



**Storytellers Pt. 3:**  
Ruby Bellanger

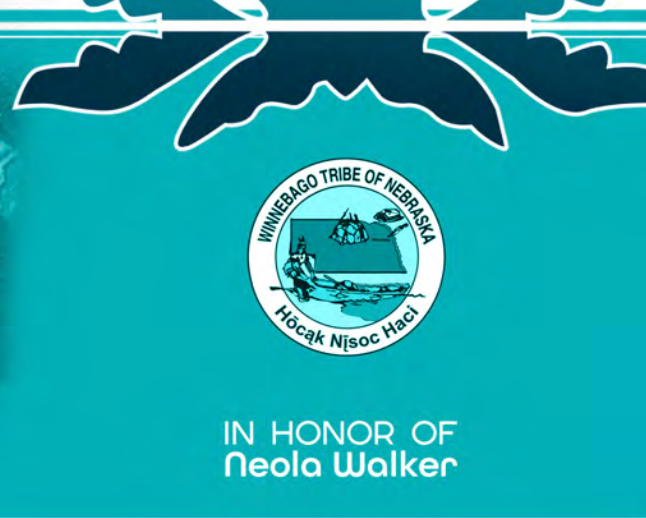
pages: 6-7



**The Class of 2024!**  
Photos inside

pages: 4, 5 & 9

Volume 53, Number 11 **Mā Hitawus wīra** Saturday, May 25, 2024  
*Earth Drying Moon*



Our masthead this issue features Winnebago tribal member, Henry Roe Cloud / Wonah'ilay hunk ga [1884-1950] HRC was born on our reservation in 1884 and was soon orphaned by both parents. He was sent to Genoa Indian School along with his brother. He traveled east to attend prep school in Massachusetts. He graduated as Salutatorian from Mt. Hermon Prep in 1906. He then attended Yale College, graduating with a BA in psychology and philosophy in 1910. Later he earned a master's degree from Yale (Anthropology) in 1914. Henry took the name Roe from his adoptive parents during his undergraduate years. Working in education throughout his career, he brought attention to the under-education of Indian people at all levels. Haskell Indian Nations University bestowed his name to one of their dorms in honor of his service there as Superintendent. We are featuring him here in light of this year's robust commencement activities. Our people have been creating educational pathways forever, both foundationally academic and culturally historic.

## WHS Graduates 48 for Class of 2024



*By Brian Chamberlain  
Photos by Garan Coons / archives*

[Winnebago, NE] On Sunday, May 12th, 2024, Winnebago Public High School held its commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2024 here. Their class moto: "We've learned from the bad times and were humbled by the good." With forty-eight graduates walking across the stage the event was as exciting and commemorative as ever. "We made it!" stated class Salutatorian, Devin Houghton, during his commencement speech delivered to the crowd.

Winnebago Public School has graduated some large classes in recent times. Some of those numbers reaching toward sixty plus students. While this year's class was not quite that large, the sentiments and emotions ran just as high. Class Valedictorian,

Melodine Earth, addressed those in attendance providing her underclassmen with some sage advice from her years at WHS; "you don't have to be perfect." She went on to describe how learning to reach beyond your personal comfort zone can provide many welcome surprises, as it did for her.

As is now tradition for the graduates of Winnebago High, the matriculated class were presented with several gifts, including star quilts and honor songs. Because the event also fell on the national holiday, which is Mother's Day, the speakers from the class offered their own brand of well wishes. Salutatorian, Devin Houghton coyly said, "... this counts as your gift, right?" meaning his diploma and speech to his own family. The crowd chuckled appropriately as the good feeling from the day swelled.

The members of the Class of 2024 have

a wide array of plans following their graduation. Athletes, academics, and those focused on their careers were all celebrated. Besides the numerous scholarships offered and accepted, the students also recognized how simply reaching for new goals is amply part of any good plan to move forward. "I'm so proud of everybody..," said Valedictorian, Melodine Earth as she recalled examples of achievement and progress for her classmates.

The Winnebago Indian News congratulates each of the graduates. Our best wishes for your bright future go with each of you. Ladies and Gentlemen, we proudly repeat the presentation of this year's graduating class from Winnebago High School – the Class of 2024.

