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Our masthead this issue features Winnebago tribal member, Keith Chamberlain / Ma Giksuc ga {Strikes the Earth} [1948-2020]. Keith served our Winnebago people for over 40 years working for the tribe in many capacities. Personnel Director for the tribe throughout the 1980s, Chairman of the Winnebago Gaming Commission through the 1990s, and even as multiple term Mayor for the Village of Winnebago, Keith's dedication to the success of our people helped establish many of the organizational policies that still stand to this day. Keith's awareness of local politics helped him create the foundations upon which each of the groups he worked with built upon in later days. Also, a long serving member of the WRFD, he served as Fire Chief helping re-establish the organization. Unafraid to call into question subjects that did not serve the people, or took advantage of them, he bravely lived up to his Hocak name. A quality that is sorely missed. Keith's family have the WIN's sincerest gratitude for their kind permission to feature his photograph here.





WinnaVegas Casino Celebrates 32 Years



By Brian Chamberlain Photos by Brian Chamberlain / Kevin Ebert / archives

[Sloan, IA] The Winnebago Tribe and management for WinnaVegas Casino celebrated 32 years of business here on April 29th, 2024. First opening in the Spring of 1992, from humble beginnings, WinnaVegas has become the powerhouse which has propelled the Winnebago people forward since that time. "I remember opening day. I actually worked the nights. [I] was a blackjack dealer. [It] was the funnest job!" said tribal member Teresa Parker who was working on that fateful opening day. Another tribal member, Jules LaRose, who was also there said, "I was there on opening day. Working as a waiter serving champagne to guests waiting in line to get in."

WinnaVegas is operated by the Winnebago Tribe as a Class III gaming facility, as defined by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act [IGRA]. That Act of Congress passed in 1988 and signed into law by President Reagan, has changed the landscape for all Indian Country. Past leaders for the Tribe have all remarked at how the operation has become one of the most important turns taken for our people.

Winnebago leadership in the early 1990s, taking cues from the national trend happening at the time, as well as from the momentum created by the State of Iowa's historic riverboat excursion efforts, yoked the legal support of the IGRA to create the original compact with the State of Iowa. This agreement allowed the Winnebago Tribe to open and operate WinnaVegas Casino. That landmark agreement has been in place since its inception in 1992.

WinnaVegas had very modest beginnings. It began inside several modular trailers that were essentially gutted and daisy-chained together. "We were ready." said tribal member Kellie Snow – another original staff member from day one. Those trailers housed dozens of slot machines, a table games area, including a craps table, a small snack bar, and a poker room. From those humble beginnings the operation was capable of funding the renovation of the former Winn-a-Bingo facility, which was closed a few years prior.

The closure of the tribe's high-stakes

Located on the North end of Winnebago in the HoChunk Village 2.0, HCI started building the Elders Village Housing in January 2022 and finished in the Summer of 2023. 10 elder units were built with features including solar panels, porch ramps and attached garages. Community amenities include common areas with grilling spaces and a courtyard with walking trails. The goal of this project is to provide affordable housing for our Elders. Sign-up for senior housing is located at HoChunk Capital or reach out to Koren Russell at krussell@hochunkcapital.com



WTNs Roads Department has a new warehouse/ office space being constructed. The new building will house 6+ office workers and various heavy machinery. Exercise caution when in the area as construction is active.



May 3rd the Angel De Cora Museum hosted a tour for members of the Yseali Institute on Civiv Engagement at UNO. The group originate from areas of Southeast Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Photos by Angel DeCora Museum Con't. on page 2...

Class III Gaming in Nebraska Steps Forward



Pictured from left: Michelle Mitchell, Danelle Smith (General Counsel), Kia Mallory and Damon Payer (Gaming Commission)

[CONTINUING COVERAGE] By: Brian Chamberlain Photos: Brian Chamberlain / Sharon Redhorn-Chamberlain / archives

[Lincoln, NE] The Winnebago Tribe held its first round of discussions with delegates for the State of Nebraska regarding implementation of Class III gaming here on Thursday, April 25th, 2024. Representatives for the tribe traveled to the State capital to begin the process that will soon bring the expanded form of gaming to the Winnebago Reservation.

In its most recent iteration, the Tribe established a committee that will bring the process forward. Collaborating with members of the tribal Gaming Commission, and office of General Counsel, the committee responsible for negotiating what will become the first gaming compact with the State responded to the Governor's invitation to come to Lincoln to start the discussions. "I'm really excited for us, but I'm also ready to begin working with the new set of rules." Winnebago Gaming Development Corporation CEO, Sharon Redhorn-Chamberlain stated.

