact reports for current grants.

* We responded to requests for guidance and information as well as to many requests from organizations and civic groups for speakers/presenters.

* We worked on routine tasks – bookkeeping & account reconciliations, composed & e-mailed donation receipt letters, processed membership renewals, attended informational & training webinars, responded to general e-mail inquiries, updated our website and facebook pages, etc. ■



SALEM FILM FEST 2023

We are happy to report that for the second year, the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) was a community partner with Salem Film Fest 2023 which took place in-person on Thursday, March 23 through Sunday, March 26.



Film screenings and events, with visiting filmmakers, were held at various North Shore locations that included Cinema Salem, the Cabot Theatre, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the National Park Service Visitor Center. Many of the films screened this year were seen in Massachusetts for the first time, with seven films making their U.S. premiere. A favorite was a film on the Native American experiences in San Francisco called Town Destroyer. It's about controversy that erupts over images of African American slaves and Native Americans in New Deal-era murals at George Washington High School in San Francisco, leading to a passionate

outpouring of activism and opinions about art, history, and racial reckoning in America. A virtual festival of films began to stream on March 27 thru April 2 for those who were unable to attend in person. MCNAA received 10 complementary vouchers that were shared among board, advisory council, and MCNAA members. ■

HEATING ASSISTANCE FOR NATIVE FAMILIES

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.

As you might remember, the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) received a small grant to help needy Elders and Native families pay specifically for their heating bills this winter.



In efforts to spread the word about the funds ending at the end of April 2023, we sent out an e-mail reminding constituents to contact us, before the deadline, if they were experiencing temporary financial hardship and needed help paying their heating bill. In addition, we posted the information on social media. As you can imagine, through e-mails, social media and then word of mouth from recipients who received help, a huge batch of requests came in. We are pleased to say that all funds for this season have now been expended. We are elated that we were able to help so many of our Elders and Native families across the Commonwealth.

Here's what some of our needy Native constituents said about their situation:

** I sent in the form for my heating bill. Thank you for having this program available to native folks. I'm moving at the end of summer. It's too expensive here.*

** Temporarily, I am having a problem with my heat and electric bill. I was overwhelmed by the increase in my oil bill when I received 200 gallons of oil and the cost was \$1,041.00 which is now paid and then the next bill was lower but still \$890.00. I have been paying catch up until now. I am in need of 100 gallons of oil and any help you can give me towards my electric bill. Any help would be greatly appreciated.*

** I know I say this each time but good grief! I don't know how people - especially seniors - manage to pay these astronomical rates without help. Thank you for easing the burden.*

** Honestly, I don't know how they expect people on fixed incomes to pay these rates! I'm very thankful that MCNAA has this funding available. ♥♥*

** I could use help with my gas bill with Eversource. It's more than I expected this winter. Can I get help through your program? Please help if you can.*

** I am writing to determine if MCNAA can provide any assistance with my electric bill and/or groceries. I know that within the community the needs are greater than ever. I would appreciate any assistance you can provide. Thank you for your help and dedication to the community. ■*

OTHER NEWS & INFORMATION

WAMPANOAG ARTISTS FEATURED IN STATE HOUSE EXHIBIT

Excerpts from The Enterprise Newspaper article written by Alex Mergerle - Feb. 2, 2023.

A reception at the Massachusetts State House in Boston on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 honored four Mashpee Wampanoag artists—Natasha Frye, Nelson Andrews Jr., Hartman Deetz and Robert Peters—whose artwork was featured in the Senate Chamber.

Danielle Greendeer, owner of the Wampanoag Trading Post and Gallery in Mashpee Commons, where several of the artists display their work, told the Enterprise the event is the first time any Mashpee Wampanoag artist has been featured in the State House.



Front row (l-r), David Pocknett, Cheenulka Pocknett and Attain Pocknett of the Red Hawk Singers. Top row (l-r) Michael Bobbitt, Robert Peters, unidentified person, Senator Susan Moran, Natasha Frye, Hartman Deetz, Elijah Revolorio-Frye, and Danielle Greendeer.

State Senator Susan L. Moran sponsored the exhibit and reception, and Mr. Peters curated the exhibit, which was titled “We Are Still Here.”

