



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

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MCNAA TurtleTalk: October–December 2022

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING AT MCNAA

**MEMBERS OF MCNAA'S LEADERSHIP TEAM & ADVISORY
COUNCIL PARTICIPATED IN NEWBURYPORT'S INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES DAY CELEBRATION**

by Anthony SkyHawk, Board Member - Photo by Bob Arcand

On October 8, 2022 MCNAA Board Member Claudia Fox Tree (pictured below) and Advisory Council Member Patricia Rocker participated in the Newburyport Indigenous People Day Celebration. Patricia was able set up a MCNAA information table for the public to sign up for general membership and answer any questions. In addition to the membership forms and program flyers, the table displayed an array of beautiful handmade Wampum jewelry as well as other crafts for sale made by well-known Native artisans throughout the New England area.



Claudia, an educator and a much sought after Indigenous presenter, was the main speaker at the event and received rave reviews. See comment below by Kristine Malpica, one of the event organizer's.

"Dear Burne and all, On behalf of myself and the Newburyport IP day coalition thank you so much for supporting our event! It was a wonderful day and a very moving and meaningful gathering on many levels!! Thanks to Patricia for hosting the MCNAA table and for all you do. Claudia's talk was wonderful also."

As most of MCNAA's Leadership Team members are still social distancing and not attending large in person events, we continue to keep our programs going by having a number of activities via zoom and other mediums. Therefore, we greatly appreciate Claudia and Patricia representing MCNAA and being there to answer any questions the public may have. ■

MCNAA DELIVERED CHRISTMAS/NIKKOMO GIFTS TO NEEDY NATIVE CHILDREN

by Anthony SkyHawk, Board Member

In the middle of December, MCNAA put together and delivered a large number of Christmas/Nikkomo toys and gifts to needy Native families. The toys, donated by a number of sources including Toys for Tots, were primarily listed for youth from 3 years old up to 12+, however we were able to find a few for a 2-year-old as well as a number for young teens up 15 and 16.



Because most of the families that reached out to us live quite a distance from MCNAA's office, we offered to deliver the gifts to their home. Although this took a bit more traveling and coordination, it turned out to be a very rewarding experience for us as the sincere gratitude that many of the families privately expressed was overwhelming. Many of our Native families are experiencing financial difficulties which become magnified during the holidays, particularly Christmas/Nikkomo, which are the most important holidays for children because of their expectations of a lot of gifts under the tree. We hope the toys helped fill that void this year. ■

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE OFFICE!

by Burne Stanley-Peters, Board Member.

With Covid-19 cases coming back into the news again, we have become more vigilant again about how to manage the office. Visits from members are scheduled in advance and then we meet folks outside while wearing face masks.

Providing services and operating our major programs have been our main focus over the last three months. Read below to see what we've been doing:



- * Through our Social Assistance Program, we assisted numerous needy Native families and Elders with food and utility bills.

- * Through our Scholarship & Educational Resources Program, we provided culturally sensitive guidance, vital resources, and other support to our college students during the 2022 Fall semester.

- * We explored more grant opportunities.

- * Responded to requests for guidance and information as well as to many requests from organizations and civic groups for speakers/presenters, especially during October and November.

- * Worked on routine tasks –bookkeeping & account reconciliations, wrote & e-mailed donation receipt letters, processed membership renewals, attended informational & professional development webinars, responded to general e-mail inquiries, updated our website and facebook pages, etc.

- * Board Member, Dawn Duncan, continues to sit on the on the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) Community Advisory Board (CAB). Her experience from a program development, policy, and public health perspective makes her the ideal MCNAA Board Member to provide input to this board. As we stated in early 2021, the goal of CAB is primarily to keep one another (tribal communities and Native non-profits) apprised as to what is going on as well as to hear from BSAS on new initiatives. They meet regularly every other Wednesday.