The Winnebago Tribe began Class III gaming operations in Sloan, Iowa in 1992. That remains WinnaVegas Casino / Resort to this day. However, those activities are governed under laws created with the State of Iowa and have no impact on actions west of the Missouri River. It was not until much later, following a series of legal events, that the Winnebago Tribe began meaningful gaming activity closer to home. In 2004, the Tribe began an operation in Emerson, Nebraska called the Iron Horse Bar & Casino. This business was established under the corporate code of the Tribe and is operated by the Winnebago Gaming Development Corporation [WGDC], a wholly owned entity of the Tribe.

Using the provisions for Class II gaming as set by the National Indian Gaming Commission [NIGC] and promulgated under the authority created by the Indian Gaming

Con't. on page 2...

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cont. from front page, WinnaVegas Casino Celebrates 32 Years...

bingo operation led to the financial demise of the tribe's activities in that period. Winnebago in 1991 was not a dynamic place because jobs were scarce, housing was limited, and the overall outlook was bleak. Many tribal members left Winnebago to find work, and a place to live. With the advent of gaming activity occurring just across the river, however, that time was not long lived. Soon the prospects of the Winnebago people would change for the better. The dawn of prosperity began the day WinnaVegas opened its doors to the public.

WinnaVegas provided revenue to the tribal organization, but it also gave the membership their long-awaited opportunity to hold jobs - meaningful ones. The name of the game in Sloan wasn't just gambling, it was about upward mobility for the people who wanted to work, and who were looking to make an impact on their families' lives and for our people. This kind of advancement opportunity created by Indian Gaming has touched the lives of hundreds of tribal members. That kind of opportunity still exists in the gaming industry today.

Expanding Greatness – Beginning in those confined, reinforced trailers the operation found its legs but looked toward expansion. Being the only game in town, WinnaVegas knew the window where that was true would soon come to an end. Competition was close on the heels of the tribe. The wisdom of the leadership had them make decisions that would prove to provide for our people for decades following.

Capitalizing on the influx of revenue despite the small size, the former bingo building next door was completely renovated and the casino was moved. In a quick, roughshod, yet excitement filled night, the trailers were left behind and the machines, equipment, supply, and staff did all they could to relocate the operation into its permanent home. "It was all hands-on deck." said another tribal member who worked during that hurried time. "We moved literally everything. Using hand carts, dollies, boxes, truck beds, and of course muscle, the whole thing was moved in one night. It was amazing!" they continued.

The area only accessed by an unpaved county road was also soon upgraded. To meet the end of the existing pavement at the intersection just to the East, the main road was closed, and the patrons and employees had to take an alternative route going through one of the adjacent corn fields. "I forgot about that!" exclaimed one tribal member the WIN was talking with about this. The parking lot was also paved at that time. In years to come the money the tribe invested in that road would prove invaluable. During the flood of 2011, that road, which was over-engineered, and poured at depths deemed excessive to some at the time, held up under the flood waters. The casino was able to re-open even quicker because the road had almost no damage despite being under flowing water for that extended period.

Although the old bingo facility had undergone full renovation, there was still other work to be done. The area that became the Flowers Island Buffet was part of a phase two of that overall upgrade. "I recall sitting in the construction area thinking how nice the restaurant was going to be." recalled one former employee. The restaurant area was completed not long after the main renovation was done. From that point the casino began its full push to become the premier gaming location in the area.

Return to Bingo – There is a long-held affinity for bingo in its classic form amongst the Winnebago people. Winn-a-Bingo was popular but was forced to close. The tribe never forgot about it, however. A few years later, once the expanded casino was taking hold strongly, leadership for the casino and the tribe put forward plans to add onto the operation. The first WinnaVegas bingo hall was proposed, planned, built and opened on the southside of the building.

With seating for hundreds bingo made a roaring comeback. However, the casino also had their eyes on hosting premier entertainment. The bingo hall doubled as the concert venue for WinnaVegas. For years the casino would host A-list entertainers, like Loretta Lynn, Wayne Newton, Dionne Warwick, Kenny Rogers, and Rick Springfield – among so many others.

WinnaVegas has certainly seen its share of changes over the years. Our story here covers only some of the early days and the wild success of the 1990s. Even more exciting expansion was on the horizon after the turn of the century.



cont. from front page, Class III Gaming in Nebraska Steps Forward ...

Regulatory Act of 1988 [IGRA], the Winnebago Tribe's foray into gaming in Nebraska remained limited for nearly two decades. Both properties operated by the WGDC, Iron Horse Casino and Native Star Casino, stayed within the parameters of Class II gaming, while the State of Nebraska remained unable to change its laws regarding gaming. "This day is such a long time coming. It's almost hard to believe we're actually doing this - finally," said WGDC Board Vice-Chair, Caroline Bassette.