## Nįšoc Nįgešana Bago Bits

By: Tyler Snake

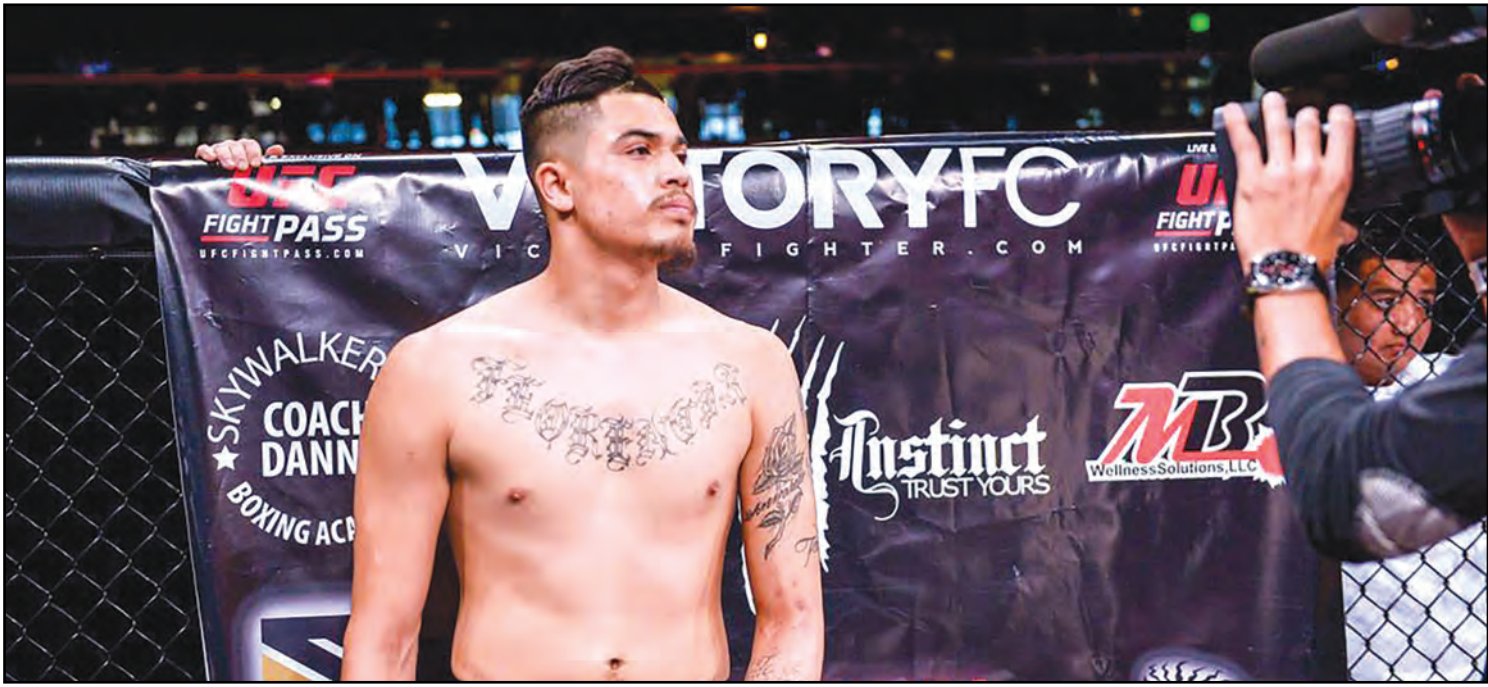


Beginning May 10th, the Village Farmers Market is back every Friday. The hours usually range from 10am-5pm, weather permitting. Woodland Trails is the next location if moved due to the weather. The season will last until October 25th. This is the 5th year running! Local Vendors bring their goods ranging from: breakfast/lunch, baked goods, fresh vegetables, beadwork, regalia, quilts, handcrafted decor, raffles and more! Stop by and support local small businesses.



The Winnebago County Roads crew are replacing the bridge on the South-end of town, heading towards Walthill. Roundabout traffic has taken longer with the one-way lane stoplights, as a result Sunrise Drive and the Twelve Clans Unity Hospital traffic has risen. The bridge will be getting a 72-inch aluminum corrugated metal pipe replaced. Construction is expected to end mid July. The bridge was built in 1917. The picture shown above was taken in 1972 after it was widened from 18 to 24 feet and had rails added. Questions can be directed to the County Engineers Office at 641-585-2905. Pictured above is the current progress.

## TRINIDAD-SNAKE WINS BKFC BOUT



*By Brian Chamberlain  
Photos: Garan Coons / Brian Chamberlain / BKFC*

[Omaha, NE] Inside a packed Liberty First Arena, Carlos Trinidad-Snake took only 13 seconds in the opening round to defeat his competitor here. Although the round completed its full measure of time, Trinidad-Snake knew he had dealt a finishing blow following an early round exchange. "I'm not a doctor at all and I recognized right away that it was broken - just by the way it was hanging," he stated about his opponent's broken jaw during a post-fight

interview held with The Big Voice Radio's Bago Sports Talk Show.

Trinidad-Snake went on, "There was just a loud snap. Like as soon as it happened. I feel like some people thought we butted heads or something because it was a real fast exchange. But it was definitely the jaw." Recounting that first round's events have become the norm now for the young fighter who hails from Omaha, Nebraska. The short bout essentially decided in just 13 seconds due to his quick upper cut which landed squarely on his opponent's jaw causing the match-up to be called for Trinidad-Snake by TKO. Trinidad-Snake was pitted against

Dustin Pague of Pennsylvania. A fellow fighter then ranked #4 in the welter-weight class for the BKFC [Bare Knuckle Fighting Championship].

The event was full of hype and delivered on all points. The arena hosting the event was sold out and the online subscriptions were strong. When asked about his pre-fight prep, Carlos explained, "You gotta know what your mission is. That's it. All this other stuff is just another night in the office, another night in the gym. This is all the extra. The

Con't. on page 2...



# Wāgax'ap cōwe hijaira

Front Page Continued

## Cont. from front pg. - TRINIDAD-SNAKE WINS BKFC BOUT

cameras and stuff, they just get a viewing." Trinidad-Snake told the Bago Sports interviewers all about his level of focus prior to the fight. Quoting boxing champion Mike Tyson during that interview, it was clear the 28-year-old knew how to remain vigilant to the task at hand.

While Trinidad-Snake knew he had dealt a damaging blow early on, he did not know the severity of his hit until the bout was called in his favor just before round two was set to begin. On his competitor, Trinidad-Snake rained accolades of respect for being a warrior willing to stick it out despite his then unknown injury. He said Pague told him, "He told me after the fight that he knew he had that one chance to finish the round and go for it. And he definitely did." The TKO was declared for Trinidad-Snake following a ring-side examination from onsite medical staff.

Up next is the probability of a title match up with reigning BKFC Champion, Austin Trout. Trout is a former boxing champion who has taken to the bare-knuckle realm

in recent years. Immediately following the win, Trinidad-Snake confidently exclaimed, "Austin Trout, you ain't (expletive)," He went on saying, "You've got nothing for me, dude. You're holding my belt, and I'm coming for it at the end of the year." Due to the rules of the championships, that pending fight is yet to be scheduled. Most likely however, it will be set for some time near the later quarter of 2024, if not beyond.

Carlos graciously accepted The Big Voice's hosting for his post victory interview in Winnebago. Showing his solid upbringing, he remained humble and held much respect for his family as well as for the fans of his who are now growing exponentially in number. "Thanks for all the support. It means a lot. I'm working to give you guys a world champion," he stated proudly. Moving now to an undefeated 5-0, this young and humble Winnebago son definitely has not reached his peak. Trinidad-Snake is the son of Annabelle Trinidad-Snake, and grandson of the late Lenore Snake.



**MID-MONTHLY  
Winnebago Tribal Council  
Meetings will now  
be held at  
9:00 AM**

## Hōcāk Hoit'e

"Set/Lay/Stand it commands"

Niġe kaṇaṅkre.	Nee-gay kah-nahk-rday	Set it somewhere.
Niġe wakaṇaṅkre.	Nee-gay wah-kah-nahk-rday	Set them somewhere.
Niġe t'ūpre.	Nee-gay d'oop-rday	Lay it somewhere.
Niġe wat'ūpre.	Nee-gay wah-d'oop-rday	Lay them somewhere.
Niġe kerere.	Nee-gay kay-rday-rday	Stand it somewhere.
Niġe wakerere.	Nee-gay wah-kay-rday-rday	Stand them somewhere.



