



Win Awenen Nisitotung

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Makwa Giizis
Bear Moon

Bahweting Bidajimowin • Official newspaper of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians



Lake State robotics receives 2% funding from tribe

BY SCOTT BRAND

Under the 2% agreement between the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the state of Michigan for gaming revenue sharing, the tribe is required to disburse 2% of its slot revenue to local units of government.

In the latest round of funding, Lake Superior State University's Robotics was the recipient of nearly \$10,000 helping to bolster Team AMORE (Autonomous Maritime Operations and Robotics Engineering) as it continues to build on past success in worldwide competitions.

"I am deeply grateful to the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians for their support through the 2% funding program," said Dr. Edoardo Sarda, who has led Team AMORE since its inception in 2021. "This investment allows Lake Superior State University to expand hands-on education and applied research in marine and freshwater robotics, giving students the opportunity to work with real-world autonomous systems in the Great Lakes environment. The impact extends beyond campus by supporting workforce development, innovation, and environmental stewardship that directly benefit our local and regional community."

While on the surface it would appear as though Team AMORE

would be limited to those pursuing a degree in robotics, it turns out there is a need for others seeking different engineering degrees, including computer, electrical, mechanical manufacturing and mechatronics with a little over 10% of the up-and-coming engineers joining the club. Their individual specialties can be utilized on the sub-team level — mechanical, software, electrical, marketing and logistics — providing team members to contribute in their areas of expertise.

"They don't get a grade for this," said Sarda. "It's all time they spend for their own benefit."

"It's a huge résumé builder," explained Hailey Greenleaf, a sophomore at LSSU who has just secured an internship for the summer crediting her Team AMORE experiences for helping to get her foot in the door. "It was a huge talking point for me."

In addition to honing their individual talents, Team AMORE members have also logged a lot of travel miles over the years, with some competitions taking them as far away as Australia and Norway when they venture outside the United States. Other trips are much shorter, with testing in the waters of southern Michigan or northern Ohio, depending on weather and even short trips to nearby waterways and the LSSU swimming pool.



Dr. Edoardo Sarda, left, with Leo Mandoka, a member of the Notawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi as they showcase the largest vessel in the Team AMORE fleet. The Robotics Program at Lake Superior State University recently received nearly \$10,000 from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the latest round of 2% funding which helps them to travel and compete throughout the United States and around the world gaining valuable experience in the students chosen field of study. See photos on page 14 in this issue.

The marine drones built by Team AMORE come in various shapes and sizes. The largest one requires disassembly before it can be taken out of the club's garage, while some of the smaller versions could share a hot tub.

The unmanned vehicles can also collect a wide range of important research collecting data on PH levels, monitor water quality and pollution, or even mapping a lake floor.

Team AMORE members travel

to local school districts where they build awareness about the opportunities available at LSSU.

"This helps bring students here," Greenleaf concluded. "We are good publicity for the university."

Buffalo harvested in South Dakota for tribal elders

The Sault Tribe recently received a generous donation from Indian Energy to purchase buffalo meat for the Elder Meal Program.

With the approval of the Sault Tribe Board of Directors, members traveled to the DuBray Buffalo Ranch located on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. The ranch has

15,000 acres of land and over 500 head of free-ranging buffalo.

Owner Fred DuBray, a Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux member, guided the members of the hunt for three mature, two-year-old bulls.

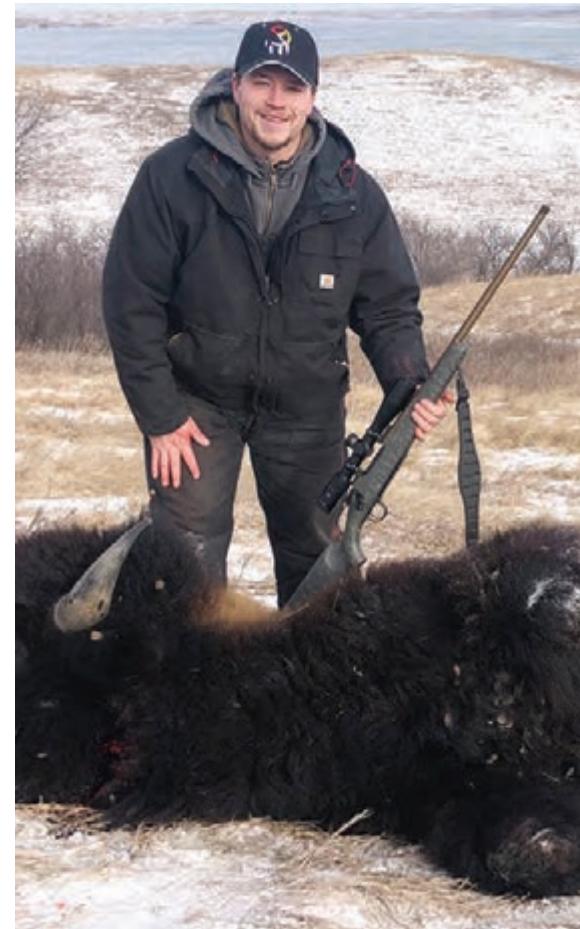
The buffalo were all harvested in a culturally appropriate way with offerings of Asema and smudging and Mr. DuBray gave

a teaching on how to respect the downed animals.

Members worked to field-dress the buffalo and a mobile proces-

sor skinned and quartered them. Over 2,000 pounds of hanging weight was brought back to Sault Ste. Marie where Maurer's Little

Meat Shop will finish the processing so the meat can be distributed to the elders.



Clarence Hudak (left) and Colt Hudak with the two buffalo they harvested.

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Members mark major milestones



Sault Tribe member Katelyn McKerchie earned and received her white coat as Doctor of Physical Therapy from South College in Knoxville, Tenn. The ceremony was held on Jan. 28, 2026, in Knoxville. During the fall semester 2025, Katelyn was also nominated to the National Society of leadership and skills. Proud parents are Todd and Amber McKerchie. Grandparents are the late Harold (Bud) and Linda McKerchie, and the late Lisa Nichols, all from Mobile, Ala.



Hayden Thompson, a Sault Tribe member from Sault Ste. Marie, was named to the Northern Michigan University Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester. Hayden, a freshman, is majoring in Political Science and is the son of Kristen and Christopher Brochu. Thompson was honored for achieving a GPA of 3.50 or higher during the semester.

Archer Lynn Hutchinson was born Jan. 1, 2026, to Andrew and Anna Hutchinson. He weighed 5 pounds, 11 ounces, and was 18 inches in length.



Tribal Court offers Bench Warrant Amnesty Program

The Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribal Court has announced its annual waiver program for individuals to comply with court orders by settling their debts without further penalty or incarceration.

Specifically, the program addresses outstanding warrants for non-compliance with a court order of fines, fees, court costs and any outstanding civil tickets that have gone into default. The waiver program will be effective March 1 through March 31, 2026.

"This is an opportunity for people to settle past due fines with the court without further penalty and at a reduced amount," Court Administrator Traci Swan said. "Eligible applicants will be given partial fee waivers and have the ability to set up payment plans to resolve matters without the worry of additional penalties or incarceration. If our people have a warrant out prohibiting them from obtaining a job or

housing, this program will allow the Court to lift the warrant, they just need to make contact the Court."

Individuals seeking to make payment can use the Court's online payment system [www.citetpayusa.com](http://citetpayusa.com), mail in a check or money order for a contact-free experience, or come in person and speak with a clerk during business hours. The Court will also accept credit card payments in person. Individuals must contact the Court in advance of making any payment to allow for removal of their bench warrant and the reduction in their fines.

If an individual is unable to pay in full, but makes a significant payment, the Court will work with each individual's situation and to set up a new payment plan regarding any outstanding balance.

Contact Tribal Court at (906) 635-4963 for additional information.

Apply for the 2026 Sault Tribe Internship Program

College juniors through graduate students who are Sault Tribe members are invited to apply for the 2026 Sault Tribe Internship Program. The 40-hour per week internships are from June 8 through Aug. 14 paying \$15.50 per hour.

Possible placements include

administration, education, enterprises, fiscal services, fisheries & wildlife, health, judicial/legal services, Kewadin Casinos, language & culture, law enforcement, recreation, social services, and others. On-site placements only.

Deadline is March 6. Email internship@saulttribe.net.

FEELING OFF? FOLLOW UP.

In Michigan, 8 out of 10 maternal deaths are preventable.

If you have any of these symptoms during or after pregnancy, talk to your health care provider right away. For the safety of you and your baby.

- Overwhelming tiredness.
- Persistent headache.
- Dizziness, fainting or vision changes.
- Fever over 100.4°F.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.
- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain.
- High blood pressure.
- Fast heart rate.
- Severe nausea.
- Belly pain that won't go away.
- Baby's movement slowing or stopping during pregnancy.
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking fluid during pregnancy or heavy bleeding after pregnancy.
- Extreme swelling of your hands, face, arms or legs.
- Swelling, redness or pain in legs.



Michigan.gov/MIH

 Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

Committee vacancies — volunteers needed!

The following Sault Tribe Committees have vacant seats or upcoming vacancies. Sault Tribe members interested in filling these vacancies should submit one letter of intent and three letters of recommendation (forms available online or contact Lona) from other members to Lona Stewart at 523 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, or call (906) 635-6050 with any questions.