Under provisions from the NIGC the State must negotiate with the Tribe 'in good faith' for the creation of a gaming compact. This compact will govern the operations of the tribe once established. After much internal debate, the Winnebago Tribal Council authorized Tribal Chairwoman, Victoria Kitcheyan, to send a letter to the Governor of the State of Nebraska, Jim Pillen, giving him notice of the Tribe's intent to move forward with the process for a Class III gaming compact. That letter sent is a critical component in the Tribe's invocation of the gaming compact negotiation process.

The first meeting of the two committees was one that helped establish a rapport for those on both sides of the table. Long time lobbyist for the Tribe, Don Wesley remarked, "Today's meeting between the two sovereigns is quite historic." The State was well represented, with several members of their committee coming from the areas of gaming already established by the State, as well as those from the Department of Revenue, and Attorney General's Office. The introduction of several topics came forward, including who would be signing the agreement once all negotiations have been concluded. Also following the subject matter, next steps were discussed that allowed for a logical timeline on how to proceed.

The depth of knowledge in the gaming field on behalf of the Winnebago Tribe was on full display all throughout the entire discussion. The illustration of the tribe's overall intent became clear, as was the distinction between Class III gaming and commercial gaming held on other lands across the state. "Although both appear to be under the overall umbrella of the tribe. Class III gaming remains solely within the reservation boundaries," remarked committee member, Brian Chamberlain.

The opening meeting of the two committees was a productive one. Next steps were planned, and a general time frame was established. Now the real work begins. The WIN will keep you posted as this prominent issue moves forward.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The WIN Editor, and writer of this article, Brian Chamberlain, was a member of the Tribal Council who voted in favor of moving the negotiation process forward. Chamberlain was appointed to this committee while a member of the Tribal Council.



Winnebago Gaming Development Executives L to R: Sandra Olivares, Sharon Redhorn-Chamberlain and Caroline Bassette



Pictured from left: Bethani, Garan and WinnaVegas General Manager, Tom Teesdale



WinnaVegas presents Donations to ATLAS. Pictured L to R: Ray Thomas, LaDonna Holstein, Ken Vampola, Shannon P, WinnaVegas GM - Tom Teesdale, Landon Hamilton and Winona Armell

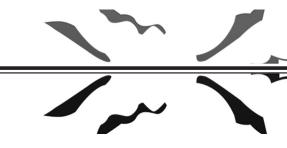


WinnaVegas presents Donations to Senior Center. Pictured L to R: Janet Bird, unknown, Marge Gilpin and Anna "Babe" Rogue

Thomas Snow - Gaming Commissioner and Teresa Littlegeorge - Tribal Council Member



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



SUICIDE IN INDIAN COUNTRY PART 46

Prevention Through Knowledge

To help someone suicidal move through the crisis and into the healing, here are some things you need to know:

Suicide is preventable; most people do not truly want to die.

Talking about suicidal feelings with someone does not increase risk, but reduces it.

Treatment, therapy, counseling - call it what you will - works.

Help is available.

About Therapy

Your friend or family member probably needs therapy and possible medication. Talk therapy works and so do medications. The two together often work best. Consider too, that as a loved one, parent or friend, you may want to be involved in the counseling as well. Discuss this possibility with the professional or counselor who is going to try to help sort things out.

Give Support, But Watch for Clues

Most suicidal people send messages that they want to die. Having experienced a suicidal crisis once does not mean another crisis cannot occur.

You can help by recognizing situations or communications that suggest another crisis is brewing or that an old one is returning. While no list of clues can be complete, and one clue may not mean much, the theme of returning hopelessness my lead to:

A threat to kill oneself. This may be said many ways, but often takes the following forms: "I'm no good to anyone and might as well be dead." "You'd be better off without me." "This time, I'll do it right, so you won't have to worry."

Sudden changes in behavior, e.g. apathy, anger, moodiness or an unexpected guarrel. Unexpected problems at school with grades, friends or teachers.

Any indication the person is making final arrangements, such as giving away personal possessions, making funeral plans, saying goodbyes, or in any way indicating, by word or deed, that he or she does not intent to be around long.

Vague statements about "taking a long trip," "joining grandma" (or anyone deceased), or wondering aloud if "God has a place for a person like me?"

Suddenly turning away from or toward religion, preoccupation with death and dying through talk, writing, drawing or doodling.

Making preparations for death, such as buying a gun, saving up pills, or any action which suggests that a means to suicide is under active consideration.

The onset or return of a depressed mood.

Relapse into drug or alcohol use in someone who is trying to stay clean and sober. **Deadly Situations**

There are, also, so-called "deadly situations." In short, these are situations that, unless resolved quickly, will often put someone who once considered suicide at immediate and imminent risk. These situations can vary widely, but the essential ingredient is that some new crisis or set-back has taken place. Suddenly overcome with a sense of utter hopelessness once again, the person slips back into that false sense of relief that death promises.