## LITTLE PRIEST TRIBAL COLLEGE

Our Mission: "Be Strong and Educate My Children"

Little Priest Tribal College is now taking applications for the following positions:

- Admissions Coordinator
- Vice President of Teaching and Learning
- Learning Lab Specialist
- Maintenance and Security Assistant
- Student Interns
- Tutors
- Extension and Equity Student Intern

For more information, visit us on the web at:  
<https://www.littlepriest.edu/human-resources-office/>  
LPTC is an equal-opportunity employer.  
**LPTC 601 E. College Dr. Winnebago, NE**



# Wāgax hūk ra wāgax hokik'una

Letter to the Editor

## SUICIDE IN INDIAN COUNTRY PART 47

### A Word About Depression

Most suicidal people are depressed. Depression is the common cold of modern life. Unfortunately, most depressions go undetected and, therefore, untreated. The good news is that depression is generally time-limited and quite treatable. The symptoms include nervousness, crying, inability to concentrate, poor sleep, fatigue and a general or specific loss of interest in friends, food and fun, and, for most, recurring thoughts of death and suicide.

As a caring friend or family member, you need to know a couple of things about depression and suicide. First, since depression saps energy and purpose, sometimes the depressed person is "too tired" to carry out a suicide plan. However, as the depression finally begins to lift, the suicidal person may suddenly feel "well enough" to act. Therefore, any sudden "happiness" in a depressed person should be challenged directly with the question, "Have you decided to kill yourself?"

As strange as it sounds, once someone decides to end his or her suffering by suicide, the hours before death are often filled with a kind of chipperness or even a blissful calm. Again, this change in behavior may mean the person now has the energy to carry out an act of self-destruction.

If in doubt, never hesitate to ask, "Have you decided to kill yourself?" or "Are you feeling suicidal again?"

The person may lie to you, but this is unlikely. Whatever you do, do not talk yourself out of asking the question, and do not be lulled into a false sense of security. Tomorrow could be too late.

### A Word About Alcohol

People who finally take their lives by their own hand must pass through a sort of psychological threshold before they act - a kind of final wall of resistance to death. This wall is what keeps many seriously suicidal people alive.

Of all the things that can remove this wall of resistance to death, alcohol is the most dangerous. Quick-acting and readily available, alcohol at intoxicating levels is found in the blood of most completed suicides - whether or not they ever had a drinking problem.

To help your child, friend or loved one get through the days and weeks ahead and to strengthen this wall of resistance to death, asking them not to drink is very good medicine. Never offer them a drink or encourage drinking in any way. Alcohol makes depression worse, impairs thinking and judgment, and, like driving without a seat belt, often contributes to tragic accidents - including suicides.

Many people who are not sure they want to die drink to intoxication to dull their pain. Once under the influence, they may feel a kind of false courage to play dangerous games, such as overdosing on pills, loading a firearm, driving fast, etc. Major life decisions are difficult enough when a person is depressed and feeling helpless and hopeless; adding drunkenness to the problems can only make things worse - usually much worse.

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

## JESUS OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN OUTREACH



By: Pastor Ricky Jacob

### "Knowledge of the Truth"

'God our Savior, wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' [1st Timothy 2:3-5 NIV]. So what is knowledge? Knowledge is by definition: facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.

Now where can one find the knowledge about God our Savior?

Hint: it is not in looking and studying the world around us. Oh, one can see the handiwork of Creator God - in the creation. Yes, in the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets and galaxies one is or should be totally amazed! However, you will not find a label anywhere in these works that states: MADE by Creator God!

Yes, one can study the intricacies of the human body, the circulation system, the formation of the eye, or the various parts of the brain, but you will not come to knowing who designed one's stupendous body. Once again there is no label found on or inside a human body that states: MADE by Creator God! Such a belief is based solely on the teachings found in a book.

This book is God's Sacred Word, often referred to as the Bible. The Bible is a book of books that points one to some of the mysteries of the world - such as: creation and who is the Creator; where suffering and death come from; and what is to be expected after one's demise. Hidden in plain sight in this book is the knowledge of God's plan of salvation.

There are many people who have read the Bible but to no avail, to no benefit. Maybe they read it as a self-

help type of book. The Bible is not a self-help book. Nor is a book in which Creator God attempts to control one through fear.

Ultimately the Bible burst any thought that one can save or rescue oneself. Or that Creator God desires to control one through fear tactics. Rather one should be brought to the realization that one is powerless over sin and its consequences.

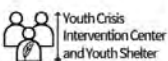
In other words, each and every person has disobeyed one's Creator and is in need of being rescued from the consequences of one's own rebellious actions. One's choice to not walk in God's ways leads one to banishing oneself from His loving presence in paradise.

God's Sacred Word is not a self-help book. Truth be told God's Sacred Word is a book about Jesus, the world's one and only Savior. Faith in Jesus Christ is one and only way to life everlasting and this is the truth!

The Holy Bible is the one and the only place where one can come to the knowledge of the truth! And in this word of truth, one comes to learn that God our Savior, wants all men to be saved! Creator God has provided the one and only one way to be rescued and that is through faith in Jesus whose bloody sacrifice and victorious resurrection from the dead offers the blessed hope of life everlasting.

Do not take me at my word. Rather take Creator God's son at his word. 'Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well" ' [John 14:6].

# QPR Training over Zoom



Elevate Your Skills to help others!

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide

- ◆ Date : 25 June 2024
- ◆ Time : Start At 12:00PM
- ◆ Location : Zoom

Reserve your spot now → [donna.wolff@winnebagotribe.com](mailto:donna.wolff@winnebagotribe.com)

Talking Circle for adults over 18 years old



## Join us for a sacred space. Thurs. June 20th at 5:30pm at YCIC.



A traditional, respectful sharing circle.

The Talking Circle is a safe space to share thoughts and emotions through sharing.

ADULTS ONLY!

The Circle is a time-honored tradition that encourages deep listening and heartfelt communication. No daycare provided.