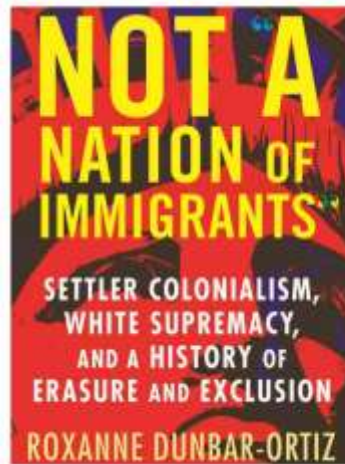
- * Board Member, Claudia Fox Tree, maintains a seat on Essex County Community Foundation's Racial Equity Committee. The purpose of the Committee, as is described by ECCF, is to advise their staff and trustees in its current and evolving racial equity strategy and hold them accountable for the actions needed to effectively bring about change. ■

MCNAA MEMBERS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE AT VIRTUAL BOOK DISCUSSION OF “NOT A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS” BY ROXANNE DUNBAR-ORTIZ

Article by Erin McCormack, Advisory Council Member

MCNAA Board Member, Claudia Fox Tree, and MCNAA Advisory Council Member, Erin McCormack, were invited to participate on a Zoom book discussion hosted by

Massachusetts Peace and Action (MAPA), over two dates, Oct. 22 and Nov 19, in recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day and National Native American Heritage month. The discussion centered on *Not a Nation of Immigrants* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, an ambitious and provocative retelling of American history, subtitled, *Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion*. Over a hundred participants signed up, including



readers from across the country and abroad. The book examines settler colonialism: how early Europeans came to this continent not as immigrants ready to join the preexisting Native cultures, but for the purpose of settling and spreading their own religions and cultures, developing justifications for taking over the land by violence or bad faith treaties.

Claudia Fox Tree spoke at the first session on the need to re-center Native history on this continent, to restore the science, engineering and land management practices that were used for thousands of years to the historical record. This history needs to be recognized and told here in the Western Hemisphere, as there are no other places on Earth where the cultures originated and can be traced, like Germany or China which still have a depository of history in their homelands. Claudia offered compelling examples of how renaming and re-branding has obscured so many of the Indigenous contributions, like the development of corn and potatoes, now major food staples around the world.

The second session focused on various ethnic groups' struggles to become accepted in America. Initially despised and mistreated, they assimilated into the dominant settler culture and in turn learned to look down on Black and Indigenous peoples. Andres Mares Moro, from El Paso, TX, spoke on the complex situation in the American Southwest and in California, where he was an activist with Cesar Chavez in the Mexican Farmworkers strike. For many with Hispanic backgrounds, the “border crossed them” in places their families had lived for generations. Some of the long-established Hispano families became colonized by the United States, although centuries before they had colonized the Indigenous Pueblos people. Andres spoke of how the

Mexican peoples, over centuries of intermarriage and assimilation, without sovereign status of reservations, lost their tribal affiliations, to become a blended people with little knowledge of their Indigenous roots.

Heather Leavell, co-founder of Italian Americans for Indigenous Peoples Day, presented a slide show explaining how poor and oppressed Italian immigrant settlers came to embrace Columbus Day as a symbol of acceptance into the dominant white, Protestant culture. Following the 1891 mass lynchings of Italian men in New Orleans, President Harrison created a holiday to placate the Italian government, which threatened war. Subsequently, Columbus was depicted as a courageous explorer, who brought European culture to the American continent, obscuring his record of violence and exploitation of the Arawak natives. Today, Italian Americans who have taken up anti-racism work, willing to correct the historical record, sometimes meet heated resistance from fellow Italian Americans who believe Columbus Day enshrines and protects their heritage and contributions to this country.