The list of deadly situations includes any unexpected turn of events that, taken together with a previous episode of depression, helplessness, or hopelessness, once again pitches the person into an acute crisis for survival. The loss of any significant relationship, however, tops the list. As the time between idea and act can be short, rapid intervention into quickly changing events is critical.

The golden rule of suicide prevention: If in doubt, ask. If wondering what to do, do something!

NOTE: While most suicidal people send clues that they are thinking about killing themselves, not all do. Research shows that perhaps 10% of suicidal people keep their plans entirely to themselves.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), Winnebago Behavioral Health 1-402-878-2911, After Hours Crisis #1-712-259-3263.

Point your phone's camera at the QR code to go to the Big Voice Radio webpage!



IT'S REAL: TEENS AND MENTAL HEALTH

for High School Students

It's Real: Teens and Mental Health for High School Students is a 45-minute program, which provides young people with mental health education and resources.

The presentation covers such topics as:

- What is mental health? How is it similar to, or different from, physical health?
- How to notice signs of someone needing help
- Tips and strategies for having a caring conversation with someone you might be worried about
- Methods of self-care for mind, body, soul, and surroundings
- Examples of trustworthy resources
- How reaching out to trusted adults can help teens manage their mental health

The presentation includes brief video narratives featuring well-known GenZ influencers sharing their own experiences with mental health, and what they found helpful at the time.

Target Audience:

Teens between the ages of 14 and 18.

This program is directed to be presented to high school classes or community settings with groups of comparably aged adolescents. Date May 20, 2024

Time

12-1pm over Zoom

Details Lunch & Learn over Zoom

Registration donna.wolff@winnebagotribe.com

Questions? Donna Wolff YCIC Youth Crisis Intervention Center 402-841-3834 NE Chapter AFSP

afsp.or



Date

KWTN 100.9 FM

The Official Radio Station of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

Notice:

The Polling Place for Winnebago is now located at the Whirling Thunder Wellness Center/Blackhawk Center For the Primary May 14, 2024 Election

Please enter through the North door.

A Brief Introduction to LGBTQ Suicide Prevention

Suicide can be prevented. This presentation will cover what we know about this leading cause of death, the most up-to-date research on prevention, and what we can all do to fight suicide.

Participants will learn the common risk factors for suicide in LGBTQ populations, how to spot the warning signs in others, and how to keep ourselves, our loved ones and those in our community safe.

June 4, 2024

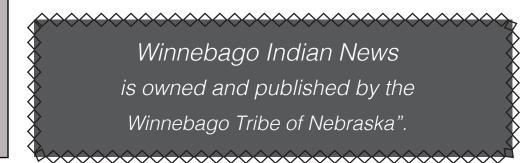
Time 12-1:30pm

Location Over Zoom

RSVP

Donna Wolff donna.wolff@winnebagotribe.com 402-841-3834

Brought to you by funds raised by YCIC Youth Crisis Intervention Center, GLS grant, NE Chapter AFSP



The next issue of the WINNEBAGO INDIAN NEWS will be published on May 25, 2024. DEADLINE for this issue will be May 21, 2024.

Youth Crisis Intervention C and Youth She



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The Winnebago Indian News (WIN), founded in January 1972, is published bi-weekly for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

The Mission of the WIN is to inform and to educate the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska of issues that affect them, and to be a vehicle in which stresses positive and beneficial concerns and points of view. LETTER POLICY: Signed editorials, letters and articles appearing in the WIN are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of the Winnebago Indian News or the Winnebage Tribal Council.

The WIN encourages the submission of Letters to the Editor; however, letters must be signed and addressed. Letters may be edited for language and length

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Coly Brown	Member
Kenny Mallory	Member
Aric Armell	Member
Theresa Littlegeorge	Member
Eugene DeCora	Member



= COMMUNITY

...Con't. from last issue...

Motion carried.

Discussion on the Indirect Cost Rate (IDC) WCHS can get vs. the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska's IDC rate. WCHS is researching this.

Follow-Up from the February 2024 WCHS Quarterly Meeting, Health Foundation Update, Master Facilities Plan Update – presented by David Edwards CEO.

Eugene DeCora motioned to adjourn. Kenneth Mallory seconded.

VOTE: (6) yes (0) no (0) abstain Motion carried.

Vice-Chairman Isaac Smith adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lorelei DeCora, Secretary, Winnebago Tribal Council

Winnebago Student Throw Backs



WPS High School Choir 1997



WCHS Hosts Beading Event for Breast Cancer Survivors and Their Relatives

Winnebago, NE – The resilient spirit of breast cancer survivors and their loved ones was celebrated at the recent "This Is Living Bead by Bead" event, held at WCHS. Organized as a collaborative effort between local communities and health organizations, the event showcased the healing power of beading within Winnebago culture, offering participants a meaningful space for connection, creativity, and reflection.