To RSVP email: [charles.hindsley@winnebagotribe.com](mailto:charles.hindsley@winnebagotribe.com)

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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 Winnebago 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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CLASS OF 2024



# Congratulations!

## WINNEBAGO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



ALEXANDER WALKER



AMIAH TYNDALL



ANTOINETTE BLUE



BOBBIE RICHARDS



TREYLYNN SHERIDAN



CARRIMEN PRETENDS EAGLE



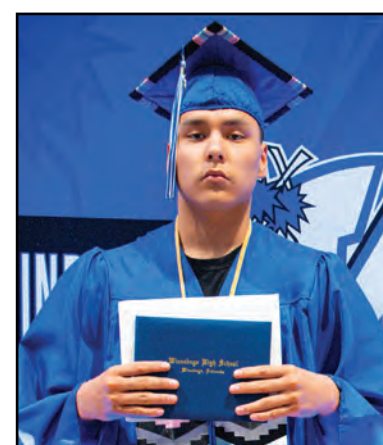
CASHUS KEARNES



DAMON PAYER



DARIAN EARTH



TYLEE BASSETTE



DEVIN HARDEN



DEVIN HOUGHTON



EARLY SNOW



ELLIE SMITH



WARRICK LONEWOLF



EUGENE DECORA JR.



FIONA SOAP



GIA SCOTT



HOWARD BASSETTE IV



XANTHONY CLEVELAND



JACIE WALKER



JAVON STOUT



JOSUE OLIVAREZ



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# WPS CLASS OF 2024



JULIUS BASS



KADEN KENNEDY



KHALEN LITTLEGEORGE-CLOUD



LEANGELA ROBINSON-LINCOLN



MACKENZIE WARE



MARCEL PICOTTE



MATEO CANALES



MELAKI GEORGE



MELODINE EARTH



MICHAEL HULIT



MIMIKE DOLEZAL



MISTY EAGLE



MYLA MILFORD



NIZU BAKER



OSCAR EARTH II



OTIS BASSETTE



QUINYA HARDEN



ROBERT RIVERA



SANTINO NIEMAN



TIMOTHY LAPOINTE



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# HAKWE

## Question of the Issue:

*If you could go back in time to your high school graduation, what would you tell yourself?*

**Garan:** I graduated high school in 1999. I would say don't worry about the Y2K bug; it wasn't nothing. I would also say, stop listening to R. Kelly and P. Diddy! Watch those artists with abbreviated names. haha!

**Brian:** Hmm, in 1990 I just wanted to escape. I'd probably just tell myself to store the keepsakes better. All those things, like my yearbook and class senior pix got tossed by someone else. I wish I still had them, because I had everyone's. ... oh, and "follow your dreams." ;-p

**Tyler:** this one really had me thinking. I'd tell myself to focus on my goals rather than having fun. I don't regret the memories though :)

**Kevin:** If I was able to go back and tell my young self at graduation, would be, stick it out in college, you can have way more fun later. Oh! and your first love is not your last. EDITOR'S NOTE: ¡ADIO!

**Christina:** Don't overthink your decisions and when you decide on something just do it!

**Bethani:** In 2012, I couldn't wait to be on my own. I would tell myself to stay focused! Continue pursuing my education & do not give up - no matter what! I'd end the convo with a big bear hug while whispering, "change those shoes before the ceremony!" :)



## STORYTELLERS

*Ruby Bellanger (part 3 - finale)*

The Winnebago Indian News sat down recently with a special tribal member, Ruby Bellanger. Ruby agreed to speak with us after I 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, the WIN assured her that our readers wanted to hear her points of view and her experiences – opinions intact, so 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.

WIN (W) – *(On being a judge)*

Ruby B. (R) – For one thing, it's the, I'm still from the old school and I'm looking at it as the washboard because they're singing those songs, you know. I'm looking for their arm movement, and some of their feet are going a little bit too fast, and some are actually jumping.

That's what I look for. Some of our girls now they're arms are coming out. They're supposed to stay close. And they keep them down here. But now they're ending those songs like this [arms misplaced]. I'm looking at them as washboard dancers.

(W) – *(MC at powwow)*

(R) – There was always kind of somebody. As far as I can remember there was an MC. And that's how we knew the songs, what family they belonged to and stuff like that. Because one of my earlier ones I remember [was] Sam Tebo. It was whoever. Everything now is so organized. We weren't really that strict, organized. Sam got up there and talked. Different ones asked him, can we do the such and such song? And he'd you know announce it. It was just a fun time.

(W) – *(powwows being organized)*

(R) – I think it was better [back then]. Because now things can't happen because people go, oh no we can't have that because at 2 o'clock we're having this or we're doing this. It's too cut and dried now. It's better when things just sort of happen. And now we try to end the powwow early on Sunday so people can get home. But back in our day, we didn't care when they got home. We went until the singers got done singing. [laughs] Somebody made mention to me, well if they're in that big of a hurry to get home, what did they come here for? And then they're powwow people! So, they have this all figured out, so we don't need to be cutting it short like that, but we do, so they could get home. But most powwows do now, all over.

(W) – *(dancing traditionally / after session)*

(R) – I always did. No fancy. ...just after hours [laughs] I got fancy. [laughs] I was darn fancy! [laughs] After the singers got done singing, they'd wait about maybe half-hour once we got electricity out there. Because we had just three or four light bulbs burning out there. They'd shut off the lights. The singers would come back into [the arena] and sing for us kids. We used to have Dave Littlebear and the Funmaker boys from Wisconsin and some of our local singers. They'd come back and sing for us. That's when we'd act up. One time there was this stray dog. He [Dave] [loosely gestures hands] tied a rope around its neck and he told one of the girls, now you have to do the dog dance. So she takes that [rope] and she's just dancing away with this dog. We used to have fun like that. Kids don't have that kind of fun anymore.

(W) – *(powwow activity)*

(R) – Sometimes when I was really young, like about 9, 10, just starting. I used to be a little bit embarrassed because we had a lot of drunks. We don't have that any more in the arena and stuff like that. There used to be a lot of drinking. So that's one good thing. I'm glad that stopped. Kind of stopped all over really. I think. That used to be a little bit embarrassing. Because them were the days when we had like white people at the powwow. We don't have that many white people [anymore]. Because if you think about it, everybody has a powwow. Everybody. Even people that don't even know how to powwow have a powwow. Powwows are dime a dozen now. So I think the few white people we get, they just happen to be going down the road and saw a sign and pulled in. But there used to be a lot, lots of white people.