Anishinaabe Cultural Committee - One vacancy - male (4-year term)

Child Welfare Committee - Two vacancies — one term expires November 2026, one expires May 2029

Conservation Committee: Commercial Fishers - Two vacancies (4-year term)

Non-Commercial Fishers - Two vacancies (4-year term)

Elder Advisory Committee: Unit I - Sault - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)
Unit II - Newberry - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)
Unit III - St. Ignace - Two alter-

nate vacancies (4-year terms)
Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Elder Subcommittees:

Unit II - Naubinway - One regular vacancy - term expires May 2027

Unit II - Newberry - One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit III - St. Ignace - One regular vacancy - term expires April 2027, one alternate vacancy - term expires March 2028

Unit IV - Escanaba - One regular vacancy (4-year term)

Unit IV - Manistique - Two regular vacancies - one term expires January 2027, one expires May 2026

Unit V - Munising - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)
Unit V - Marquette - One alternate vacancy (4-year term)

Food Sovereignty Committee Three vacancies (4-year terms)

Health Board - One vacancy (4-year term)

Sault Tribe Election Commission - Two vacancies terms expiring Nov. 20.

Membership Assistance

Membership liaisons work to assist with membership issues and concerns. The liaisons will also respond to and follow up on membership issues to ensure they are resolved.

Sault Tribe members are encouraged to contact liaisons when they need help with tribal issues by emailing membersconcerns@saulttribe.net or individually at the contacts below. Please note that although the liaisons are located at sites across the seven-county service area, they serve all tribal members.

Michelle Moore

Available for in-person meetings at Sault Tribe Administration.

Phone: (906) 635-6050 Ext. 26359

Cell: (906) 259-3862

mmoore@saulttribe.net

Clarence Hudak

Lambert Center, St. Ignace, (906) 643-2124

chudak@saulttribe.net

Mary Jenerou

Manistique Tribal Center, (906) 341-8469

Munising Tribal Center, (906) 450-7011

mjenerou@saulttribe.net

Membership liaisons answer your questions

Q: I recently received my membership and I would like to apply for the Sault Tribe Inland Harvest Card. I downloaded the application from the website and started looking it over and noticed it asks for my STS number. I don't know what that is; where can I find it?

A: The STS number is an individual identifier number that is issued to a member when first applying for the Inland Harvest Card. Once issued to a member, the STS number will never change for that individual and will stay with them for life. First time applicants for the Inland Harvest Card can make note on the application and the Law Enforcement Department will provide them with their STS number. 2025 Harvest Cards expire March 31 and 2026 cards will be available then.

Q: I will be filing my taxes soon and need Form 4013. This is my first year filing for the credit. Where can I get the form?

A: Contact the Tax Agreement Office in Sault Ste. Marie. The Land and Tax Administrator will check to make sure the residence is within an agreement area and that the member is registered.

Copies of Form 4013 can be picked up in person or they can be emailed by request. To contact the office, members can call (866) 632-6281 or (906) 632-6281. The email address is taxoffice@saulttribe.net.

Marie, MI 49783

• MidJim Convenience Store, 3045 Mackinac Trail, St. Ignace, MI 49781

• White Pine Lodge and Convenience Store, 7889 E. W. M-28, Christmas, MI 49862

Tribal owned gas stations

offering gas discount only:

• University BP, 301 W. Fair Ave., Marquette, MI 49855

Not tribal owned stations

offering gas discounts only:

• Kinross BP, 4440 Tone Road, Kincheloe, MI 49788

• Cedar Pantry, 159 W. M-134,

Cedarville, MI 49719

• Sunoco, 13975 M-28, Newberry, MI 49868

• Manistique Oil Company, 216

Deer Street, Manistique, MI 49854

• Carnes Eco Fuels, 2300 Ludington St., Escanaba, MI 49837

Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information about Missing and Murdered Sault Tribe Members:

In an effort to maintain the Sault Tribe MMIP database for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), the Advocacy Resource Center is seeking information regarding missing and murdered individuals who are members of the **Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians**. Please message or call the ARC at 906-632-1808 with information that can be entered into the database. The information provided does not have to be current information. The ARC is seeking information for ALL missing or murdered tribal members including the seven county service areas and tribal members across the world. Please ask for Community Educator Jess Gillotte-King (extension 73104) when calling the ARC. If messaging the ARC Facebook page, please leave the following information:



First/Middle/Last Name

Date of Birth

Date of Death

Murdered/When/Where

Perpetrator Name if known:

If Missing:

Nickname/Alias

Date Last Seen/Went Missing

Physical Description

Distinctive Physical Features

Vehicle Information



Any information would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this matter. Please feel free to share this information. Miigwech!

Sault Tribe Member Newspaper Subscription Form

To receive a FREE tribal newspaper subscription in the mail, tribal members under 60 are asked to complete the form below and send it to: Win Awenen Nisitotung, 531 Ashmun St., Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783, or email it to slucas@saulttribe.net. **Those 60 and over do not have to fill out this form.** Those who prefer to get their newspaper online do not have to complete this form.

Name: _____

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submissions of news articles, feature stories, photographs, columns and announcements of American Indian or non-profit events. All submissions are printed at the discretion of the editor, subject to editing and are not to exceed 400 words. Unsigned submissions are not accepted.

Please note the distribution date when submitting event information for our community calendar. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. The distribution date is the earliest the newspaper can arrive in the seven-county service area.

Win Awenen Nisitotung is funded by the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and is published

12 times a year. Its mission is to inform tribal members and the public about the activities of the tribal government, membership programs and services and cultural, social and spiritual activities of Sault Tribe members.

Win Awenen Nisitotung, in Anishinaabemowin, means, "One who understands," and is pronounced "Win Oh-weh-nin Nis-toh-tuhng."

See our full, online edition at www.saulttribe.com.

Subscriptions: The regular rate is \$18 per year, \$11 for senior citizens and \$30 to Canada. Please call for other foreign countries.

Subscribe by sending your name and mailing address to the address below with your check or money order made out to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Or, call (906) 632-6398 to pay by credit card.

Advertising: \$8.50/column inch.

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Win Awenen Nisitotung

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Bear Moon
Mukwa Giizis

Jennifer Dale-Burton.....Editor
Sherrie Lucas.....Secretary
Brenda Austin.....Staff Writer
Scott Brand.....Staff Writer
Win Awenen Nisitotung welcomes



SAULTTRIBEGUARDIAN.COM

Paquin receives grant for canoe-building

BY BRENDA AUSTIN

ST. IGNACE, Mich. — Sault Tribe member and elder Ronald Paquin of St. Ignace has received a \$15,000 grant through a national initiative supporting folklife in communities of color, funding his traditional Anishinaabe (Chippewa) canoe-building work.

Paquin is among 40 individuals awarded \$15,000 grants through Walking Together: Investing in Folklife in Communities of Color, a pilot program announced Jan. 13, 2026, by the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations. The program awarded a total of \$3.34 million to 96 grantees nationwide.

“Walking Together will play a critical role in my ability to access the natural materials I need, help me bring environmental issues relating to availability of materials to light, and host a hands-on gathering of all of my apprentices and Michigan tribal cultural divisions to share stories and knowledge,” Paquin said.

The initiative provides unrestricted, nonmatching grants to traditional artists, practitioners, nonprofits, local and tribal governments, and community organizations committed to sustaining folklife rooted in communities of color. In addition to individual awards, 56 organizations

each received \$50,000 grants.

Mid Atlantic Arts administers the program on behalf of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations, a national coalition of six nonprofit arts service organizations. Grant recipients represent all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and multiple U.S. territories.

More than 2,000 artists and organizations applied for funding in 2025. Applicants were reviewed through a multi-stage process involving regional panels and advisory “Working Circles” composed of traditional artists, folklorists, scholars, and arts professionals.



Ron Paquin uses a wood mallet on a canoe at JKL School in 2014 with the help of students who were learning his building techniques.

Resolutions passed in January and February

Two major resolutions, passed by the Sault Tribe Board of Directors at the Jan. 20, 2026, session, will seemingly have long-lasting impacts that will reverberate many years, perhaps even generations, after this board is gone.

The first, which passed with a tie-breaking vote from Tribal Chairman Austin Lowes, cleared the way for JKL Bawheting School to expand into the high school realm with the addition of a ninth-grade class for the 2026-27 school year. This pilot program will access outside funding and is designed to educate 25 students next year with an eye toward eventual expansion

into a full-blown high school accommodating all grades from 9th through 12th. Directors Isacc McKechnie, Larry Barbeau, Tyler LaPlaunt, Aaron Payment, Kim Hampton and Kimberly Lee voted in favor of this measure, while Directors Kim Gravelle, Lana Causley-Smith, Bridgett Sorenson, Shawn Borowicz, Rob McRorie and Mike McKerchie voted against the plan.

The second major resolution called for the Mackinac Band members to be officially recognized as part of the Sault Tribe when the upcoming three-branch separation of powers measure is finally brought before the membership for a vote. While

there was some concern that this might derail the separation of powers amendment, the directors eventually determined that more than half of the potential voters would be represented under this banner and this would avoid any potential future litigation as they would join the Grand Island, Point Iroquois, Sault Ste. Marie, Garden River, Sugar Island and Drummond Island bands under the Constitution.

In other action, the directors approved the following resolutions:

— Established a fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget for The Nature Conservancy with other revenues of \$50,000 for grant

money primarily for whitefish restoration efforts.