In Winnebago culture, beading holds deep cultural and spiritual significance, symbolizing storytelling, heritage, and healing. Passed down through generations, beadwork serves as a medium for expressing identity, resilience, and unity within the community. For breast cancer survivors and their relatives, engaging in beadwork becomes a transformative journey, weaving together threads of hope, strength, and solidarity in the face of adversity.

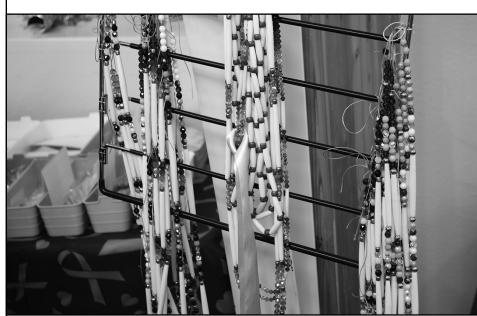
At the "This Is Living Bead by Bead" event, participants were invited to explore the rich tradition of beading through a workshop, demonstrations, and interactive activities. From learning traditional beading techniques to creating personalized beadwork designs, attendees immersed themselves in a vibrant tapestry of colors, textures, and patterns, each bead symbolizing a story of courage, perseverance, and healing.

Jane Langemeier, Public Health Nursing Director, expressed her sentiments about the event, stating, "The 'This Is Living Bead by Bead' event exemplifies the transformative power of cultural heritage and community support in the healing journey of breast cancer survivors. Through the art of beading, participants not only embrace their cultural roots but also find solace, strength, and inspiration in the shared stories of resilience and hope. This event serves as a poignant reminder that healing is not just a destination but a continuous journey, marked by moments of connection, creativity, and collective empowerment."

Article by: Wyatt Hoefer Marketing Specialist | wyatt.hoefer@wchs.health | 402-745-3950-6702



WCHS Staff





Lady Indians Basketball 1994



WHS Art Students (Year Unknown)



MC Slammers Youth Basketball Team (Year Unknown)

Finished necklaces made at the event



Event participants



More event participants

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- ANNOUNCEMENTS



Bring your photo ID with you when you vote in person. Or provide your Nebraska driver's license/state ID or a photocopy of the ID when you vote by mail.

A variety of acceptable and readily attainable IDs* may be used for voting purposes, including:

- Nebraska driver's license/state ID
- 🚫 U.S. Passport, military ID, tribal ID
- Hospital, assisted-living facility, nursing home record
- Nebraska political subdivision ID (state, county, city, school, etc.)
- Nebraska college or university ID

*ID must include name and photo

A message from the Nebraska Secretary of State.

For more information on Voter ID, visit

VoterID.Nebraska.gov



"As your state senator I will work to protect our water sources and make sure Nebraska puts people over profits."

We must protect our natural resources at all costs. That's why I will always put people over pipelines and profit. As your senator I will work to ensure that the people who depend on the health of our land and waterways have a voice at the table when decisions are being made.

The primary election is May 14th and your vote really matters!

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WINNEBAGO SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

4	All meals subje		Ma	ay		e safe v home
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed Chicken wings 1 Biscuit Spring Macaroni Sweet potato fries Fresh fruit	Thu Nachos w/ cheese 2 Tamale Chips V-8 Refried beans Fruit Cocktail	Fri Hamburger soup 3 With potatoes Cowboy bread Steamed cabbage Cake	Sat 4
5	Calif. Pasta salad Orange Margarine	Tuna Casserole 7 Multi-grain bread Mixed Vegetables Diced Pears	Chicken soup w/ 8 Dumplings Cowboy bread Broccoli/cheese Chocolate pudding	Lima bean soup 9 Crackers Relish tray Apple & PB	Breakfast 10 Burrito V-8 Multi grain bar Orange	11
	Cantaloupe	Indian Taco 14 Avocado slices Strawberries	Fish sandwich 15 Mac & Cheese Mixed Vegetables	Polish sausage 16 Sauerkraut 3 bean salad Lemon pudding	Hamb. Gravy 17 Mashed potatoes Corn Bread Yogurt Apricots	18
60	Macaroni salad Cuties Brownies w/ nuts	Soup Fry bread Apple Celery/PB Jello cake	Tuna Salad 22 Sandwich Lettuce salad Jello w/ whip cream	Chef salad w/ 23 Ham Boiled egg Garlic toast Peaches	Frittata 24 Sausage links Pancakes Assorted juice Grapes	25 ©
26	Closed	Beef/barley 28 Soup Homemade bun Spinach Cherry fluff	BLT 29 Toasted bread Kidney bean salad Jello	Green pepper 30 Casserole Waffle biscuit Fresh peach Carrot salad	Chicken fried 31 Steak w/ gravy Mashed potatoes Biscuit Peas/carrots	



Question of the Issue:

What was the first CD you purchased with your own money?