(W) – *(changes in regalia)*

(R) – We used to wear a lot, not a whole bunch, but glass beads. Now they wear those seashells. And they're so thick! We never had that when we were [young]. Cause one time I told this one girl, cause she had so many [on], I said, I see you went down to the seashore again. Of course, she got mad at me and I thought, I better go sit down [laughs]. I went and sat down. And that was over kill. But see again we're doing that so the judge will look at me. A lot of that is because they're contest people.

I like the way the young girls [dress] now, and the material that's out there, they put their colors together. They're just beautiful. I just like them all. Colors you think wouldn't go together, but the way they know how to put them together, it's really pretty. They make some, the girls are making pretty outfits.

(W) – *(a judge's advice)*

(R) – We just judge. What would I tell them? To find out about their feathering. Why they're getting [it] and who it is and why he can give it to you. Because the veterans now days are a big part of our powwow, and a lot of our kids don't know anything about World War II, or Korea. They maybe know a little bit about Vietnam, but they don't know why we're doing half the stuff we're doing. I just think they need to know that. For whatever reason, I wish they knew about the Holocaust, and stuff like that, what a lot of our guys went through. Which they never talk about, which is bad in a way. But there's things they could learn. But they don't know why we're doing half the stuff we're doing out there.

When I ran it, I never judged, I just took care of the tally. And never cheated! [laughs] The women I picked for judges they knew what they were doing. [the regalia] That's some of the stuff they look at. Dancing is kind of it. That's what I notice mostly, they judge by. When you talk about the dancing, what do you look for? One of the things is they don't dance on their toes. I said, I don't pick ballerinas. Because [our] women dance flat on their feet. [lightly beats table] They don't toe dance. I don't, I won't judge a fancy dancer or jingle, because I don't know nothing about them dances. So, I don't like to judge them.

(W) – *(seeing jingle dress first)*

(R) – I learned [about] it out in California. In fact, Joe was a Chippewa. His people sent Denise a little dress. And I thought, oh that's a jingle dress? And then older ones start coming out. It kind of made me take notice a little more. I just thought it was a cool dance. Some other tribe, that's fine with me. Whatever they want to do.

(W) – *(jingle being an Ojibwa dance)*

(R) – Yeah that's where I heard it came from. There is a big story behind it. But now it's nowhere near like it was. They're all fancy. If you watch some of them girls I thought, I bet she used to be a fancy dancer. Because boy she's lifting her legs and what have you. They just changed [over time].

(W) – *(the future around the arena)*

(R) – I guess what I really want, is I want to see our men up there. We just don't [have many], I mean we got the women and they're still dressed like we used to dress. But these women that's got little boys they gotta start putting them out there. But they don't want to put out for them. Anymore these outfits cost money. They can go to the casino and what have you, but they can put that money into their children. But they got to get those little boys out there.

And that's just kind of true not even being around the arena. Look at all our committees, it's women. And with Winnebago's it's supposed to be the men. So that's what I want to see. I want to see them taking back responsibility for what they're supposed to do. But again, that's just like the mothers. They don't know what to, what to teach their children, so it's the same with the men.

(W) – *(enjoying the powwow event)*

(R) – [I like] meeting different people. Looking at different outfits. Not so much the stand, or the vendors, but the actual people that are out there dancing, looking at how they're dressed. Because it's so inter-tribal now. I like looking at all of them.

(W) – *(return of grass dancers)*

(R) – Oh I like that! Because in the 19... somewhere around the 50s. My cousin came from South Dakota. He was a grass dancer. His name was Harold Rave. That was the first time I met him. He was my uncle's boy. His mother was a Sioux woman. But the Siouxs raised him. We were, like I said we didn't have grand entry. We were kind of in and out. We heard these big old cow bells and we were like, wow, who's that? He came into the arena and he started dancing and that's what he was. He was a grass dancer. He took the powwow by storm I should say. [laughs]

Later that evening, I think one of my aunts said, come over to the tent we want you to meet somebody. I thought, oh here we go, another old relative from Wisconsin [laughs]. And it was Harold. Then he moved down here. He was around my age so we had a

lot in common. So that's how I got introduced to the grass dancers. That was in the 50s.

And those outfits are easy to make. You don't need feathers. You don't even have to have beadwork. You needed a roach, but by them days everybody [did their own]. That's why we had a lot of little ones. And that was a good way to start the little ones off, with the grass dance outfits. Because they were easy to make.

(W) – *(if going back 50 years)*

(R) – 1970, what would I hold on to? Just try to, I guess the way we still attend funerals and wakes. Because I just don't think they're getting the respect of what they're all about. Now they're like party time USA. Mostly we need to hang onto a lot of our traditions.

(W) – *(on language)*

(R) – I like the language program. It's been here forever. I think in the 90s didn't it start? So, by now the majority of us should be talking Winnebago. Because it's been here so long. But I still don't hear it out here.

(W) – *(about wakes and funerals)*

(R) – Something I notice now days. I feel bad for our children because of this technology. You go to a wake. The children now days, their parents are young. Even with the parents, they're all sitting there on their [phones]. Nobody is listening to that individual talking. That's where I learned a lot of stuff. People stood up and talked and you listened. But now, nobody pays attention. It's just kind of like I don't even know if they know they're being disrespectful because it's almost just the norm. That our kids do not know nothing.

With this technology there's certain things you do that at wakes at funerals. That's the Winnebago way. Not the Native American Church, the Catholic, the Dutch [Reformed] it's the Winnebago way. Nobody kind of pays any attention to that. So there's just [a lot there]. And our kids are definitely not paying attention, so where are they gonna be 10 years from now? Where they gonna be? They don't know nothing. They don't wanna know nothing. So language is being taught, which is good, but there's no traditions being taught. Along with everything.

With this technology, I don't find it funny. I don't know what I find [it]. People are putting, say I passed away, Heavens forbid! Somebody's gonna put on Facebook, oh Ruby we're really gonna miss you. Am I on Facebook when I'm dead?! They're talking to me, a dead person, on Facebook! I find that, to me that's kind of a cop out. Because, ok, I put it on Facebook. So I don't have to go out to the wake. I don't have to sit with the family. I don't have to be there for them. I already put it on Facebook, I'll pray for you. That's something, I said. I just don't care for technology. I mean it's good but know when to use it. And we don't use it for something like that.