— Authorized the Government CFO and Sault Tribe Health CEO to utilize third-party revenue from October to December 2025 for year-end budget reconciliations with the assistance of the Budget Department, Legal Department and Government CEO.

— Provided the Legal Department with 30 days to examine potential budget modifications for future tobacco tax fund appropriations.

— Cleared the way for accessing more than \$705,000 in Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) funding,

which will be dedicated to the Youth Education and Activities (YEA) Program.

— Approved a contract with Wolverine Power in the amount of \$63,380 for generator maintenance and load testing.

— Authorized the Sault Tribe Housing Authority to prepare and submit an application for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to support a new 36-unit facility designed to transition tribal members out of homelessness.

— Approved a trust land lease to promote future infrastructure development for the Savard

See “Resolutions,” page 5

SATURDAYS IN MARCH & ALL SITES



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Resolutions passed at recent board meetings, continued...

From "Resolutions," page 4

Property in St. Ignace.

— Waived sovereign immunity to clear the way for a contract with BS&A Software for new billing software, which will facilitate the acceptance of paying bills online.

— Waived sovereign immunity with Central Savings Bank providing a \$100,000 letter of credit for access to 738 Cloverland Electric power poles as part of an effort to improve broadband service.

— Authorized a change in forms and contracts to meet new U.S. Department of Agriculture requirements.

— Condemned any unlawful action by ICE or any other fed-

eral law enforcement agents.

A resolution to curtail mileage reimbursement for personal vehicle use by the directors was voted down 7-5.

Directors Barbeau, McKerchie, Sorenson, LaPlaunt, Hampton, Gravelle and Causley-Smith voted in favor of keeping the existing reimbursement system.

And, a resolution establishing a camera policy for the directors utilizing remote board meeting attendance was also defeated with Directors Sorenson, Barbeau, Lee, McKerchie, Gravelle, LaPlaunt and Hampton voting to keep the existing system.

February 3 meeting:

Sault Tribe Natural Resources Division Director Danielle Fegan was in the spotlight at the Feb. 3, 2026, meeting of the Sault Tribe Board of Directors as more than half of the resolutions on the agenda fell under her purview and passed with minimal discussion, including:

— Approval of a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget for improvements to the Nunn's Creek Fish Hatchery to be funded with \$123,000 from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) revenue.

— Approval of a FY 2026 budget for GLRI monitoring and restoration efforts on the St. Mary's River in the amount of \$242,995.80 from BIA revenue.

— Approval of a FY 2026 budget for black tern and mud-puppy research, to primarily be conducted in Munuscong Bay, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revenue in the amount of \$81,804.27.

— Authorized the Natural Resources Division to apply for up to \$100,000 in grant money to support wild rice and migratory bird research through the BIA Circle of Flight program.

— Authorized the Natural Resources Division to apply for up to \$4.5 million in grants through the BIA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to support environmental, wildlife, fisheries and research efforts within the 1836 ceded territory.

— Awarded a contract

not to exceed \$585,000 to University of Michigan School for Environmental Sustainability (UM-SEAS) staff funded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services for a Hemiboreal Decision Support Project.

In action unrelated to the Natural Resources Division, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors approved a FY 2026 Budget Document for the Health Division totaling \$70,373,399; authorized the Health Division's acceptance of Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant Agreement Funds in the amount of \$219,944, and approved a data sharing agreement with the University of Michigan of Social Work.

Odenaang rental homes slated for upgrades DTE Energy rebates



Photo from Housing Authority

Pictured above from left to right are ICF Senior Project Manager Annalisa Wilder, DTE Energy Efficiency Concierge Rick Fluharty, STHA Procurement Contract Administrator Ryan Madigan, STHA Operations Manager Veronica Beaumont, STHA Interim Housing Director Mariea Mongene, and DTE Energy Advisor Brad Willette.

With the latest installment of rebates from DTE Energy the Sault Tribe Housing Authority (STHA) has received \$380,000 in cash rebates for the installation of new furnaces, attic insulation and roofs, and new water heaters.

"As an energy provider, they are required to have efficiency incentives to lower energy use and attain compliance obligations and conservation of the Earth's natural resources," said STHA Operations Manager Veronica Beaumont of DTE's participation. "And they do have tribal set-asides, now."

The latest round of rebates delivered \$157,700 for the installation of new furnaces in housing rental units at the Odenaang site. This comes on the heels of another large rebate from the 2024 effort to upgrade roofs and attic insulation in those homes.

The STHA was able to make those improvements with federal grant monies and subsequently recovered some of those expenses through the DTE Energy rebate.

"We are going to replace the boilers in the housing units in 2026," said Beaumont of this year's plans, which will upgrade all of the housing units

throughout the seven-county service area. Adding additional work will see "construction on the new 20-unit apartment building and an elder quad on

the Odenaang Housing site. All of these projects will have a degree of rebate incentives that Housing is eligible for," said Beaumont.

Volunteers needed to guide future NRD actions regarding lake whitefish



The Sault Tribe Fisheries

program is looking for tribal members 18 years and older to participate in a series of workshops beginning in 2026 that will be used to guide stewardship of Atikameg (Lake Whitefish) in northern Lake Huron.

We hope to find 10 to 20 interested individuals

from the following groups: elders, commercial gill net and trap net fishers, subsistence fishers, and all

tribal members and youth (18+). This work is critically important to ensure tribal objectives and values guide stewardship of Atikameg in traditional fishing grounds of the Sault Tribe.

If you are interested in volunteering, or would like more information please call Sault Tribe Fisheries Biologist II Shane Flinn at (906) 632 0072 (ext. 73163), (906) 203 5125, or by email at sfllin@saulttribe.net.

Kimberly Hampton for Unit 4 Sault Tribe Board of Director

- Three-branch Government Enactment
- Protect Unit 4 Cultural Enhancement & 2% Funds
- Expanded Access to Traditional Healing and Wellness in Unit 4

This ad is endorsed by Kimberly Hampton



Anishinaabemowin 2026

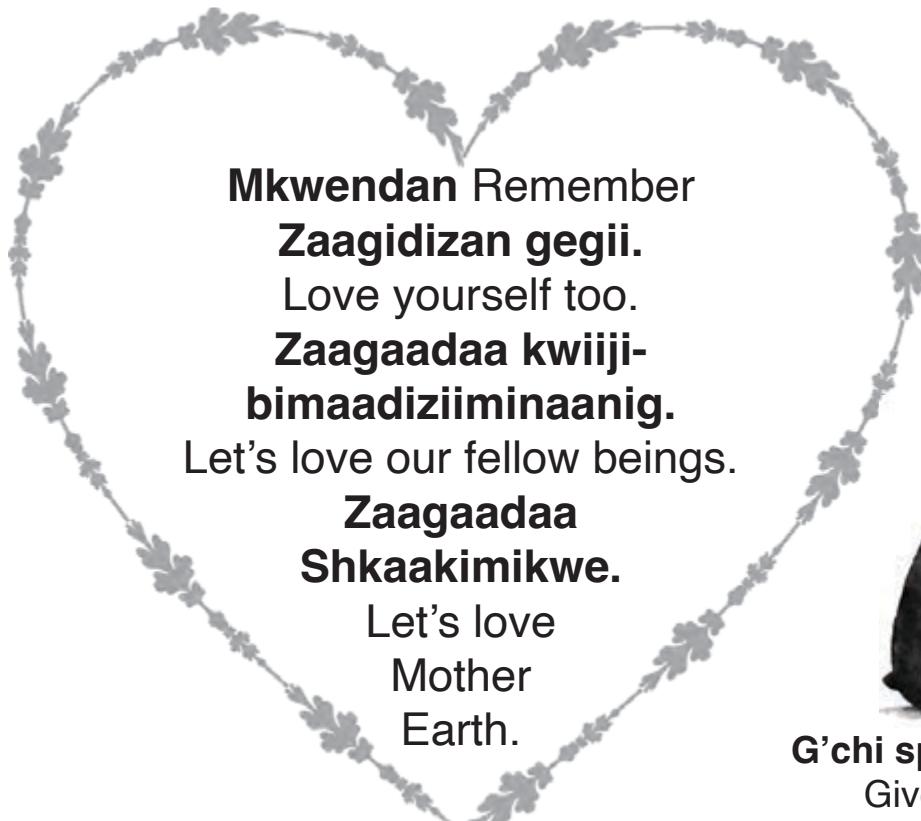
Choose a phrase or comment that fits your life and say it every day for a week. Next week pick another one. Step by step you'll be a speaker!

Aaniin kina waya! Hello everyone!

Gaagidwin giizhigad gii zhiwebad nangwa giizis.

Valentine's day happened this month.

G'minwaangozi na? Did you have a good time?



G'miijin na ziisbaakidoonsan?

Did you eat candies?

G'gii baap'aag na bimaadizijig?

Did you smile at people?

G'gii zaganikenaa na waya?

Did you hold hands with someone?

G'gii jiim'aa na waya?

Did you kiss someone?

G'gii aabtoo-jiinidim na?

Did you hug each other?

G'gii wiindamawaa na waya "G'zaagin"?

Did you tell someone "I love you"?



G'chi spaajiinin waya!

Give someone a great big bear hug!

Gojiing geyaabi gisinaa. Geyaabi goon temagad.

Outside it's still cold. There is still snow on the ground.

Makwaa geyaabi zagakii. Sa, aapta-zagakii.

Black bear is still hibernating. Well, semi-hibernating.