Mr. Peters said he has had a knack for art since he was in school but did not begin pursuing it professionally until the 1990s when he was working for the Mass Bay Transportation Authority. He wanted the exhibit to be a representation of his tribe and to bring attention to the Mashpee Wampanoag’s rich tradition in contemporary art as well as their issues and needs. He said the U.S. government system was based on how indigenous people governed themselves and that he hopes the exhibit will be a step toward the tribe one day being represented on Beacon Hill. He called the exhibit a “little deal but a big deal” — a small thing that carries a lot of weight.

Sen. Moran also expressed a desire for the artwork to draw attention where it is needed. “In receiving this generous opportunity from the Senate President’s Office, I felt there was an opportunity to not just highlight a local artist but to highlight an underserved community,” she said in a press release. “By placing these powerful works of art in the Senate Gallery, we will encourage senators from all over the state to gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing indigenous people in the region and across the state.” ■

MASHPEE WAMPANOAG PRE-DOCTORAL DIVERSITY FELLOWS ATTEND THE 2023 EASTERN NURSING RESEARCH SOCIETY CONFERENCE

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.



L-R Chyla Bingham-Hendricks and Autaquay Peters-Mosquera.

The 2023 Eastern Nursing Research Society (ENRS) Conference was held at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown from Thursday, March 23, 2023 – Friday, March 24, 2023. This was the first year enrolled Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Members, Chyla Bingham-Hendricks and Autaquay Peters-Mosquera, attended. Both are Pre-Doctoral Diversity Fellows at U Mass Chan Medical School in Worcester, MA. As part of their participation in the conference, they created, set up a huge poster and gave a presentation on “*The Role Nurses Can Play in Addressing and Preventing the Prevalence of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).*” The conference was a great opportunity for them to learn about as well as address determinants of health through nursing science. It’s great to see these two young ladies pursue such a meaningful career. ■

NATIVE PRESENTERS ARTICLE ON THEIR RECENT ACTIVITIES

Coordinated by Erin McCormack, Advisory Council Member.

While staff at MCNAA was occupied behind the scenes throughout 2022, some of our Native friends were out in public spreading awareness around the state about Native American culture and issues. Fall of 2022 was a very busy time for presenters. More towns are celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day in October. November brought both National Native American Heritage Month as well as National Day of Mourning. We reached out to Annawon, Claudia and Larry, some of our busiest friends, and asked if they would be willing to share some of their recent activities and experiences. Both virtually and in-person, they have really been getting around! Read what each of them shared with us.”

1. ANNAWON WEEDEN, Mashpee Wampanoag Educator
First Light Foundation - <https://firstlightfoundation.setmore.com/>

Fun Film Experience: This past year I was invited to Virginia to film my first comedic role in “By George”, soon to be released. It seems documentaries and historically accurate roles are all I’ve ever been given, which can be burdensome. Creating culturally appropriate films are often jeopardized by editors who determine the final product without cultural considerations or consent. Working on “By George” was actually the first time I had fun filming.

Removing Reed’s Redface: Following filming in Virginia this past February, I immediately set out on my cross-country drive to remove Reed’s Redface from Riverside. For those unaware, a teacher named Candace Reed had been depicting our culture in horrific fashion throughout her entire career teaching a calculus lesson at John W North High School located in Riverside CA. Her racist rants were depicted in the high school yearbook over a decade. Fortunately footage of her bigotry finally went viral. It’s our duty to stand up for ourselves and more importantly stand up to support our tribal youth. Despite no sleep for the entire drive and a freak blizzard that occurred the moment I crossed the Texas border into New Mexico, Creator allowed me to make the meeting, share some words and ultimately remove the teacher permanently, by committee decision to terminate her from teaching at RUSD anymore.

Return to Classrooms: This past year I finally returned to classrooms abroad, in person once again. Spending time with our future generations has always been central to all I do. Working with staff & faculty also allows our indigenous teachings to reach far more for future generations to benefit as well. Personally, I was not willing to contribute to the excessive online content many of our youth were overexposed to during the pandemic. A screen cannot convey our culture as clearly.

Wampanoag Experience Immersive project: As many may know, building our traditional architecture is a time-sensitive seasonal-specific process – a short window to make so much



happen. I was honored to be asked to construct a wigwag for our greater community of New Bedford/Dartmouth MA at Round the Bend (RtB) farm, together with my colleagues Peter Crawley (Satoria Consulting) and longtime friend Desa VanLarhoven (Director RtB). This was actually the fastest I’ve ever built a wigwag.