I've been going to so many and then growing up. The best thing we have to offer, maybe not anymore because everybody's got jobs, we got money. But my growing up, the best thing you could give somebody was food. That's why we eat a lot, in everything we do. And we always had soup. So we always have to have soup.

A relative of mine, one time we were at a memorial. When we got done eating my relative said, oh gee that was too much food, showing off. And I said, no, no. They're not showing off. They're giving the best they got. And what we ate is the best they got. [In] my growing up we had soup, frybread and a little haas. You know what haas is? Something sweet. And that was the best that family had. But now days, she said, oh I never thought about that. Because that's what you give. That's why if you ever notice everything we do, we eat.

But something that bothers me, when we go to eat, people bring in their own drinks. Some bring in their food to give to their kids. Which, that's another old story. And if you're bringing it, you'd better be able to share it. But you look at everybody, they're all sitting around with [their own]. And that shouldn't be, because the people who are sponsoring everything, they put out a lot of money to for this food to make it nice for you. And you bring your own food and little drinks? A little weird there.

(W) – *(funeral meals)*

(R) – I kind of think I remember when they started doing this cafeteria style eating, was when that white church was there. What was that, a Presbyterian? We called it a white church because only white people went there. The Indians went to the Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed. So anyway, that's when I noticed that and I thought, hmm that's kind of weird. But now everybody does it. Everybody does it.

And then, when it's a funeral, the family always eats first. And now they have somebody fixing a plate for me. But I'm just sitting there waiting to get in line. I'm not waiting for food. So when these young people that are passing out the food, they'll bring me a dish, and I go, no, no. Some day may be the day I'll need you to wait on me, but today isn't the

*Con't. on page 7...*



## CONT. STORYTELLERS PT. 3

day. Go give that plate to a mourner that's still in line trying to eat. So see the people in charge don't even know that. You're not supposed to, you know. If I'm sitting there and I'm that old and can't get up, my relative that I came with, cause I'm sure must have come with [someone], they're supposed to, as they're going through the line bring me a dish. But don't feed me first, because that's the family.

Even the family sometime don't know what to do. Because a couple of times I had to tell them, you gotta sit down cause they were [moving around] after everybody left, and I know they were shook up and whatever, they're trying to clean the table and sweep and stuff. I said, you're not supposed to do nothing. You just sit there. And they go, oh... well. I know they're all shook up, but that's not the way it's supposed to go.

When it's a funeral, and whoever you put in charge, their wife takes over the whole [meals] or their lady relatives takes over the whole morning, noon, night, you know. When you have memorials, then it's the family eats last. But now, I was just at one last week, and the person in charge said, ok we'll start with the family. And I thought, nah. But what am I gonna do, jump up and say No!? Even the people in charge [misunderstand].

(W) – (*children at wakes / funerals*)

(R) – My growing up, I went with my grandma wherever something was going on. But I better not talk. Or get up and run around or whatever. I just knew that. And half the time I didn't want to go because I couldn't behave. [laughs] So you just knew, but that's what you were taught. But see we're not teaching our children that. We're letting them run and play these machines. Just not paying attention. Sometimes maybe it's ok, cause some of those little ones. But you don't bring them if they can't behave.

(W) – (*the person in charge telling the family to let go*)

(R) – That's what I mean. When that person's standing up there talking. That's what they talk about. Even if they repeat it over and over again. That's how you learn it. That's how I learned it. Nobody sat me down. Winnebagos don't cry. We don't wail, or boo hoo. We shed tears, but we don't cry. But that's what they should be standing up there talking about. And that's what they did say. Even when we'd be in the car going up to the cemetery, they'd used to say, don't look back. You can't be looking back. They say you're looking for them. I never looked back, because I didn't want to be looking for [them]. Our kids don't even know that. If you really listen to them or talk to them they don't know. So somewhere along the line we gotta get some culture into these children. But it's so easy to give them that phone and [say] here, sit down here, and drink your pop.

(W) – (*on more funeral thoughts*)

(R) – I very seldom tell people that kids had to eat last. Because now we feed them first to get them out of the way. If you didn't [eat what's taken], they never did pass around a garbage can. You took everything home. But like I said, I've seen kids throw big chicken breasts away. I thought, why did that mother let that kid take that [big] piece of meat? It just made me sick. Because I grew up when food was a little bit on the scarce side.

(W) – (*on early meaning of being enrolled*)

(R) – The way I understand it. Being young, was just oh you belong to the government, and they got you on a list. But as I got older, I was with my two [friends]. Do you remember Agnes and Yvonne Saint Cyr? We were sitting around teenagers talking about boys and their dad came through and he knew what we were talking about. He said, you girls, just remember you can't pair apples and oranges. So we just kind of looked at him. We didn't say nothing, but years later I guess what he was trying to say was, you marry within your own kind. But as far as enrollment, it was just on a list. Because we belonged to the government. They took care of us.

(W) – (*enrollment status*)

(R) – What makes me mad today. Here we are in 2024 and they still think we get things for free. Nothing's free. Whatever we get our ancestors paid for it by giving up land. That's the way I look at it. It's funny you asked that, because just a couple of weeks ago I was down to Blackbird Bend Casino and this white lady I know we started talking. I said, Oh my goodness have you retired yet? She said, oh no I have to work a couple years. I have to fix my house yet. And I said, oh yeah I'm thinking about moving to a smaller place. And she said, well move out there. [gestures hand] This white lady's from Winnebago. She said move out to those units out there. I said, no. I haven't paid rent in so long. I hate to start paying rent. She said, what? You don't get those for free? She thought we could move in out there [for free]. I said, no we gotta pay like \$500 dollars. She was just like taken back. I thought, lady where have you been? She lives here in Winnebago. That's just shows

you there's no communication. She doesn't have anything to do with [the tribe].

(W) – (*influence of using other Indian blood*)

(R) – I think it's good. Because we need the people. And if they've got enough. I don't know what a low number would be, 1/16th? That's kind of [low]. That's kind of grabbing at it. But I like something you said. You talked about lineal descent. If you can ask the right questions. You know, say I'm trying to get on and under lineal descent. And you ask me who my, great-great, maybe go back 3 greats and I can't tell you. I don't know how you become a lineal descendant. Or what is it you know about the Winnebago tribe, and they can't tell you nothing. Then no, I shouldn't be on the roll. But those questions have to be, they have to be tough ones.

