

Use common sense and prioritize, do no harm



JENNIFER MCLEOD, DIRECTOR, UNIT I

Aaniin Anishnaabek, This month my article is going to be a long one. As promised, I am including language and cultural information. The past month was filled with all of our regular meetings and workshops, and the information should be available online (if not now, soon). A great deal of my time was spent trying to convince the federal government to protect our tribe from sequestration. I, and others, spread the word that the relationship between the federal government and tribal nations is not

discretionary, but a trust relationship established by many treaties. Although some legislators seemed sympathetic, little to nothing was actually done to protect tribes. Congressman Benishek however, has taken quite an interest in our tribal clinics, and contacted me for a tour of our St. Ignace clinic on April 3. It would be great to have the opportunity for our tribe to host other federal leaders throughout our communities, as we have a wonderful story to share.

Even in these rather challenging times, we have good stories to tell. This month, I wish to share with you a story of the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Let's start with —

THE GOOD

New life has begun, the maple trees have awakened, and the sugarbush has been opened as it has for centuries among the Anishnaabek. As promised last month, I am including an Ojibwe language activity in my report. The sugarmaking moon word search is a fun way to learn vocabulary used when gathering and boiling maple sap, as well as making syrup or sugar.

I was taught that our people

did not originally make and store syrup, but rather sugar was made, and stored in containers made of birch bark or perhaps pottery. The island where I live, Sugar Island, was important to the sugar bush activities of our ancestors. It is named for its large stands of maple trees. Even now, in the spring, small sugar camps dot the island, as families tap trees, gather sap and boil it down in large cast iron pots or more modern evaporators. After a long cold winter, it is good to be outside again, walking in the woods, laughing with family and friends, all working together (just as in our early days) to obtain that sweet gift from the maple trees. Pancakes, waffles, frybread, coffee and tea all taste better with a little maple syrup!

Along with the word search puzzle, I am including a pronunciation guide to help you learn the words. Please keep in mind, that I am not a fluent speaker and am sharing with you what I have learned over the years. Sometimes the dialect may reflect the different sources of my learning but, as I taught my students, the most important thing is, "Do we understand each other?"

In the March issue of our paper, I stated that I believed that the greatest threat to our tribe is the loss of our language, and our culture. Together we can work to protect our tribe by **SPEAKING** our language, and **LIVING** our culture. Tapping maple trees, making syrup and sugar **IS LIVING OUR CULTURE**. If you need help with the words, call me or our culture department. Helping each other, we can all grow, and all share the good life of the Anishnaabe!

THE BAD

Sequestration has hit our tribe.

We will suffer a reduction of nearly \$2 million dollars due to politics in D.C. Neither side of the house will yield and, as a result, the citizens will suffer the consequences. The tribal board of directors is working very hard to find the best way to deal with the tribe's loss of federal dollars, however, strong differences of opinion exists as to what is "best." Here are my thoughts: First, let's use common sense and prioritize. Do all that we can so that **NO ONE** loses their job. Employees have told me that they would be willing to take furloughs to ensure that everyone keeps working. That makes sense to me.

Second, do no harm to the enterprises that make money for our tribe. Let them keep making money; in fact, we should be helping them so they can make **MORE** money, not less. Again, makes sense to me.

Third, if program cuts **HAVE** to be made, let us prioritize according to the survival needs of our people. Truly, I mean no offense to the fine employees who work in departments that do not provide shelter, food and health care. However, keeping our people safe in terms of basic needs is more important to me than some of the other activities that our many programs provide. Once more, it makes sense to me.

What does not make sense is cutting jobs for some, when employees are willing to take furloughs. It does not make sense to make cuts to our enterprises, they need to keep making money for us! If the sequestration cuts from the feds does not affect our enterprises, I feel they should be held harmless. We depend on the revenues our enterprises make. Let them do their job! It does not

make sense to take more revenue from our enterprises to replace funding lost through sequestration. If we do that, we are clearly telling the federal government that we don't need their money, we can handle it all on our own (and they may agree!) Does that make sense to you?