Ginemaa maamaa-makwaa ga niigi'aag niizh maage nswi makoonsak. Maybe the maamaa bear will give birth to 2 or 3 cubs.

Endso makoons wii piitnigozi megwaach nshwaaswi ounces.

Each cub will weigh about 8 ounces.

"Nshwaaswi ounces" aawan naasaap

("8 ounces" is the same as)

bezhik kiikwaabik menwaagamig

niizhwaatig zaaw-bimide

bezhik medium mishiimin

bezhik ngodnaagaans ziisbaakwad One cupful of sugar

One can of pop.

Two sticks of butter

One medium-size apple



Fun Fact: Black bears only reproduce every 2-3 years, and only if the female has enough fat reserves to sustain a pregnancy and lactation.



Making our Sounds Most letters sound like they do in

English. Here are the exceptions.

aa sounds like the *a* in *awesome* **a** sounds like the *a* in *about*

ii sounds like the *e* in *be*

i sounds like the *i* in *dip*

oo sounds like the *o* in *go*

o sounds like the *oo*'s in *book*

e sounds like the *e* in *Ed*

g sounds only like it does in *go*

We underlined the syllables that get the emphasis.

Pronounce all the letters. Big deal: these combinations: **nh**, **ns**,

ny in a word signal the previous vowel is said nasally. The **n** in

these is *always silent* but you pronounce the second letter. It's

only a sign to say the previous vowel nasally - as if you have a

stuffed-up nose!

Aambe, baapin! (Come on, laugh!)

Why did the bear quit her job? *She was only making the bear minimum!*

What do you call a chilly bear? *A brrr!*

What is as big as a bear but weighs nothing? *Its shadow!*

What would bears be without bees? *Ears!*

What do you call a bear without teeth? *A gummy bear!*

What is bear's favorite dessert? *Blue-beary pie!*



Why the Anishinaabe use the bark of the birch tree

We tell legends only when the snow covers the ground and the spirits are sleeping, so we don't inadvertently offend them. Here is a story about Nanaboozho.

It was a cold fall day in the Northwoods. Winter was just around the corner and only a few lonesome leaves were left in the tall trees. Nanaboozho thought he would try his hand at hunting that day. He walked for hours and aimed at a few deer but he could not seem to hit his target. Nanaboozho decided to rest on a nearby rock.

"What is wrong? I can't seem

to get a deer," he said. "It can't be me because I am the greatest hunter of all time."

Nanaboozho pondered for a while and decided it must be his arrows. After all, they were just ordinary arrows that all Anishinaabe hunters used. He must make a great arrow.

"I must climb the highest mountain and the tallest tree to retrieve the feathers of the great Thunderbird. Then I will be able to make my arrows and have the biggest, best deer harvest ever."

The Thunderbird nest was far away so Nanaboozho decided

he had better get started. The evening frost had set in and Nanaboozho started to get cold, but he continued on his journey. By the time he reached the tall tree of the Thunderbird nest, the harvest moon was shining brighter than ever. This reminded Nanaboozho of his dreams for the biggest deer harvest ever.

Nanaboozho started up the tree and when he reached the top he snatched a handful of baby Thunderbird feathers. As he climbed down the tree, he could hear the babies cry. He was not the only one to hear them cry

Mother Thunderbird heard the cries, too. When the mother bird saw Nanaboozho climbing down the tree, she swooped down to snatch the feathers back.

Nanaboozho dropped the feathers as he fled for his life. Mother Thunderbird was very angry and kept after Nanaboozho. Up ahead, Nanaboozho could see a fallen birch tree with a hole in it. He quickly jumped inside for protection. Mother Thunderbird flew overhead for awhile but finally give up to tend her babies.

Nanaboozho came out after he

was sure Mother Thunderbird had gone. He was grateful for the protection the birch tree gave him. "My friend, you have saved my life," he said. "From now on, my people shall use you to protect them and their sacred things."

This is why the Anishinaabeg use the bark of the birch tree for many things, such as canoes, homes, and containers, and writing.



*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
Language and Culture Department
Invites you to attend:

Winter Storytelling with Marileth Leveque and Soup Contest

Please join us on 02/28/26
from Noon to 2 P.M.
Munising Tribal Center
622 W Superior St.
Munising, MI 49862

Bring a pot of your favorite soup and join
the contest for some great prizes! Bonus points
for those who include traditional foods.

**AMBE!
ANISHINAABEMODAA!
(COME ON! LETS SPEAK
ANISHINAABEMOWIN!)**

Join Larissa for an all ages, all skill levels Anishinaabemowin language class

Class Dates:
(Every other Wednesday)
February 4th, 2026
February 18th, 2026
March 4th, 2026
March 18th, 2026

Location:
Sault Tribe Community Center
204 Cherry Creek Rd, Marquette MI
6PM - 8PM

Lets Learn Together

Questions? Email Larissa at
larissa.larson20@gmail.com

Beginners Welcome!

Sault Tribe Traditional Medicine Program
Gerard Sagassige
2026 March Healer Clinic Schedule

March 2,3,16,17,23,24,30,31
Sault Ste. Marie Health Center
(906)632-0236

Wednesday, March 4th
St. Ignace Health Center
(906)643-8689 or (877)256-0135

Wednesday, March 18th
Manistique Health Center
(906)341-8469 or (866) 401-0043

Wednesday, March 25th
Hessel Community Center
(906)484-2727

ANY QUESTIONS, OR TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM AT
906-632-0236 OR 906-632-5268

ZIISBAAKDOKE GIIZIS - MAPLE SUGAR MAKING MOON - MARCH 2026

NIIZHWAASO GIIZHIGAT	NTAM GIIZHIGAT	NIIZHO GIIZHIGAT	NSWO GIIZHIGAT	NIIWOO GIIZHIGAT	NAANO GIIZHIGAT	NGODWAASWO GIIZHIGAT
1 Minisedaa. (Let's cut firewood.)	2 Mikoomiika. (There is lots of ice. It is icy.) 	3 Mooshkaneshin Dibiki Giizis (It is a full moon.)	4 ninaatig (maple tree) 	5 ziisbakadaaboo (maple sap)	6 Aambe daminadaa goon-genebik! (Let's go play snow snake!) 	7 Giizhookonawen! (Dress warmly!)
8 Maadse gibeyiing giizhigat. (Daylight savings time begins.)	9 shkode (fire)	10 kikoonhsag (pails)	11 Skagamizige. (S/he is boiling down sap.)	12 ziisbaakadoonhs (maple candy)	13 Aagimase. (S/he is walking on snowshoes.) 	14 ninaatig ziwaagmide (maple syrup)
15 Giziibiigininjiin. (Wash your hands.)	16 Gjibdan! (Taste it!) 	17 Gchitwaa Pedii Giizhigat (St. Patrick's Day)	18 naabardin (crusted snow) 	19 Zookpo. (It is snowing.)	20 Zhooshkwaade. (S/he is skating.)	21 Ntam Mnookomik (First day of spring)
22 goon nini (snowman)	23 Noodin gwojing. (It's windy outside.)	24 Goonkaa. (There is a lot of snow.)	25 goon (snow that has already fallen)	26 Aapiji go gisinaa! (It is very cold!)	27 Zhooshkwa. (It is slippery.)	28 Gii boonpwa. (It stopped snowing.)
29 Nigwaankwat. (It is cloudy.)	30 Biingejaa (s/he is cold)	31 Biiskaan wiikwaan (Put on a hat)				

Calendar created by Sault Tribe Language & Culture Division

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

FROM THE ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER

February is typically associated with love and relationships. We often find our first love or “puppy love” in our teens. Since these early crushes or relationships set the tone for what is and will be tolerated in their years to come, it is essential to teach teens what a healthy relationship looks like and feels like. By modeling healthy relationships, teens learn what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate. Teen Dating Violence is a serious issue and is becoming more prevalent in adolescent relationships. Teen dating violence is defined as the physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional abuse within a dating relationship among adolescents.

Verbal, physical, and sexual violence are common in teen relationships and are becoming even more common. Loveisrespect.org reports, “Teen dating violence is more common than many people think. One in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by

someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults. And nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors.”

According to the National Institute of Justice, “Native American adolescents experience violence at rates higher than any other racial group in the United States, with 56.4% reporting experiencing sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.” The Sault Tribe’s Advocacy Resource Center aims to educate teens on the importance of healthy relationships and what red flags of unhealthy relationships look like.

Red flags in unhealthy relationships might look something like this:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, punching, shoving, restraining, biting, scratching, hair pulling, pinching, or anything that causes harm to another person.

Sexual Abuse: Pressuring or forcing a partner to engage in

unwanted sexual activity, using social media or text messages to pressure partners to share photos, raping or coercing a partner to perform sexual acts, preventing the use of birth control or other forms of contraception.

Verbal Abuse: Name-calling, yelling, insulting, embarrassing, criticizing, etc.

Psychological Abuse: Using threats and intimidation, such as threatening to end the relationship, threats to cause harm to themselves or others, threats to commit suicide, or to cause harm to pets or property. Using controlling tactics such as not allowing the partner to see friends or family, or preventing them from going places, controlling what clothes are worn, extreme jealousy, spreading rumors, minimizing behaviors, or blaming the partner for their abusive actions.