The sessions ended with “Myth of the Vanishing Indian” by poet Rena Priest, Lhaq’temish. Participants were offered a Resource List to learn more about issues of concern to Native Americans today. They were also urged to look at their own family’s experiences arriving in America, if non-native: how did these ancestors benefit from settler colonialism? MAPA welcomed participants to join their Indigenous Solidarity Group, focused on Indigenous Legislative Agenda, Free Leonard Peltier, Herring Pond Pine Barrens and Land Back movement – and urged them to learn about and support Native-led organizations in this area, such as MCNAA. ■



**MCNAA
VIRTUAL TALKING CIRCLE**

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, February 25, 2023 at 10am EST

For some of us, it's been a while since we've connected, so we would like to make space to share thoughts and feelings. Claudia

Fox Tree, MCNAA Board Member, will facilitate a Virtual Talking Circle for adults to share good news, struggles, or just listen in community.

Pre-registration is required as we are limiting participation so we can hear all voices!

For those interested in attending, please check our website in January 2023 for registration information (www.mcnaa.org) or e-mail our office for the registration form (mcnaa@aol.com) ■

OTHER NEWS & INFORMATION

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY–BEDFORD

Reprinted in part from Bedford Embraces Diversity's facebook post

What a wonderful way to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day in Bedford! On Saturday, October 8, 2022, The Creator's Game: The Indigenous Roots of Lacrosse was an opportunity to honor and learn from our Indigenous friends and neighbors about the game of lacrosse, the oldest sport on Turtle Island (North America).



Lexington's Pastor Sakoneseriosta Brent J. Maracle, Mohawk, (*left*) who played for the Haudenosaunee Nationals from 1989-1995, spoke of the physical, cultural, and spiritual significance of lacrosse to Indigenous communities, and explained the history of the sport as well as differences of how the game is played today.

Professional lacrosse player Zed Williams (Seneca) shared his personal experiences of the game from childhood to the present, including how it has affected him and his family and strengthened his connection to his indigenous roots. We learned how important this sport is to the culture of indigenous communities, and that it is so much more than a game.

The event was co-sponsored by the Parents Diversity Council and Bedford Youth Lacrosse.

Thank you to Heather Leavell, Erin L. McCormack, Anne Caron, Shirley FC, and Chris Rucker for helping to plan and run the event.

We are grateful to Bedford Town Historian Sharon McDonald, Xóchi Kountz of Crafts for Justice, Aimeé Ledwell (Mashpee Wampanoag) of the Maynard Anti-Racism Alliance (MARA), Kelly Korenak, [Marilou Barsam](#), and Tricia Anderson for their informational booths and activities. ■

THE WINTER SOLSTICE IS A SPECIAL TIME FOR THOSE WHO HONOR AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE PATTERNS OF OUR NATURAL WORLD.

By Sarah Sunshine Manning, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Idaho and Nevada, and Chippewa-Cree of Rocky Boy, Montana, NDN Collective Director of Communications.

On this day, the sun is at its lowest point in the sky, traveling across the sky world above us in a short stride, resulting in the shortest day and the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. For Indigenous people across the globe, the natural world is a source of teachings about natural and universal laws. In understanding the interconnectedness of all things, we recognize that the cosmos— the sun, moon, stars, and other planets— affect us and connect us in undeniable ways.



The winter solstice is an event that has been observed for millennia by many of our Indigenous ancestors. While some Tribal Nations have traditionally held special ceremonies during celestial events like the winter and summer solstices, others may have simpler ways of observing these moments. Some Tribal Nations have maintained teachings around solstice time, while others may be seeking to revive the teachings, practices and ceremonies that were forcibly taken from us.

In its period of darkness, the winter solstice is an opportunity to go inward with deep intention, to care for our spiritual selves, our bodies and minds, our loved ones and families, and to prepare for the longer days ahead.

In the spirit of self-care, community care, accessing our ancestral memory and our most powerful selves, here are several different ways that you and your loved ones can spend the winter solstice in observance of a natural phenomena that comes only once a year. Take what works for you from this list, and if possible, consult with elders and your own traditional teachings for guidance on the best ways to acknowledge this event and deepen your spiritual connection during this time.

1. TAKE THE DAY OFF OF WORK OR JUST SLOW DOWN AND REST

Whether you have to pull a full or double shift on winter solstice day, or if you have the day off already, set aside time to just, be. No guilt. No intrusive thoughts about what needs to get done. Set down your electronic devices and smart phones, and be present in the moment. And if you have kids, housemates, friends or loved ones, spend that quality time together and totally unplugged from technology.