Garan: I remember my older sister bought a rap CD from Walmart and it was all messed up because it was the clean version. Basically, every other word was scratched out and you couldn't enjoy it. So, I decided I would buy a R&B CD because of less cussing. It was H-Town and the hit song was "Knockin' Da Boots", which in my opinion helped with the population growth if you know what I mean.

Brian: I had a lot of cassettes, but my first actual CD was MTV's Party 2 Go – Vol 1. That whole series was great! I also used to listen to it on my portable CD Walkman in my car. Complete with the cassette adaptor and bass boost toggle switch. We knew how to jam. Haazz!

Tyler: For my 10th birthday I got a radio / karaoke machine. The first CD I bought was Nicki Minaj's "Pink Friday". I had the Barbie chain and every-thing. Haha!

Kevin: Vanilla Ice when I was living in Germany. Not a huge selection. I had pry 200 cassette tapes.

Christina: I was a major Mariah Carey fan when CDs were the thing to have. I believe "Emotions" was my first CD purchase if not "The Chronic" lol.

Bethani: I had a nice CD collection that I wish I still had! It is crazy to think back on that transition to when MP3 players were on the rise & even burning a mixed CD, those were always fun to make. My 1st CD purchase (with my own money) was from long hours of babysitting & chores! I was never allowed to buy explicit music, but Ashantis' debut album was where it was at. I bought Ashanti by Ashanti, with my mom's approval of course!



STORYTELLERS PT. 2: *Ruby Bellanger*

The Winnebago Indian News sat down recently with a special tribal member, Ruby Bellanger. Ruby agreed to speak with us after L introduced the new column idea to her following a recent public event. She was genuinely interested in providing her stories to the WIN and held an apprehensiveness due to her self-awareness of being in possession of an opinion. Once we began speaking, and the WIN assured her that our readers wanted to hear her points of view and her experiences - opinions intact; we began our dialogue. We had many laughs and we also named quite a few people. Ruby's life is certainly at no shortage for people all throughout it. The WIN will employ a standard verbatim dialogue throughout this printed interview to preserve as much as possible the original intent and context of our discussion. However, some editing has been done for clarity. The original transcript remains in the WIN's possession. Ruby's appearance in the WIN is entirely voluntary and her perspectives are hers. So please enjoy this conversation as it is meant to describe her points of view on the life she has, and the experiences she's lived. We are so glad she bravely shared them with us, unapologetically. Ruby knew her story was hers to tell. The WIN appreciates her ability to open-up and share so much of her story with us. Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to introduce once again our first Storyteller debuting in these premiere issues of the Winnebago Indian News: Mrs. Ruby Bellanger - in her own words.

dancers in our family. And I just tell them, dance hard. You know we don't say dance good, or jam or whatever. We just say dance hard, and that means you give it your best going to Morton. That's more of a traditional, and then maybe they'll throw in a contest, but I like traditional powwows. I don't like Denver March. I don't like the Gathering. I've been to all [of] them. I don't like them. [They are] very commercial.

See I went to the very first Gathering. And it's a lot different than what it is now. Now you have to park to get in and out, and you gotta to pay to dance. First you gotta pay to get in, then you pay to register to dance. So, then you pay to go look at the Arts & Crafts. If you'd give yourself a couple more weeks you could come to Winnebago and see them dancers, for free. [laughs]

(W) - (about dancing around drums / groups)

(R) – Drums just kind of floated in. Being out in California and seeing these different drums, what I noticed, I said, gee when I grew up, I was telling somebody, we had one drum. One Winnebago drum and they sang all day, and they even sang for us kids at night so we could Round Dance and 49. They said, gee how'd they do that? And I said, that's what I'm wondering. I said because, I think I know. But now Winnebago we gotta have this many drums. We gotta invite drums. And I said them guys sang, because if you watch them, they're singing. Nowadays drums are screaming. If you really listen to them and watch, they're screaming.

(W) - (about what used to be in the arena)

(R) – There used to be, and I don't know, I bet you, anybody ... I don't even know it anymore. I tried to think of it. We used to have a half-breed song. You never hear that anymore, because probably nobody knows how to sing it. I can't even think of it. But just the half-breeds got out there and danced. One time I saw my grandma out there and see I didn't even know it. And I thought, what's she doing out there? So, I got kind of shook up. Cause I thought, I bet she didn't even know. You know I was all worried and everything. And then I found out her mother was a French woman, but she never told us. So, I was like, ok. So, I can simmer down now, because I thought she was out there and didn't know that song. [laughs]

(W) – (on songs changing)

(R) – That's like I'm aware of the Marines song. That was a song was especially for, I can't think of his first name, but his last name was Greencrow. That was his song. That wasn't the Marines' song. But now it's the Marines' song, but it was his personal [song]. Just like Mem. What's Mem's real name? [Emmett Walker] He's got a song. The Emmett Walker song. So very few people [know it], probably 20 years down the road that will change to something else. But that's his own song.