Using Technology: Excessive texting, messaging, or calling, cyberbullying, checking a partner’s phone without permission, using location services to track a partner, stalking, creating fake

profiles to spy on a partner, posting on a partner’s social media, messaging others about a partner, etc.

Look for green flags in relationships, which typically include being respectful, listening actively, respecting boundaries, being kind, helpful, and supportive, and not using power and control to guide the relationship.

For parents, while teen dating violence is on the rise, it can be prevented. Pre-teens and teens must learn the skills needed to create and maintain healthy relationships. These skills may include managing feelings appropriately, communicating healthily, respecting boundaries, and having appropriate expectations of others. It is essential to talk to teens and maintain an open line of communication. It is not always easy for teens to express their feelings to adults, but knowing they have someone willing to listen is vital.

For teens, if you find yourself in an abusive relationship or feel you are being treated inappropriately, please tell someone and consider ending the relationship. If your partner is making you feel uncomfortable, or forcing or coercing you to do things you disagree with, please know that you are not alone. Help is available. Everything is confidential. The Advocacy Resource Center has a wealth of information available and the compassion to assist with teen dating violence and provide care and support to those in need.

Teen Dating Violence does not discriminate, and it is our job to teach, to protect, and to demonstrate healthy relationships. We must help our adolescents understand and appreciate their worth. Let them know they are not alone, and help is always available.

The Advocacy Resource Center can be reached at (906) 632-1808. Also, look for more information on our website at www.arcsoaltribe.com or on our Facebook at www.facebook.com/saulttribeARC.

Love Shouldn’t Hurt.

Cloth diaper class offers free education and diapers

MUNISING, Mich. — Little Agate, in partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, will host its next Tribal Cloth Diaper Class on Sunday, April 19, 2026, from 12 to 3 p.m., at the Sault Tribe Community Center in Munising.

This free class is open to all Sault Tribe families who are expecting or have a baby.

Little Agate’s Cloth Diaper Program has already supported hundreds families across the region by teaming up with strong community partners and organizations to provide education and

diapering supplies at no cost to families, radically reducing waste and strengthening family care systems.

While reducing the financial burden of diapering is an important part of the program, the class exists for a bigger reason: to help tribal families reclaim traditional caregiving practices and reduce dependence on industries that profit from pollution and disposability.

“This work is about helping our tribe free our families from reliance on toxic, colonized industries to care for our babies,”

said Leah Blanchard, founder of Little Agate and passionate cloth diaper advocate. “Cloth diapering isn’t just a sustainability practice — it’s a sovereignty practice.”

The program intentionally has no income barrier. This class is for all Sault Tribe families who have or are expecting a baby. “It’s about reclamation of sovereignty, culture, and knowledge, not just of financial need,” Leah said. “Colonization didn’t only take land — it disrupted knowledge systems. Many elders have shared with me that they wanted to cloth diaper, but didn’t have

the support and there was no one with the knowledge to guide them.

Without that wisdom, families try, give up, and are forced to turn to toxic industries to care for their babies. Our goal is to restore that lost knowledge.”

By supporting families with both education and supplies, Little Agate’s Cloth Diaper Program reduces waste on a large scale, improves family health, and empowers the next generation of knowledge keepers. “Every disposable diaper we replace with cloth is another step

toward sovereignty for our children and the children who come after them.”

Participants will receive a full cloth diaper stash and a copy of Little Agate’s cloth diaper guide.

The class also provides hands-on education on how to use, wash, and maintain cloth diapers in daily life.

Class will be held Sunday, April 19, at the Munising Sault Tribe Community Center. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. For more information or to register, visit: www.LittleAgate.com/cloth-diapers.

Caring foster parents needed in our tribal community

Anishnaabek Community and Family Services is looking for caring people within our tribal community who are willing to open their homes to children in need. Foster parents help provide safety, stability, and support

during times when children and families are facing challenges.

Children in foster care need loving homes where they feel safe, stay connected to their culture and community, and have the chance to grow. Foster parents

play an important role by offering daily care, guidance, and compassion while families work toward reunification or other permanent plans.

ACFS provides training, support, and ongoing guidance to

foster families throughout the process. You do not have to be perfect to become a foster parent. Patience, understanding, and a willingness to care for a child are what matter most.

If you are interested in

learning more about becoming a foster parent, please contact Anishnaabek Community and Family Services at (906) 632-5250. Your support can make a lasting difference for a child and for our tribal community.

MINDIMOYENH - The One Who Holds It All Together

MAANG N'DOODEM - LOON CLAN

BIIDAASKINOKWE N'DGOO - LIGHT COMES FROM THIS WOMAN - SPIRIT NAME

After many conversations with Elders and Wisdom Keepers, I am announcing my candidacy in running for the Unit 2 seat on our Sault Tribe Board of Directors.



Together we will work on restoring and honoring our traditional Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin for all tribal members.

Together we will bring inclusivity & transparency through actions not words. As leaders, it is our responsibility to unite our communities and tribal citizens. We will make sure your vote counts.

I will be out canvassing and getting signatures on my nominating petition once it is available. I look forward to talking with you and having a new role in moving our tribe forward for all of us.

JACKIE MINTON
UNIT 2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(906) 322-6423
JACKIEMINTONUNIT2@GMAIL.COM
ENDORSED BY JACKIE MINTON

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Acceptable forms of identification include: U.S. passport or passport card; U.S. Department of Defense ID; DHS trusted traveler card; Photo ID issued by federally recognized tribal nation/Indian tribe; Enhanced tribal cards; REAL ID/enhanced driver’s license.

Sault Tribe Law Enforcement and Conservation

BY ROBERT MARCHAND, CHIEF OF POLICE

Sault Tribe Law Enforcement (STLE) issues treaty hunting and fishing licenses to Sault Tribe members to be utilized within the boundaries of the 1836 Treaty Area. If members have any questions regarding these licenses, the criteria for obtaining them, and/or the regulations governing their use, please contact our office at (906) 635-6065.

Inland Hunting and Fishing

STLE would like to remind any members who held a 2025 Inland license that harvest reports were due back Feb. 1, 2026. These reports are required regardless of whether you caught any fish or game, or whether you engaged in any activity. Members will not be able to obtain a 2026 license until this report is received. If you are requesting this license for the first time, you are required to provide a copy of your tribal card along with proof of hunter safety (if born after 1960) if you want to engage in treaty hunting rights.

Our office will start issuing 2026 Inland licenses as of Monday, March 2, 2026. The cost to get your license is **\$10 (check/money order by mail, credit/debit at window only in person)**. If you plan to engage in any treaty activity with your 2025 license through March 31, please be sure to keep your 2025 license until then. 2025 licenses expire March 31, 2026, as noted on your license; therefore, the 2026 license does not go into effect until April 1, 2026. Chapter 21 of the Tribal Code regulates Inland licenses.

Upcoming seasons: Spring Turkey begins April 15 through June 15, please remember that if you are using this license for fishing purposes, you are only authorized to fish inland lakes and streams within the boundaries of the 1836 Treaty Area.

Inland Walleye lake closures: March 15–April 24, 2026, for the LOWER Peninsula, April 1–May 14, 2026, for the UPPER Peninsula. Contact our office for permitting questions regarding walleye lake closures. There are some restrictions on specific bodies of water that you can find more information about in Chapter 21 of the Tribal Code.

Great Lakes – Subsistence/Netting and Commercial

All 2025 subsistence and commercial licenses expired Dec. 31, 2025. If you have not yet renewed either license for 2026, please make sure you are not engaging in any of the authorized activities for each license.

Commercial licenses – captains and helpers – require an appointment be made with STLE in order to renew each year. It is important that helpers and captains call to schedule their OWN appointments. STLE has to obtain specific personal information each year that only the member themselves can provide.



Per the CORA code, Captains are now required to report BI-WEEKLY. Harvest reports are due every second and fourth Wednesday of each month and no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time regardless of where you are commercial fishing. The report needs to be submitted online at the new CORA website CORAfish.org. The dates in which you are required to report for are available on the new CORA reporting system. The new CORA Code is available at www.sault-tribe.com (Tribal Code under

the Government menu).

The cost for all Commercial Captains have been raised to \$250. For more information, see **Chapter 20-20.102 Licensing of Commercial Treaty Fishing Activity (4)(d)**.

If you hold a subsistence license or subsistence netting license, please remember that you are required to turn in a monthly catch report by the 10th of each month, regardless of effort or no harvest. If you do NOT turn in a report and you have a active subsistence and/or gill net card, you will receive a citation if our office does not receive your report in time.

If you are issued a citation, it is still your responsibility to turn in any missing reports and take care of any tickets. Exact wording may be found in your subsistence packet regarding reporting requirements.

If you are fishing in Little Bay de Noc grid 306 from March 1 to May 14, you are required to obtain a permit through our office (you may

hold up to three at a time), and reports are due back within 24 hours.

All reports are required whether you catch any fish or get out to fish. Please remember that these licenses are valid only on the Great Lakes within the boundaries of Sault Tribe's 1836 Treaty Area. Chapter 20 of the Tribal Code and CORA Code regulate both licenses.

As a reminder, you are authorized to recreationally fish in the Great Lakes within the boundaries of our 1836 Treaty Area with just your up-to-date tribal membership card as long

as you follow state of Michigan rules and regulations for the activity.

It is expected that members will educate themselves on the various rules governing our treaty rights; however, STLE is here to help members wade through the sometimes complex rules. If you cannot find the information you are looking for in the Tribal Code, or the CORA Code, please contact our office and ask to speak with a conservation officer.