2. COOK AND SHARE A HEALTHY, COMFORTING MEAL WITH LOVED ONES

As Indigenous people of the Earth, kinship is what has always held us together. Sharing space and time to cook, eat, and nourish our bodies and our loved ones' bodies through the preparation of healthy meals is both physical, communal and spiritual. Seek out traditional and clean foods to prepare, or cook your favorite recipe from a loved one!

3. REFLECT ON THE PAST YEAR

Take time to reflect on the highs and even lows of the past year. Acknowledge and celebrate your growth, your resilience, your strength and the blessings you may have overlooked. And last but not least, let go of what doesn't serve you in order to create space for the positive ahead of you in the coming year. Make amends with others if you need to and set yourself up for new possibilities, new friendships and deepened connections.

4. GIVE THANKS FOR ALL OF YOUR BLESSINGS

It's so easy to get wrapped up in what isn't working for us, what didn't happen for us in the past year or loss we may have endured. But the fact that we are all still here, breathing and living right now, is evidence of SO many blessings. Start with the small things, like, clean air, a warm space to be in, your physical abilities, the gift of your intelligence and creativity. Recount these things in your mind, in a prayer or meditation, or even write them down on a piece of paper. There is no limit to how long this gratitude list can be! And in fact, the longer the list the better.

5. CLEAN AND HONOR YOUR LIVING SPACE BY DECLUTTERING

Our homes are the sacred spaces where so many important things happen. We rest in our homes, we eat in our homes. We gather, commune, and even raise children in our homes. Creating a sacred space in your home sets you and your family up for success each day. Create an atmosphere on solstice day that allows you to just be present in your home and to focus on the things that nourish and inspire you. This might mean getting a lot of the heavy lifting-type cleaning done in the days leading up to solstice day.

6. SHOW THE PEOPLE WHO YOU CARE FOR THAT YOU APPRECIATE THEM

This could be as simple as a written card, a text message, a phone call or a home visit. You can show up for them with a favor, a simple gift, or just with your presence. Not only express your gratitude for them and the ways they have brought value and nourishment to your life, but ask genuine questions about how they are doing, and be an attentive and compassionate listener.

7. CHANNEL YOUR CREATIVE ENERGY THROUGH ARTS, CRAFTS AND EXERCISING YOUR IMAGINATION

One of the most powerful gifts that we all have, is the gift of our creative thoughts. We are born with creativity, and we exercise this daily with our thoughts and actions, actively co-creating the world around us. We are ALL creatives in some way! Channel your creativity by dreaming up something new, by making something with your hands and your mind, and savor the process. Sew, bead, paint, write, cook, design, change the layout of your bedroom or living room, and even strategize movements. The possibilities are endless!

8. DRINK NATURAL AND MEDICINAL TEAS

Our natural world is rich with medicines, for both body, mind and spirit, and our ancestors knew the power of drinking medicinal teas. If possible, prepare and drink teas from your or other Indigenous homelands. Drink tea with loved ones. Pray over your tea, pray to the root and plant nations, to ancestors, and to the water, and know that you are activating medicine on a cellular and even generational level.

9. PRACTICE SPECIAL SELF-CARE RITUALS FOR SELF AND OTHERS

Care for your physical and spiritual self with a warm shower or bath, with rich lotions, essential oils, etc. Put on a luxurious face mask if that's your thing. Give yourself a manicure or pedicure. Get a massage or give a massage. Braid someone else's hair for them, or ask them to braid your hair. Name your practice, and make time for that.

10. LIGHT A FIRE

Winter solstice and winter in general is a time of fires, and fire is an old soul. Fire is also comforting, beautiful and mesmerizing to look at. You can put medicines on the fire, like sage or cedar. You can sit around a fire and feel its warmth. You can cook over a fire, put offerings into a fire, even pray, sing and tell stories next to a fire.