(W) – (on changes in dances)

(R) – You asked about the dance. There's some dances that are being messed up out there. One of them is the Green Corn dance. Your partners are crossing over. You never cross over. And then you go out, and some of them are going way out to the drum [gestures arm widely]. And it's like what are you doing?

way. Some are going that way. [moves arms in a circle]

I know one year, I won't say a name again, we got this MC. He belonged to the Medicine Lodge. Somebody wanted to bring, come in, we always go to the left. But they wanted the men to come in and go to the right. He said, if you people do that I will leave. Now I don't understand the Medicine Lodge. I don't pretend to because I didn't grow up with it. Never went to anything. But for that reason, he said he would leave. So that must be something they do. And why somebody wanted to do that I'll never know because we've always come in, for the last 100 years [laughs], come in from the left. [Since] We started our Grand Entry, we've always come in the same way.

(W) – (recalling old powwow grounds)

(R) – The first time I remember dancing was right downtown. There used to be, in fact what's there? Where they got, kind of somewhere around the area where Ricky Jacob lives. Somewhere down in that area. That was my first time [dancing].

I remember going to Macy a lot. This was [a long time ago]. We had to catch a ride. There used to be a guy that had a truck, kind of a small, little bit bigger than a pick up bed, now. I don't know how many tons you call it. We had to pay him, something like 10 cents, or something to ride. And then we couldn't sit down. We all had to stand up. Ok, going is ok. I never once thought about my poor grandma probably just tired. But coming back, probably running around down at the powwow, cause I didn't dance during that time. Coming back, I just wanted to lay down and sleep so bad. But that's how we got to the Macy powwow. We rode in the back of a truck! [laughs]

(W) – (on dancing with others / powwow with others)

(R) - Yeah. I was trying to think of his name the other day. He was a young boy they used to pair me up with, that I used to have to dance with him for their Green Corn. But we had Omaha dancers come up. But I don't remember any of them other than that young boy that they made me dance with, who was like [makes scary gesture]. When I'm 13 I probably would have grabbed him [laughs] But I'm like 8, I ain't about to grab him.

(W) - (fun dancing / with Lavina / Live Wires)

(R) - Oh yeah! I know I and she did too. We did. Because every little dance within like 100 miles we were trying to make it.

You know we got that name. They called us the "Live Wires." An Omaha man named us that. He was, in fact Lavina, she didn't get feathered until we were dancing in old age. So, she had a little ceremony down there, and he was talking, and he mentioned our dancing. He said, them women are just like live wires. From there on that's the name, our stage name. [laughs]

The first ones that put us in the back, because we were up there dancing the Snake Dance with the women. Pete Snowball called us out. He said, I want you women to get in the back - me, Lavina and Sidney. We go, what for? He said, I want you guys to be the tail. They just kind of started teasing us. So that's when we decided, we go, let's give 'em hell! [laughs] and see John D., that was Lavina's brother, he knew us so when it was our turn, boy he kicked that drum in. Made it faster and faster, and we'd look at him, and he'd be just laughing at us! [laughs] Another thing we, I wish we still had it. Do you know where, I don't know who lives there now, but where Donnie Snowball had his house? There used to be a lady who lived there. Her name was Rosie Payer. And just about every weekend, she even had her yard fixed up, she had benches around there. We had a powwow there. It was cool. That's where a lot of us kids learned to dance. And learned the songs and whatever. And out there I got to dance with Felix White, old man. There was a guy named Mose Whitebear. I got to dance with him. And sometimes Waukon and Gustave would come. You just never knew who was going to be there. It was like a fun time for everybody. People must have brought potlucks, cause I don't remember how we ate. But all of us kids had orders to never go in her house. And we never [did]. And that's how she was probably able to have them [dances], cause kids would be running around, you know. But we never went into her house. I wanted to.[laughs] I really did. I wanted to see what it was like in there. But that's another way we learned as young kids, we went there. And sometimes we didn't even dance but somewhere in the back of your head you'd hear those drums and people talking, and that's how we kind of learned things.

WIN (W) – (On being Head Lady dancer at the powwow.)

Ruby B. (R) - Never. I was asked one time by John Decora. John D. I said No. He said, Hey you're not supposed to say no. I said I know that John D. But I said it's supposed to be an honor and you guys are not honoring it, because you're gonna pay me. And I said, I have to be there at such and such time. I have to sign a contract. I said no. And then he said, ok well do it for free then. And I said, I'll be darned if I will, not when you'll give the next person money! So, I turned it down because to me there's no honor in it anymore. It's a working process where you get paid. You don't give tobacco and a check at the same time. That's what I'm talking about, there's no honor in it anymore. It's a job.