What does IHS use? Because when I go down there, I'm like where are you people coming from? Are you using the same [as the tribe]? I just think there has to be questions that really sock it to 'em. Because if you're going to say you're Winnebago then you better come up and prove it. If you can't go by blood.

(W) – (*in Ruby's world for enrollment*)

(R) – We got people that are almost like 5 different tribes. I saw something on Facebook I thought it was cute. They said, gee where were you conceived, at the Gathering?! [laughs]. I thought that was kind of cute. But I would want to pick up a little of every tribe. As long as they had some Winnebago in them, and they wanted to be a Winnebago. I would use that. Because 50, 100 years down the road we might not even be a tribe. Unless we start somewhere.

And I missed it, but I heard somebody got up and talked. [at the forum] But I thought that was over the wire there. [they said] if you're so worried about being a Winnebago, why don't you marry one? That's easier said than done. Because a lot of girls are saying, I married out of my tribe because everybody was my relation. And I said, yeah but you only go up to about 5 [generations] back. 4 or 5 back, whatever you want to make it, whatever you're comfortable with or the tribe [wanted]. That could still be your relation, but not like your 'kissing cousin', you know what I mean? Because I thought, what'd they do a long time ago? Because everybody was related.

(W) – (*on mobility of tribal members*)

(R) – When we did go to Sioux City, because we weren't welcome in all the stores. They say we were, but you got that treatment where everybody looked at you. We stayed down on what they called 'Lower Fourth.' That's where a lot of the drinking and pan handling happened. I loved it, when I went to Sioux City. Oh yeah, I liked it because I got to see some of my relatives. I think I just had to be around Indian people. And like I said most of them were my relatives! [laughs].

(W) – (*going down to Omaha*)

(R) – My grandkids chuckle when I tell them. They can't believe I did a lot of fighting when I was young. My mother lived in Omaha, and every now and then she'd come get me and I'd go down there for about a week and I'd have to come back to Winnebago. Which is ok. But down there there's a little bit of everything. One time I said I want to go to school down here. They said, I don't think you're gonna make it. I go, yeah I like it. I must have been in the 5th grade. Sitting behind me was a black boy. And we were looking at a book. There was a picture of a white man, a black man, a Asian, and a Indian. He tapped me and he said, is this you? He pointed to the Indian. I said, yeah that's me. Is this you, and I pointed to the African-American. You know he got mad and after school him and I had to fight. I beat him. [laughs] But I was more scared of Dwight! Because Dwight was down in Omaha. We were down there together. And if I didn't win, Dwight would beat me up. I was more scared of Dwight! [laughs] more than I was of that kid. Years later I thought, I wonder why he got mad? [laughs]

I didn't let nobody say anything bad about the Indian. Because I was right on them. And I hated Sioux City. Because they'd be walking across that via dock. If they guys got out of that car, I swear I probably would have threw them over that bridge. We all lived under that via dock. My uncles did. They worked at the packing house, so that's why they lived in Sioux City. But I liked it down there because I never seen such a [group]. When I think back on it, so many people of all different races living together in South Bottoms. And they were all friends with each other. We can't even do that today.

(W) – (*being in Omaha*)

(R) – It wasn't like an eye-opener, because I had been to Sioux City, so I knew what city life was like. But I didn't particularly care for it because you couldn't go to many places. I didn't stay there too long. That's why I lived with my grandma for a reason. I just went there for a few days and then came home. It wasn't like a culture shock or anything because I was used to Sioux City.

(W) – (*on relocation*)

(R) – When I was out on relocation. I was just walking around our neighborhood. There was a Japanese man in his yard. I walked by. He said Hello. I said Hello. He said, can I ask you something? I thought, he's gonna ask me what I am? And I said, sure. He did. But I told him right off I'm a member of the Winnebago tribe from Nebraska. And he goes, well what are you doing out here? I gave him a spiel on relocation. And he said, that's the same program that when the war ended that they went on. And that's why when I was married in Idaho a lot of Japanese lived in Idaho. They used to have a concentration camp there. The government put them there and they all became potato farmers.

(W) – (*more on relocation*)

(R) – When I was out in California I worked for the post office. In Oakland, California. I was the only Indian in that joint. Thousands of workers. Big post office. One time when I was standing in line waiting to clock in and I hear someone say, hey Crazy Horse! And I thought, oh crap. There's a lot of [ethnicities]. So I thought, oh no, so I didn't say nothing. But she said it about 3 times, and it started to get quiet because everybody else waiting to clock in. So, I turned around and I said, are you talking to me? And she said, yes I am! Well, I said, let me tell you, my name is Ruby Bellanger. I wish you wouldn't call me that, because he's one of our famous chiefs. I said, would you like it

if I called you Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? And it got just quiet! I did have a friend, a black girl who we used to go to lunch together, and she went, Bwaa-haa haa! [laughs]. She just busted out laughing. And that kind of broke the ice. That girl said, no I wouldn't. I said, well alright then, my name is Ruby Bellanger. I said it again. But I had to hold my ground otherwise I would have got beat up. After that it was good.

I'd get different questions once they found out it was Indian. This one black guy said, can I ask you something? They always start out with that. So I said, what? He said, did you ever go to a cowboy and Indian show? And I said, yeah, I did. Who'd you root for? I said, I root for the Indians! I said, what about you, when you go to see a Tarzan show, who'd you root for? He said, you know what, I must have been dumb because I was rootin' for Tarzan! [laughs] So I have met a lot of crazy people. But I had to hang in with them. So I've had a colorful life.

(W) – (*in closing*)

(R) – I never done nothing like this before. But it seems like I have a lot to say because I'll be 86 years, or am I 86 now? I'm gonna be 86 here in July. Or 87? [laughs] I lie so much [about age] I don't know! [laughs]. So that's pretty old. And I've done a lot of things.

Thank you, Ruby for telling us your stories. Come back anytime and share some more. – WIN.







## Ho-Chunk, Inc. Introduces Legacy Learning to Boost Workforce

Ho-Chunk, Inc.'s new Legacy Learning Program is housed within the Community Development Department and is overseen by Janelle DeCorra, Program Manager. This is an 8-week pilot program addressing two issues that were identified in the Economic Impact Study: lack of males in the workforce and child poverty.