We hope that everyone is staying warm and safe in the New Year!

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RE-ELECT ISAAC MCKECHNIE

Accountability • Results • A Stronger Future

DELIVERING RESULTS

- Protecting and expanding our land base through strategic acquisitions and stewardship
- Pushing for stronger checks & balances and member-driven constitutional reform
- Prioritizing transparent reporting and ROI-based spending to protect limited resources
- Advocating for housing improvements, maintenance accountability, and long-term planning
- Expanding access to healthcare services and improving continuity of care for all members
- Supporting workforce development and enterprise growth



PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

OPEN ENROLLMENT

- Protect and improve open enrollment so eligible descendants aren't locked out
- Streamline the process with clear timelines, better communication, and consistent standards
- Invest in enrollment staffing/technology so applications move faster and stay transparent

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- Restore checks & balances so no single branch controls everything
- Strengthen accountability with clear rules, deadlines, and enforceable procedures
- Keep reform member-driven—based on what the people vote for

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

- Fix wage compression so long-time employees aren't stuck near starting wages
- Improve retention with competitive pay, step scales, and fair progression
- Increase transparency so compensation decisions are consistent and earned

SELF SUFFICIENCY

- Grow revenue outside gaming to reduce reliance on one income source
- Require ROI-based spending: measurable outcomes, sustainability, and reporting
- Build workforce development to keep tribal dollars circulating in tribal jobs and contracts

LAND CLAIM / ELDER FUND LOAN REPAYMENT

- Prioritize a repayment plan that protects the Elder Fund and honors commitments to elders
- Provide full transparency on balances, timelines, and payments
- Use settlements/windfalls responsibly—pay down obligations before adding new spending

HEALTHCARE EXPANSION

- Expand access with faster appointments, improved referrals, and more specialty care
- Strengthen quality and continuity through stable staffing and service standards
- Improve access for members outside the service area through partnerships and smarter systems

4-DAY WORK WEEK FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

- Use a 4-day schedule as a recruitment and retention tool to keep good employees
- Implement responsibly with coverage plans so services stay strong
- Ensure fairness so it works for frontline and office staff—not just a few departments

ENTERPRISE EXPANSION

- Build tribally owned businesses that create jobs and new long-term revenue
- Diversify investments to strengthen stability across changing markets
- Require business plans and performance reporting so enterprises deliver results

Please Cast 1 of 2 of your Unit 1 Ballots for...

Paid for and Endorsed by Betty Freiheit



BETTY FREIHEIT

~ Sault Tribe Board of Directors ~

Dear Unit 1 Voters Everywhere:

I have and will continue to fight for you. I am a strong advocate who will tell you like it is and push for a Tribal government that respects your rights as Citizens. Please vote for accomplishments and not empty promises. Below are just some of what we achieved on your behalf when I was in office and what we will accomplish together. Our work is not done.

I would appreciate your vote to allow me to continue to be your advocate.

~ *Betty*

What We Have Accomplished Together....

- Sponsored Winning Resolution to Discontinue BOD Pension going forward
- WON Election Complaint I filed on Corrupt Election Committee Member
- Sponsored Resolution to Give All Tribal Members a Pandemic Relief Check
- Sponsored Resolution of No Confidence to Protect Team Members from Hoffman
- Sponsored Resolution to Vacate Illegal Appointment of Hoffman as Chairman
- Sponsored Resolution to Hold Special Advisory Election for you to choose our Tribal Chair
- Testified in DC to Protect Victims of Crime; Especially Protect our Children Against Abuse
- Fought and WON frivolous court complaints filed against me by Hoffman
- Exposed Unit 2 ~ \$76,468 Modular Home Cares Act Give-A-Way to Non-Tribal Individual
- Exposed 2022 Political Coup that Undid your 2020 Election for Tribal Chairman

What We WILL Accomplish Together....

- Vote to Establish a 3-Branch Separation of Powers & Tribal Citizen Standing in Tribal Court
- Repay Tribal Elder Fund to Increase Elder Checks. \$340 is not enough!
- Establish Indian Preference Goals in Hiring | Set Tribal Contractor Preference at 10%
- Protect our Treaty Rights and Tribal Sovereignty. Establish Better Inter-Tribal Relations
- State & Federal Bi-Partisan Advocacy including Congress & the US President
- Tribal Citizen Led Amendment to Set Board of Directors Term Limits
- Code of Ethics to Expose Board Member Back Door Deals with Casino Developers
- Tribal Labor Law to Protect Casino, Governmental and Enterprise Team Members
- Work to Lower MI Indian Tuition Waiver to Be Based on Tribal Citizenship Not 1/4 Blood
- Invite Referenda Votes and Polls to Help Guide Key Decision Making
- Resolution to Add Emmet & Cheboygan to Health Service Area
- Free Tribal Enhanced IDs and Sault Tribe Citizen License Plates
- Open a Sault Tribe Health Center in a Central Area in Lower MI
- Fund Tribal Elder Medicare Supplemental Insurance
- Work with Chairperson Lowes to Represent All Members Everywhere

Following the 2022 Political Coup, 100% of the incumbents lost their seats including Hoffman. The "Losing 6" then voted to appoint Hoffman who you rejected in the 2022 primary. I stood up for your right to elect your Chairman and won in Tribal Court. I will always fight for your rights! ~ *Betty*



By fighting to overturn an illegal Chairman appointment, then holding a special advisory election, you got to choose Austin Lowes as our Tribal Chair. My resolutions accomplished this and were upheld in Tribal Court.

If you would like to Volunteer to Help Elect Betty to the Unit 1 Sault Tribe Board, Please contact her at:

PHONE: 906-322-0976

EMAIL: Sootribe@gmail.com

ADDRESS: 820 W. 28th Ave., A-1, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

For the third year in a row, JKL students bring home first-place in Michigan Future City Competition

BY SCOTT BRAND

Marking their third win in three years, a team of sixth, seventh and eighth graders from JKL Baheweting Anishnabe Academy in Sault Ste. Marie has once again returned home with the first-place prize in the Michigan Future City Competition hosted by the Engineering Society of Detroit.

Fresh off their Jan. 20 victory, Team Tkaranto arrived at the Feb. 10 meeting of the JKL School Board of Education to report on their success. Team presenters provided a detailed presentation on their city, which exists 100 years in the future in present-day Toronto focusing on Indigenous food sovereignty, sustainability and eliminating waste.

The eleven students who made up Team Tkaranto also took home the top prizes for most sustainable city, best essay and the achievement award, besting nearly three dozen teams throughout the state of Michigan as they dominated this year's event.

Building upon this year's Farm-to-Table theme, Team

Tkaranto intentionally grounded their futuristic design in the principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty, centering the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples to define their own food systems in accordance with cultural values, land-based teachings, and community wellness.

Students worked closely with Dr. Tara Maudrie, who provided foundational teachings on Food Sovereignty, helping them understand that sustainable engineering is not only about efficiency, but about restoring relationships between land, water, plants, animals, and people.

Through these teachings, the team explored how traditional harvesting practices, seed saving, seasonal cycles, and reciprocal stewardship could be integrated into advanced urban systems such as vertical farming, renewable energy grids, and zero-waste distribution networks.

In imagining their Kinship City of Tkaranto, students merged traditional ancestral teachings with futuristic engineering, demonstrating that innovation does not require the

abandonment of identity.

Instead, their city model reflects a future where technology and tradition walk together. Ancestral knowledge informed the placement of green spaces, water systems, and food hubs, while cutting-edge engineering solutions ensured resilience, equity, and sustainability.

The result is a city design rooted in Anishinaabe values of interdependence and responsibility, offering a powerful vision of what it means to build forward while carrying culture with intention.

The win allowed the JKL students to punch their ticket to the National Competition

in Washington, D.C. In 2024, the JKL Team, led by Susan Solomon, finished in seventh place on the national stage and came home with another Top Ten finish in 2025.

The 2026 National Competition is slated to run from Feb. 14-18. See more photos on page 14 of this issue.



Team Members: Fallon Nagy, Arya Neuenschwander, Zoey Norman, Aelinor Roos, Holden Hoy, Coach Susan Solomon, Ma'layiah Tobias, Zachary Kibble, Owen Suggitt, Jackson Ball, Cain Chaput, Grayson Kibble and Engineer Mentor Rachel Bisara.





SAULT TRIBE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

JUNE 8 - AUGUST 14, 2026
40 HOURS PER WEEK \$15.50 PER HOUR
COLLEGE JUNIORS THROUGH GRADUATE STUDENTS
MUST BE A SAULT TRIBE MEMBER
POSSIBLE PLACEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Administration
 - Education
 - Enterprises
 - Fiscal Services
- Fisheries & Wildlife
 - Health
 - Judicial/Legal Services
 - Kewadin Casinos
- Language & Culture
 - Law Enforcement
 - Recreation
 - Social Services

[More Placements Available](#)
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DEADLINE TO APPLY: MARCH 6, 2026
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY, VISIT
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INTERNSHIPS@SAULTTRIBE.NET

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906 RYAN AVENUE, SAULT STE. MARIE, MI 49783



Crafty crafters make deerskin mittens and snowshoers brave cold on trail at Big Bear Arena

Language and Culture Division sponsored a leather mitten making class Feb. 7. Twenty-six ladies and girls signed up, with a long waiting list for future classes. Instructor Yvette Pitawanakwat, who also teaches an after-school language class for the Language Program, prepared the leather and fleece pieces, provided imitation sinew for thread, and glover's needles, along with fleece liners.