Tremendous support was garnered from the many public participants who helped peel poles and allow construction of the entire frame in just one day. Participants

were invited again to return to RtB farm to place the bark strips they had peeled onto the frame as ties. These ties were mainly made by families: two or three generations investing in our cultural preservation, connecting communities simply by constructing the wet8. There were well over 2,000 spectators for our inaugural event this past September, at the Grand Opening.

Upcoming Wampanoag Experience powwow: This year's event is scheduled to be held October 14, 2023 at Round the Bend Farm. For those interested in the Wampanoag Experience project and other opportunities to participate, please feel free to join our facebook page.

Construction at the Outer Cape at Highland House Museum located in Truro, MA: Groundbreaking and blessing of the land is scheduled to take place April 22, 2023 (Earth Day) at the Highland House location. All are welcome to attend and participate in prepping the land before construction begins on the wet8 & 3 Sisters Garden.

Mishoon Burn in Westport, MA: The town of Westport has also funded a mishoon burn that is also open to the public. Another "Wampanoag Experience" event, the mishoon burn is scheduled for mid- May at Town Farm located along the Westport River. Families are invited to attend with camping gear to help tend the fire and spend a night or the entire week with us as we work together with Westport to continue raising Massachusetts Native American Awareness.

Kutaputash (Thank You) ■

2. CLAUDIA FOX TREE, Native American Activist (Arawak)
<http://multiculturalinitiatives.blogspot.com/>

What are some of the events you've taken part in?

- UPstander Academy (faculty member on one of the days)
- Churches (Unitarian, Lexington, Melrose, etc.)
- Universities (Bentley, Lesley, New Mexico State University, Eastern Nazarene, etc.)
- Anti-Racism organizations (Maynard, Bedford, etc.)
- Book Groups
- Conferences
- Panels
- Libraries (Sharon, Belmont, Milton, Peabody, Lynnfield, Beverly, etc., too many to count, but they often grouped together)
- Jackie Battalora's "Freedom to Learn" conference

What themes/topics did you focus on this year?

My biggest theme is taking back the narrative and focusing on strategies to challenge bias and make Indigenous contributions visible. I ask questions like: What's it like to be invisible? What truths are missing from U.S. history? When stereotypes abound, how do we start to unlearn

misinformation? How do we develop awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Indigenous People? How do we dismantle the implicit bias we have grown up in?

How did you decide which events to take part in?

Some factors in my decision-making are apparent, like how far away and whether virtual or in-person. I have a complicated schedule, so timing is a huge limiting factor. I cannot do everything, so I decide based on whether it fits my schedule and is a topic I can speak on.

In addition, if folks want someone to talk about general topics, I'm all in, but I defer to local nations when it has to do with specifics about this land where I live or ceremonies on this land.

Were there new opportunities this year?

I got to work with Jacqueline Battalora, author of "Birth of a White Nation: The Invention of White People and Its Relevance Today". She had a mini-conference with affinity groups for folks to process what they were learning. It was based on "Freedom Summers," but she called it "Freedom to Learn Summer."

How far were you able and willing to travel?

Because I'm in a doctoral program, I was taking classes, but I was also setting aside time to read and write, so I was not willing to travel far due to my limited open time.

What was your best/most enjoyable or meaningful event?

I loved working with the Upstander Project. I'll be doing it again this summer. I mean, look at all these great people!



Claudia Fox Tree, Linda Coombs, Dina Giglio-Whitaker, and Endawnis Spears.

There's a great video on their site (I'm in it) and the application for this summer's academy. <https://upstanderproject.org/learn/upstander-academy>

What would you like to tell TurtleTalk readers about your experiences?

One of the most challenging events I had was at a house of worship. It was in November, and before I spoke, they had their traditional parts, including asking for healing prayers and saying thanks. One person after another talked about Thanksgiving, the observance/ holiday. Then I got up there and spoke about the misinterpretation of history and problems with Thanksgiving (and other things). It was awkward.

I'm happy that I have been asked to speak all year 'round, not just in November. ■

3. LARRY SPOTTED CROW MANN, Nipmuc
Ohketeau Cultural Center - Ohketeau.org

What are some of the events you've taken part in?

"Night of Ideas" at Harvard University, hosted by the French consulate.

Amherst College, MA

Cambridge Library, MA

UMass Amherst, MA

Travelers Insurance Company

Union College, NY

Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke, MA

Concord Academy, MA

Wellesley College, MA

Bryant College, MA



What themes/topics did you focus on this year?

Decolonization; Living Presence of Native Peoples; Native Writing and Poetry; Art for Social Justice; Environmental Awareness; Native Curriculum development; Storytelling; Music.