The Legacy Learning program provides tribal and community members opportunities to cultivate skillsets through hands-on learning, workforce readiness training, and life skills development through an intentional curriculum. The program's curriculum was intentionally designed to integrate institutional and generational knowledge through the legacy learner's instructors. This pathway program promotes personal and professional development for tribal members into part-time/full-time positions within the Winnebago community.

The first cohort will be wrapping up at the end of May.

A big thank you goes out to Ho-Chunk Construction Group for purchasing tools and Ho-Chunk, Inc.'s Community Impact and Engagement department for purchasing work boots for the Legacy Learners upon completion of the program.

For more information on the Legacy Learning Program, please contact Janelle at [jdecora@hochunkinc.com](mailto:jdecora@hochunkinc.com) or 402-506-9951.



Racheal Johnson during the Career Workshop helping the Learners to develop resumes and cover letters.



Legacy instructor Vince helping Christian Roberts and Marcos Bass to read the tape measure for accurate measurements.

## What's In A Watershed?

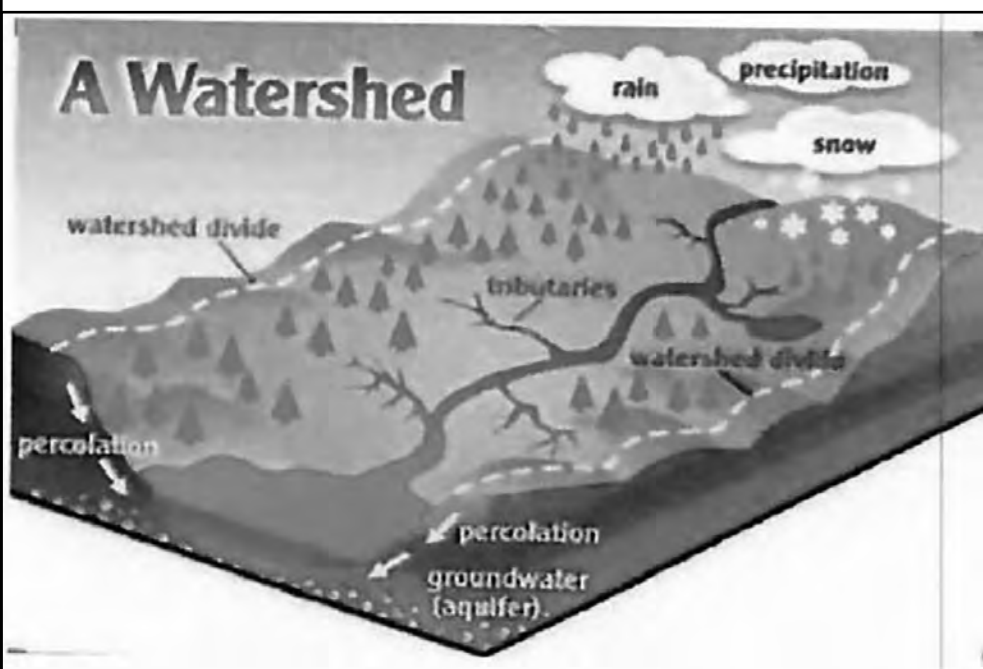
Have you ever climbed to the top of a hill and turned completely around taking in the view? What do you see? Some might say a valley below with a stream journeying through that joins with a lake. Others might say another hilltop, trees, fields, buildings, roads, wetlands, or grassy knolls. The list could go on. But what one really is witnessing is the presence of a watershed.

A watershed is the area of land that drains or sheds water into a specific receiving waterbody, such as a lake or a river. As rainwater or melting snow runs downhill in the watershed, it collects and carries with it sediment and other materials and deposits them into the receiving waterbody.

Imagine a giant funnel on the ground. When it rains, all the water that falls within the funnel flows towards the center and collects in a bucket. The funnel represents the watershed, and the bucket represents the common body of water where all the collected water ends up.

Healthy watersheds provide many ecosystems services including but not limited to natural cycling, carbon storage, erosion or sedimentation control, increased biodiversity, soil formation, wildlife movement corridors and habitat, water storage, water filtration, flood control, food, and recreation.

Just remember, that we all live in a watershed.



## Congratulations to Cory Cleveland (pictured left) and Marshall Bass! They successfully completed the Leadership Siouxland Class of 2024!

"I am beyond proud of them and their achievements. The way they represented themselves, the company, and the Winnebago Tribe throughout the 9-month program was the epitome of effective leadership and positive influence. Congrats fellas!" said Willy Bass, President of the Leadership Siouxland Board of Directors. Willy is a fellow Winnebago tribal member who manages Community Impact & Engagement for Ho-Chunk, Inc.

## A Day In The Life Of Omaha Creek



Hi everyone, this is Omaha Creek. I realize that we all have our good and bad days. But let me tell you all about a day in the life of Omaha Creek.

I will start by telling you that I am a major Reservation waterbody. I am a low gradient muddy bottom waterbody that flows from the south to the north eventually joining the Missouri River. Morgan Creek, Turtle Creek, and various smaller unnamed tributaries join me on my journey within the Reservation boundaries. I flow pretty much just west of Highway 77 and the railroad tracks expanding the entire Reservation draining approximately 37 square miles. Various wildlife, fish, birds, insects, and aquatic bugs call me home.

But don't let my pleasantries fool you. My approximately 6-mile journey through the Reservation brings with it many dangers and uncertainties. I face illegal dumping on my banks and in my water channel, crops being planted too close to the edge of the bank, pesticide and fertilizer applications that can runoff, cattle grazing stomping my banks, drought causing too little water, floods causing too much water, vegetative scouring after a heavy rainfall, low and high water flows, water quality issues, bank erosion resulting in heavy sediment loading.

Know that I can face a lot in one day, but I take it in stride and continue my journey like I have done for so many years in the past and intend to continue in the future. All I ask is that you hesitate before throwing your trash over the bridge. All I ask is that you consider other agricultural practices that reduce or eliminate the potential of pesticides and fertilizers getting into my current. To those individuals that are doing it already, thank you! All I ask is to be treated as a person, friend, and relative. I long for the days to hear children's laughter once again, feeling the touch of those taking refuge in my cooling waters, the quiet meditation of those seeking solace resting along my banks. I long for the day when my relationship with my brothers and sisters is restored. Come join me.



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