11. MAKE OFFERINGS

While we ask for good things for the upcoming year and give thanks for our blessings, it's so important to also give back and make offerings. Reciprocity, even to the spiritual world, matters. Set out food, make prayer ties, or whichever offering is prescribed by your own teachings.

12. SET INTENTIONS FOR THE LONGER DAYS AHEAD

In the same way we co-create each moment of our day, we have the power to co-create the future that is ahead of us simply with the power of our thoughts. So set and declare your best intentions for the coming days, for the winter season, and upcoming year. Write your intentions down. Journal your intentions. Pray about them and ask for support. Believe that you can achieve those things, whether they are personal, physical, spiritual, relational or professional. ■

INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD

Frances A. Nawoichyk

Excerpts taken from the obituary posted by the Brewitt Funeral Home

Frances A. Nawoichyk, lovingly known as “Cookie,” passed peacefully at Colonial Poplin, Skilled Nursing Facility in Fremont, NH. She set off on her next journey on the evening of October 3, 2022, with her daughters Joan and Vicky holding her hands and bathed in the sounds of her favorite music.



Cookie was a remarkable woman who forged her way through life, offering comfort and support to anyone who needed it—be they human or animal. She was a woman ahead of her time who did not follow the typical conventions of life. She was a liberal-minded, freethinker who marched to her own drum and did her best to instruct her children and grandchildren to do the same. Cookie lived her life fully and was always willing to hold the hand of her friends and family as they navigated life as well.

Cookie was a long time member of the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness. She had many friends in the Native American Community most notable was our late friend Sly Fox Oakley and his wife Claire. Cookie was invested in learning about and sharing in their traditions and history. For many, many years, she and her husband Vic traveled to the pow-wows with Sly Fox. Both Sly Fox and Vic cooked the communal breakfasts and suppers for the dancers, vendors and anyone who was hungry.

A memorial visitation for Cookie was held on Sunday, Oct 9, 2022, A celebration of life immediately followed at Brewitt Funeral Home in Exeter, NH.

While we hadn't seen Cookie for a number of years because she had taken ill, we will never forget her wit and good heart. We are all a bit happier, wiser, and kinder after having known her. ■

“Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting.” - Brian Tracy

Clifford Guy, Pokanoket

Excerpts taken from the obituary posted by the Quinn Funeral Home

Clifford W. Guy Jr. (Praying Heart) passed away peacefully on October 28, 2022 at the age of 87. A deeply kind and spiritual man, he is now resting in peace with his Creator. Clifford was born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island and was the eldest child of Clifford W. Guy, Sr., and Esther (Weeden) Guy.

Clifford proudly served his country in the military from 1954 – 1957. He was in the U.S Air Force and was an air traffic controller. During his adulthood, Clifford was a barber by profession and worked for many years at General Dynamics (Electric Boat) in North Kingstown, RI.

Clifford served as the Spiritual Leader (Powwas) of the Royal House of Pokanoket, Pokanoket Nation and he was extremely proud of his heritage. He spent hours researching his ancestry and he enjoyed educating others about the history of the Pokanoket tribe. He was actively involved in Native American affairs in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and other states. He was a long-time supporter of the MCNAA pow-wows, anniversary celebrations, auctions, and other special events where he traveled with his elder cousins and nephews.

(Pictured on far right.)



He will be lovingly remembered by his Native names Praying Heart and Lionheart. Clifford endlessly fought and advocated for the rights and privileges that his beloved Natives desired and deserved. He touched the lives of many with his kind words, kind heart and gentle spirit.

Clifford is preceded in death by his parents, his sister Arline Smith and his granddaughter Delsea Faison. He is survived by Ruth Guy, his beloved wife of 62 years. His memory will always be cherished and kept alive by his four children, seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and by a host of family and friends. ■

MCNAA'S MONTHLY GIVING CIRCLE

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 but the grant does not help with other program needs such as: scholarships for students; food for elders and families; 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 our 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 33 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. ■