Trisha Gough and Sheryl Hammock (L-R) at work.



Trisha finishes a mitten.



Tibby Perry and her granddaughter Julie Rae Perry spend the afternoon together making leather mitts.



Community Health's SDPI program and Health Education program along with Traditional Medicine and the Big Bear sponsored the Feb 10 snowshoeing event. L-R: Kristy Hill RD, and Kylie Coffey RDN, Health Education Supervisor Tina Robinson, and Medical Fitness Program Trainers Josh Fireck and Eric Stallman.



Alex Schulte and Heather Weber ham it up for the camera.



Tina Robinson looks for the perfect piece of leather.



Family and friends learning to make mittens together.



L-R: Alex Schulte, Heather Weber, Kara Reno, Sheri Mastaw, Nikki Dowd-McKechnie, and Jaime Baker are all ready for a snowshoe adventure.



Friends since the seventh grade - Alicia Krouth and Sara Maurer.



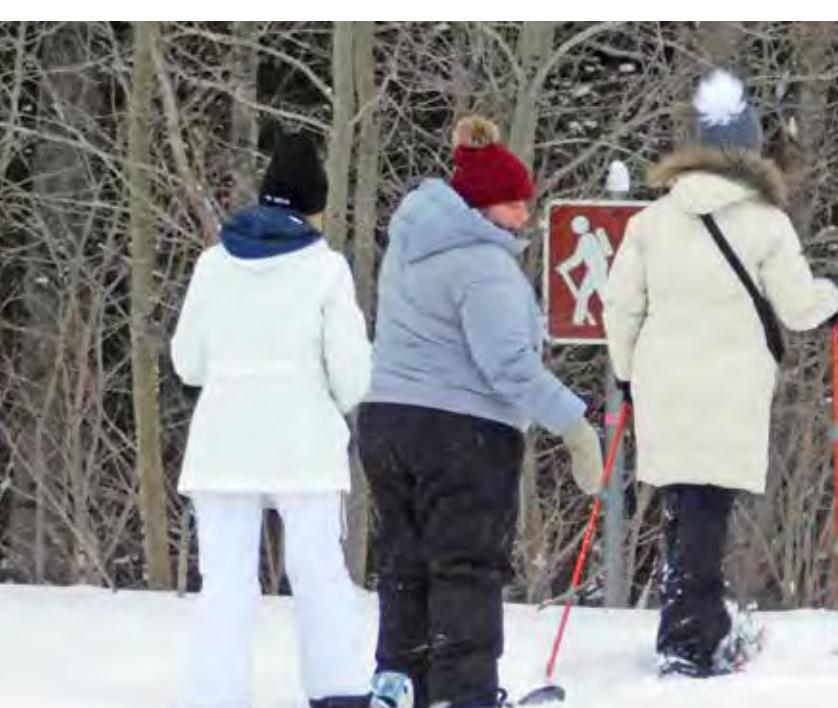
Instructor Yvette Pitawanakwat helps Tori Smith turn her mittens inside out after sewing them.



Tori Smith finished first and trimmed her mittens with rabbit fur, as a present for her mother.



Participants matched and sewed their leather pieces inside out, with an inset of colorful fleece.



Braving the cold and wind, these fearless women tackled a trail behind Big Bear Arena on snowshoes and gumption.

E.U.P. students shine in their competitive fields



LSSU's Team AMORE heading into their competition in Norway.

Above left, Hailey Greenleaf, a sophomore from Iron Mountain, Mich., tests the electronics enclosure for the WAM-V. At right, Nathan Van Antwerp, a junior from Reed City, Mich., working on the Remotely Operated Vehicle, (ROV) which is essentially an unmanned mini-submarine that can collect data underwater.



Photo by Scott Brand

FUTURE CITY — Ma'layiah Tobias, Zoey Norman and Zachary Kibble teamed up to wow the JKL School Board of Education with their Feb. 11 presentation before heading to Washington, D.C. for the national competition. See story on page 11 of this issue.

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LSSU showing two tribal fishery films March 19

The Sault Tribe is partnering with Lake Superior State University to offer the community a double screening featuring two films focused on the work of tribal fisheries in the Great Lakes.

The two films that will be screened are, "All Too Clear: Beneath the Surface of the Great Lakes" and "Sacred Waters: Anishinaabeg Naagdawenmaanaanig Giigoonhkewin (The First

People Taking Care of the Fishery.)"

Following the two screenings, members of the Sault Tribe Natural Resources Division will participate in a Q&A about the films, their content, and their importance in highlighting the work of tribal fisheries in the Upper Peninsula.

The two films will be screened on Thursday, March 19, at the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library, located on the cam-

pus of Lake Superior State University at 906 Ryan Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., with the first screening scheduled to begin at 5:50 p.m.

Light refreshments will be provided, and entrance is free of charge.

Attendees can expect the event to end around 7:30 p.m.

Free parking is available at the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library after 5 p.m.



2026 Sault Tribe Inland Application

Licensing cost is \$10 per member. Allowable payment methods are check or money order, **made payable to Sault Tribe**, or credit/debit card at the window only. **CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**. Youth (16 and under) and Elders (60 and over) are not required to pay fees. New members must provide a copy of their **current Enrollment card and proof of hunter safety if born after 1960**.

*****There will be a \$36 NSF charge applied to all returned checks*****

Application must be filled out accurately and completely. Please print legibly. It is your responsibility to know and abide by the rules and regulations pertaining to this license under Ch. 21 & 23.

Name: _____
 Last _____ First _____ Middle _____

Mailing Address: _____
 Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Physical Address (if different than above): _____
 Street _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Male _____
 Female _____ Date of Birth: _____

Phone Number: _____ Tribal File #: _____ STS#: _____

Email Address: _____

Please select one of the following licenses:

Hunting Harvest Card (allows Inland fishing, general gathering, small game, waterfowl, migratory birds and general furbearer) Choose the tags you would like below:

Deer *Season dates - 09/08/2026 to 01/04/2027
 Spring Turkey *Season dates - 04/15/2026 to 06/15/2026
 Fall Turkey *Season dates - 09/15/2026 to 11/14/2026
 Trapping (Pine Marten, Bobcat, Fisher, River Otter) *See Ch. 21 for Season dates*

Non Hunting Harvest Card (allows general gathering and Inland fishing ONLY)

Bear and Elk applications will be available in the Tribal newspaper in April 2026. For all other permits pursuant to Ch. 21 and 23 of the Tribal Code, you must contact the Conservation Department at 906-635-6065 (i.e. State/Federal Firewood Permits, Maple Sap permits, Birch Bark Permit, Conifer Bough Permit etc....)

Mail completed applications to: **Sault Tribe Law Enforcement P.O. Box 925 Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783**

For STLE office use only-----

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 Youth _____

Check# _____ CC _____ Date issued: _____

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Understanding companion, trap and cover crops

BY SARAH ZEILER, MSU

EXTENSION

Gardening is more than planting seeds and watching them grow. It's also about creating a healthy environment for plants to thrive.

One way gardeners do this is by using different types of crops that support the garden in unique ways. These are called companion crops, trap crops and cover crops.

Each plays a special role in improving soil health, managing pests and boosting overall garden productivity.

Companion crops are plants grown close together because they help each other. Some companions improve growth, while others protect against pests or diseases. For example, planting basil near tomatoes can improve tomato flavor and help repel insects. Marigolds are often planted with vegetables because they deter nematodes and aphids.

Companion planting works by: Attracting beneficial insects like ladybugs and bees; Repelling harmful pests; Improving soil nutrients (some plants fix nitrogen); Providing shade or support for other plants.

This method is especially useful in small gardens where space is limited. By choosing the right companions, gardeners can reduce the need for chemicals and create a more balanced ecosystem.

Trap crops are planted to attract pests away from your main crops. These plants act like decoys. For example, planting mustard near cabbage can draw pests like flea beetles away from the cabbage. Once pests gather on the trap crop, gardeners can remove or treat those plants to reduce pest pressure.

Trap crops are effective because: They concentrate pests

in one area; They reduce damage to valuable crops; They can be used to monitor pest populations.

This strategy is often used in organic gardening, where chemical pesticides are avoided. It's a smart way to manage pests naturally and protect your harvest.

Cover crops are grown not to be harvested but to improve the soil. They are planted during times when the garden would otherwise be bare, such as in fall or early spring. Common cover crops include rye, oats, clover and hairy vetch.

Cover crops help by:

- Preventing soil erosion
- Adding organic matter
- Improving soil structure and fertility
- Suppressing weeds
- Fixing nitrogen (especially legumes like clover and vetch)
- Supporting beneficial insects

The largest benefit of cover crops is below ground in the root matter. The top of the cover crop may be harvested and used for compost. When cover crops are cut and added to a compost pile, they decompose and release nutrients. This compost can then be returned to the garden to enrich the soil.

According to Purdue Extension, cover crops like legumes and grasses add biomass both above and below ground. When composted, this biomass becomes a rich source of organic matter that improves soil tilth, water retention and nutrient availability.

By understanding these crop types, home gardeners can make smarter planting decisions. Whether you're trying to boost yields, fight pests or build better soil, these strategies offer natural solutions that work.



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When the animals spoke one language...