(W) – (on teaching her own family about dancing)

(R)-Everybody dances in their front room, you know. And I used to tell them different things, because we don't have any male

shot.

And we never, ever say, oh you shouldn't of done this or shouldn't have done that. Just say maybe next time you could do this or not do that. That's the way I did. I don't know how everybody else does.

(W) – (on Woodland Men's dancers)

(R) – When I first, first saw them, it was like, the songs came to me. Not so much as them [woodland dancers]. But I thought, where'd I hear that? Where'd I see that? And if you'd listen, here in Winnebago we sang Winnebago songs for the woodland. And that's what our dancers were dancing to a long time ago. The woodland. So they were called War Dancers, never Woodland. And I think some of them outfits that they're wearing now, I think they're mostly like from Oneidas and stuff like that. We had floral designs on their breech cloth. And that's another thing, they don't call it a breech cloth anymore. It's called an apron. So I told my grandson, oh I hate to think of you wearing an apron. [laughs]

(W) – (on changes seen in powwow)

(R) – Those songs were kind of becoming new when I was becoming young. Because that was during World War II most of them songs came out. So, they were new songs. The women them days they used to always carry a handkerchief and wave it. That was like waving a flag. The veterans never ever ran a powwow. Never. Because those songs were for them. Everything we did was for them. Someone or a couple would be home on leave. We'd dance for them, they'd get out there and dance. We had a lot of men dancers. Winnebagos don't have hardly any men dancers [now]. We had a lot.

The men dancers. What I notice about some of... a few of our men dancers they come from Wisconsin. They're kind of uniform, you know everything, sort of matches. Back when I was young, whatever was shiny and bright and pretty, that's what you made your outfit out of. And that's why I kind of like, personally, I like to look at them Canadian dancers. Cause I like traditional. That's my favorite dance. I like the way they're dressed. Cause they're kind of hodge-podgy. They remind me of old time.

There's a lot of copying going on [now]. But then again that's because we're talking money. Money has ruined a lot of powwows. I liked going to other powwows [too]. I liked Were like rows of corn here! (laughs).

Something that's kind of a controversy right now but I only know it one way, and Lavina knew it the same way I did is the Bean Dance. They've really messed that up. So, if Christina wants to know how to do it I could tell her how. Cause she's going to hear a lot of people say this and that. And I always just tell the woman because the men will follow [laughs]. You can't tell them nothing! [laughs again].

And then the Pipe Dance. That's changed too. I remember that one year [a recent powwow MC, says name] said, and now you go to your East – West. When I'm out there I don't know if I'm North, South, East or West! But you're making a full circle so you're covering everything. For him to stand out there and say that, I was like, what are you doing? That's not the way you do it.

(W) – (on dancing to specific songs / liking them)

(R) – Oh yeah! I don't know if it's got a name, but it says in this song to be good to one another. In fact, I think they're even saying... and that's the first time I heard it was about five years ago, I heard it that way. They're saying that's the Wolf Clan song. When I was growing up I don't remember no Wolf Clan song. But that's the one I like. It says the Creator says be good to one another. You don't want me to sing it. I don't have a voice. [laughs] I wished I did. I love them women singing, but I can't sing. Cause I don't have a voice. [laughs]

That's good that they get out there and sing. But I remember the first powwow at WinnaVegas some women were taking some chairs, and they were going to sit behind this Winnebago drum group. I'm not saying no names. I said, are you girls singers? And they said, no huh-uh. And I said, well Winnebago woman don't sit behind their men. Oklahoma women do. Omaha women do. But Winnebago women, and I don't think Sioux women do it either, I don't know, but I just told them Winnebago women don't sit behind their men. They go, I didn't know that! They were real good about it. They go, oh ok. They got their chairs and they left. Even if they sang, they don't sit behind them. You go out there and you leave.

(W) – (more changes seen)

(R) – With this inter-tribal, in my growing up, women went to the left and the men came to the right. But now with inter-tribal we go all over the place. [laughs] Some are going this (W) – (on oldest regalia held)

(R) – Probably a dress. Kind of getting a little thread bare. [laughs] But yeah, a dress. And then a headband, a beaded headband about yay wide. [gestures fingers] Some Sioux woman gave me and I just kept it. A Sioux woman gave it to me, and I just thought that was so cool. [laughs]

Our "Storytellers" interview with Ruby Bellanger will continue in the next issue of the Winnebago Indian News. In the next section Ruby will continue telling us about her many times in and around the powwow arena, as well as her thoughts on what she sees today within the tribe and community. Don't forget this feature will appear only and exclusively in Hakewe.

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