

Continuing the fight for our prepaid treaty rights



**CATHY ABRAMSON, DIRECTOR,
UNIT I**

Aanii! It was good to see many of you at our annual Sault Tribe powwow! Many tribal citizens feel this is their homecoming and this year's gathering proved to be a tremendous success! Chi Miigwech to Jackie Halfaday-Minton, Linda Grosset and Randy Menard, who put a lot of hard work and effort into preparing for this event. I must say, the spiritual gathering was one of

the best I have attended in a very long time. Chi Miigwech to Dean and Amy Sayers who gave us all those great teachings. Many more people attended this year and we all learned a lot. I had the opportunity to work with the Powwow Committee as its volunteer coordinator and I was very impressed with all the individuals who came out to help with our gathering. We had many volunteers and I would like to list them but there are just so many that I wouldn't want to miss anyone. Chi miigwech for all your help!

While I enjoy the Sault Tribe Powwow, my most favorite powwow is the Sugar Island Powwow. This is a place where many descendants of our ancestors camp out and get a chance to visit and rekindle relationships and learn much oral history of our people. I love it! Lots of family and friends visiting and dancing!

I have been extremely busy working on your behalf in the area of health care. I have to admit, when Indian Health Service was included in the sequestration cuts,

I felt defeated ... for a while. We worked so hard to keep that money for our people. Next year is not looking very favorable, either. However, I am not going to give up! I am happy that our chairperson has joined me in this effort. No one can deny his tenacity when it comes to battle for justice. Frankly, we need more of our leaders to do battle with the federal government.

I couldn't help but think of how our ancestors stayed the course and fought the battles that needed to be done to keep what they had. I can't help but think of all that has been taken away from us — our land, our language, many of our ceremonies, our culture and traditions. In an effort to help make a better life for our people (we were being overthrown), our ancestors signed treaties with the federal government. They were to provide health, education and social welfare to our people in exchange for our land. Yes, they took our land and tried to assimilate us into the white culture by forcing

our youth to leave their homes and attend boarding schools. Our land was slowly taken away and, unfortunately, slowly but surely pieces of our very being were taken away as we could no longer speak our beautiful language, we were restricted from our sacred gathering and fishing areas and we were made to feel less than human. Because our ancestors and past leaders stayed focused and worked hard to protect and preserve our way of life, we are bringing back our ways. Tribal nations across the country are now using their ways to become whole and healthy again. Instead of fighting amongst each other, it would be awesome if we channeled all that energy into doing battle with the federal government. We need to all get involved! I hope that in the near future, we will have a system developed so that our tribal members are able to easily contact our legislators. When this is established, I hope you will help us out.

I am very excited that

our Bemidji area (Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota) will be hosts to the National Indian Board's annual Consumer Conference. It will be held Aug. 26-29 at the Grand Traverse Hotel in Traverse City, Mich. This is the first time in 14 years that this large national conference is to be held in our area. I am very happy that the NIHB's board of directors voted to approve holding the conference in this area. This also came at an opportune time because, due to sequestration cuts, our tribes will not have to worry about big travel expenses with the conference being held in Traverse City. This will give tribes one more opportunity to obtain training in the Affordable Care Act and how it will better serve our people. All tribal leaders and health, insurance and legal staff are invited to attend.

Please know that I am working hard for you and if you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (906) 322-3823 or e-mail me at cabramson@saulttribe.net.