How far were you able and willing to travel?

As far as needed and commensurate within agreed upon contract.

What was your best/most enjoyable or meaningful event?

Sharing and inspiring youth to their full potential and creating new spaces for art and culture to flourish.

What is Ohketeau that you are involved with?

Ohketeau is the first and only native run and operated Indigenous Cultural Center in all of Central and Western MA. We are doing revolutionary life changing work across multiple disciplines. From place-based learning to outreach programs for the well-being of Indigenous peoples across Massachusetts and beyond. Ohketeau sits on 100 acres of the traditional homelands of the Pocumtuck and Nipmuc Peoples and works to uplift and support the First People of the land through various programs, residencies and apprenticeships. ■

EARTH DAY 2023

Earth Day is a celebration of the earth and our environment. It is a historical event that takes place every year on April 22nd. On Earth Day, we will remember how closely we are connected to the earth, as well as our responsibility to protect it

How to Get Involved in Earth Day 2023.

There are many ways you can celebrate Earth Day 2023. The most effective way to start is to become more aware of the environmental issues we face, and what you can do to help. The following are some ideas:



- As a society, we should make efforts to reduce our energy consumption at home as well as at work.
- It is critical that we encourage the development of renewable energy sources in the future.
- Instead of driving more often, you might want to consider carpooling, cycling, or walking more often.
- The next time you do some shopping, consider purchasing eco-friendly products.
- It is a great idea to recycle and compost as much as possible.
- Kids can learn beautiful Earth Day poems and can read them in front of the class. It will create self-confidence in them.
- Make a difference in the environment by volunteering or donating to environmental organizations.
- Teachers and parents can plan Earth Day activities at school or at home. It will create awareness among all kids to save the earth.
- The more you know about environmental issues, the more you can educate others about them.
- You can create a garden or plant trees in your yard.
- Students can write about Earth Day essay by participating in essay competition so that people become aware of this global event.
- On social media, you can raise awareness about Earth Day by using the hashtag #earthday2023. ■

SEEKING NATIVE AMERICAN/ALASKAN NATIVES/FIRST NATIONS/ INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.

My daughter Autaquay Peters-Mosquera and another tribal member Chyla Bingham-Hendricks are Pre-Doctoral Diversity Fellows at U Mass Medical School in Worcester. As



part of one of their assignments as a research team, they are looking to form a focus group that will discuss substance misuse, treatment, and prevention in our communities.

The couple, with the oversight of their professor as well as their PhD. Director, is seeking Native American/Alaskan Natives/First Nations/ Indigenous Peoples in Massachusetts to participate in the 1-2 hour zoom event to begin discussions. Participants must be 18+.

A specific date hasn't been determined yet but they hope to hold the zoom session either in April or May 2023. Participants will receive a \$50 gift card.

If you have any knowledge about substance abuse, treatment or prevention, please help these

young Native Fellows by joining the focus group. It's only for a couple hours! Please contact either one of them as soon as possible:

Chyla - chyla.bingham-hendricks@umassmed.edu or

Autaquay - autaquay.peters-mosquera@umassmed.edu

Please include your tribal affiliation and your geographical location in MA (ie: North Shore, Boston, South Shore/Cape Cod, Central MA, Western MA.)

FYI: MCNAA Board Member, Dawn Duncan, will be part of the North Shore Focus Group. ■

MCNAA'S MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM
BECOME A G.E.M. DONOR
(Give * Every * Month)

Last year, we received a small grant to help Native families and elders with heating bills during the winter season. However, the grant does not help with other program needs such as: scholarships for students; food for elders and families; cultural programs, social change events; and youth activities. Monthly donations are a sure way to help our organization receive recurring funds on a regular basis to help more families and/or to put towards some of these other important initiatives.

In the spirit of “paying it forward”, we invite you as well as large, medium, and small businesses, to become a GEM donor and help make a difference by joining the circle of monthly giving. We are a 34 year old, tax exempt organization that needs additional support throughout the year. Donations will be applied to either our college scholarship program, our social assistance-needy fund, or our social change/social justice initiatives.



If your heart speaks and you would like to support the organization this way, please go to your PayPal account and make a donation to the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness (or mcnaa@aol.com) then click “make this a monthly donation.” Or you can mail a check monthly to the organization at: MCNAA, ATTN: Monthly Giving Circle, 85 Constitution Lane, Suite 3-B1, Danvers, MA. Thank you. ■