THE UGLY

No matter how we look at things, no matter what we do, it is going to be difficult and it is going to hurt our people, our employees and our communities. As I write this article, I already know that I am not in favor of a proposal being suggested by the chairman, it includes some of the above mentioned things that make no sense to me. However, it is not his alone to do, it is the responsibility of the entire board of directors. I pray that the board will continue to work together and not allow the ugliness of politics to become a part of this process. I have seen each director work diligently for the betterment of our tribe and I believe that they will continue to do so.

I am uncertain what lies ahead for our tribe, but I know that I will continue to put people first and will stand strong against those things that I think are not vital or absolutely necessary. I am grateful to all of you who have taken the time to call or visit with me this past month. I will be holding office hours on Thursdays from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the Nokomis-Mishomis Center in Sault Ste Marie. Please feel free to visit me there or, as always, call, text or email.

Bamapii and miigwech!

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Sugar Making Moon

G L M T E M P U P F W E I P D Z M R Y Y
 D I P X I F A X F R G O C U A U X Z L E
 B G T K N A G I Z I M A G A W I I H Z N
 S O W A C Y K Y Z W G T E Y K A N P Q I
 S A O J A H U I R E D A G R A X A T B B
 N I C B S D M Z L G E S I N A M S W V I
 W O I A A A A N S L V E A L B I I Q H S
 E P H J G N H W E I C U G R I S M M G H
 A Z F I A H Q R G G E F I S Z H Y B S A
 A B K R R A L K I A W E I Z N K W Y N A
 O S O W B F M F J K A A Z A I O J L K B
 I A T O O B A A N S T P A N I D G I W O
 G A A G A A G I M I Z H S K Z E K S P O
 L H S W V T P V M M O O N I W A T S E D
 V C K O L T Y P V L S C O W Z A T W R O
 Z R D T V Z V C S S S H Z G U Y A I S D
 A B W I Q N N X X D R J Z X O P J N Z E
 J R N A A B O O D A A N L U S P F L C B
 Q X Y C C A H F M B X M P J H T O U R U
 F V P F U X I K D Z T I X K S D X S K Q

Sugar making moon word search answers

WORD LIST	IN ENGLISH
Abwi	Paddle
Akik,	Kettle
Atoobaan,	Trough
Zispaagwadaatig	Maple Tree
Azhashki	Mud
Gaagimizh	Hemlock
Ishkode	Fire
Zoogopo	Snow
Iskigamizige	Boil Down Sap
Mamaajii	Stir
Manise	Cut Firewood
Mikwan	Ice
Misan	Firewood
Nibishaaboo	Tea
Naboob	Soup,
Negwaakwaan	Tap (For Sap)
Ziinziibaakwad	Sugar

Understanding Ojibwe vowel sounds

Aanishinaabe (Ojibwe) language guide to understanding vowel sounds:

- aa = ah as in awful, otter, aaniin (hello)
- a = nut, run, mkak (box)
- ay = mate, cake, miinanday (blue)
- ii = geese, meat, aaniin (hello)
- e = met, red, kwe (women)
- oo = know, no, go, zoogapoo (snow)

- o = wolf, cook, nimosh (dog)
- i = winter, it, zhibinaatig (pen-cil)

- Consonant sounds: B, d, g, h, j, k, m, n, p, s, t, w, y, z.
- Common sounds: zh, sh, enh, shk, ch, kw.
- Interchangeable letters (usually dialect difference): d/t, s/z, g/k, p/b, s/z, ch/j.
- Letters not in Aanishinaabe language: f, l, q, r, v, x.

Animate and inanimate words: People, places, or things (nouns) are considered animate (living) or inanimate (non-living).

How a noun is classified determines how it is made plural and the action (verb) is added. For example:

Here are the girls. (Girls are animate.) — Maaba kwesansak.

Here are the chairs. (Chairs are inanimate.) — Maanda pabwinan.