BY CATHY DEVOY

Long ago when the earth was still new, G'tchii Manitoo wanted all living things to live as brother and sister. For this reason he created a special language so everyone could talk to each other. All the animals, birds and water life could play together and help each other.

It was a good time to live on Aakii, our Mother Earth. It was common to see Makwa (Bear) carrying Ajidamoo (Squirrel) on his shoulders or Wahwahshkayshee (Deer) playing tag with Ma'iingan (Wolf). Everyone trusted each other so much that even Bineshiin (Bird) could build her nest close to the ground without fear. All the animals were happy. That is, all except one.

Waagosh (Fox) didn't care for they way things were at all. He thought all this getting along was quite boring. He would spend most of his day huddled in his den sulking.

"Why should I go out of my way to help anyone?" he thought to himself. "I'm content to live without them."

Waagosh was getting tired of eating only plants and berries.

It was customary for the animals to hold council occasionally to settle any small problems that might come up. On the day council was to be held all the animals gathered together, chattering happily to each other. Very soon, they noticed one of the animals was missing.

Ma'iingan said, "Where is our niijii, Waagosh? Perhaps he has forgotten and someone should go for him."

Ajidamoo volunteered and scampered off to find him. It wasn't too long before Wagoosh came across Waagosh lying in his den.

"Niijii, why aren't you coming to council? Everyone is waiting for you. Are you sick?"

"No, I am not," said Waagosh. "I am sick and tired of all this

getting along and I'm very weak from eating only plants and berries."

Ajidamoo said, "It's too bad you feel this way. Perhaps your brother Ma'iingan should speak with you." As Ajidamoo turned to leave, Waagosh leapt from his den and pounced on him. But Ajidamoo, who was always very quick, managed to get away.

Ajidamoo hurried back to the council grounds to report what had happened. Everyone was very upset that Waagosh had tried to get after Ajidamoo.

Something like this had never happened before on Aakii. Everyone was nervous and talking at once. Finally, Makwa spoke up. "Perhaps everyone should go home and calm down. We can meet again tomorrow and decide what to do."

This seemed like a good idea so the council broke up.

The next day, when the council convened, everyone was uneasy. The smaller animals hid at a dis-

tance behind the rocks and trees. The Bineshiinyag were flying a little higher than usual and speaking to each other in a strange language.

Makwa spoke up right away. "Why is everyone acting so strange? We are all brothers and sisters."

Waabooz (rabbit) spoke for the smaller animals. "We are afraid to come closer. Waagosh was our brother too, and yet he turned on Ajidamoo. How can we trust you now?"

The Bineshiin agreed. "We, too, are not sure who we can trust anymore. We have even made a language of our own so no one will know where our nests are."

All this made everyone very sad, and try as they might, the animals could no convince their smaller brothers and sisters that they could still trust one another.

So it is to this day that the animals of the earth cannot talk directly to one another. Each group began to mistrust the other, and created their own language to protect themselves.

Soon the special language G'tchii Manitoo gave them was forgotten. No one can remember it all because one animals had betrayed his brothers and sisters.



When the Great Spirit created birds...

BY SIMON OTTO

After creating the Mother Earth, the Great Spirit sat back and looked over what He had made. He saw the many flowers, trees and shrubs growing here and there and he was pleased with it, but something was missing.

He asked Nanaboozho, "What more can I do to help the Mother Earth?" Nanaboozho thought perhaps something should be there to enjoy the trees and bushes. They retreated to Nanaboozho's favorite resting spot on the south side of the hill.

Nanaboozho told the Great Spirit that this was the best place to sit down and enjoy the sunshine and to think. So the two of them lay down and settled into the soft grass with the sweet

smell of flowers in the air. They were soon lulled off to sleep by the peaceful Mother Earth.

Suddenly Nanaboozho was awakened by something that touched his face. He quickly brushed it away and again settled back to rest, when again something touched his face. He looked down and saw a leaf lying on the ground. So that was it — the leaves were falling off the trees. He looked up and saw that the trees were all moving, their leaves twisting and turning, thus causing them to break off and fall. The Great Spirit was concerned about the leaves. Why did they fall?

He asked the tree, "Why do you let your leaves fall like that?"

The tree answered, "I like what I am; I can provide shade

for the animal brothers on a hot day, but also I should be able to provide something else."

The Great Spirit thought and as he was thinking, a leaf slowly fluttered down and fell to the ground. An idea came to him. "I'll make something like the leaf."

He picked up the leaf and let it slowly fall to the ground and as he watched it, again the thought came to him. "I'll make something that will be like the leaf."

He again picked up the leaf and gently cradled it in his hands. As he looked at it, he gently blew into it and soon he felt something moving. As he opened his hands, this thing flew out and lit on his shoulder.

It said, "Thank you Great Spirit for giving me life. I have been trying to fly for a long time. My name is Bird."

This was good. Now the trees will have some friends — they will live in the branches of the trees. He took some more of the brown leaves and breathed on them; soon the air was filled with wrens with tails sticking straight up in the air to let everyone know they were the first birds the Great Spirit created. He was very

proud.

So the Great Spirit wandered Mother Earth, visiting other trees and taking their leaves off and breathing on them. Among his creations was wood thrush with his reddish-brown back and bright head. These he told to live in the swamps, where it was moist, where their beautiful song could be heard clearly.

As the Great Spirit went along, he saw bright yellow leaves on a tree. What a beautiful color, he thought. He quickly grabbed some leaves and breathed on them and they too began to fly. These he called goldfinches, sometimes called thistle birds because they are often seen on thistles, where they build their nests from the thistle down.

The red maple leaves were made into what is known as the cardinal, bright red with a tuft on his head. It stays around all year. Its song can be heard early in the morning.

He looked down and saw some gray leaves. When His breath touched them, they became larks. When perched high in the tree tops, they make their song, clear and vibrant.

When the Great Spirit was finished, he looked at all of them, and told them to go forth on Mother Earth and find a mate and produce little ones, so that all would enjoy their song and see their beautiful colors.

The Great Spirit said, "I am pleased, but now I will give you a bird that will lead you. He is always happy. As he was talking, a beautiful bluebird appeared out of the clear blue sky. He also has a gentle song.

When you look up and see a bird, think back to the time when the Great Spirit created the birds for all to enjoy. Also, remember they are here for a purpose, and so are we. Together, we can keep Mother Earth in harmony.

Walk in peace.



January, February Elder Birthdays



Celebrating birthdays in January are elders Curt White and George Soorus (above left, L-R), along with Elder Services Cook Roger Perron.

In February, the lone birthday is LouAnne Bush.

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March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

FROM THE SAULT TRIBE HEALTH

Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the United States. Colorectal cancer is highly preventable with early detection. Each year, 150,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with this disease, making awareness, education, and screening crucial.

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Health Division supports the implementation of evidence-based interventions to increase colorectal screening rates among patients ages 45-75 by providing a Cancer Screening Navigator who will support outreach, provide education, and care coordination to existing Sault Tribe health care clients.

The Cancer Screening

Navigator is committed to removing barriers to cancer screening by identifying critical resources, helping clients navigate through health care services and systems, and promote long-term health outcomes.



Director Emeritus of the Vatican Observatory to visit Houghton

Br. Guy Consolmagno SJ, the former head of the Vatican Observatory, and now current head of the Vatican Observatory Foundation, with a specialty in meteorites, will be presenting at Michigan Technological University, St. Albert the Great University Parish, and St. Anne's Parish in Chassell respectively on Feb. 19-21, 2026. Br. Guy is no stranger to the Keweenaw as he gave a previous presentation in the area in 2011.

Originally from Detroit, Mich., Br. Guy earned undergraduate and masters' degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Ph. D. in Planetary Science from the University of Arizona. He was also a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard and MIT, served in the U.S. Peace Corps (Kenya), and taught physics at Lafayette College.

In 1989, he joined the Jesuits where he took vows as a Jesuit brother in 1991. During this time, he studied philosophy and theology at Loyola University Chicago and physics at the University of Chicago. In 1993, he received his assignment to the Vatican Observatory. His research explores the evolution of small solar system bodies; most recently in measuring

meteorite physical properties to understanding asteroid origins and structure. He currently serves as President of the Meteoritical Society (2025-2026), chairs the Mars Task Group of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) Working Group on Planetary System Nomenclature, and has served as the Chair of the American Astronomical Society Division for Planetary Science (2006-2007).

Br. Guy will give one colloquium for the Physics Department at Michigan Technological University, and he will give three presentations for the general public, including one specifically geared towards families, in the surrounding areas. The first public talk entitled, "Strange Cosmologies," will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19 in Fisher Hall 139 at Michigan Technological University. The next public talk, "A Jesuit Guide to the Stars," will be in the lower level of St. Albert the Great University Parish following the Mass at 5:30 p.m. and a meal. The last presentation, "Adventures of a Vatican Astronomer," will be at St. Anne's parish in Chassell at 9 a.m. This presentation will be geared towards children and their families.

Michigan State University Extension and the MSU Center for Regenerative Agriculture are offering a free webinar series 2026, Regenerative Agriculture Winter Webinar, a six-session virtual series designed to support farmers, landowners, conservation partners and agricultural professionals in advancing regenerative practices across Michigan landscapes. The webinar series

will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays in February from 6 to 7 p.m.

This informative series will cover innovative and practical topics that enhance soil health, boost water quality and build resilient farm systems. Each session will feature expert insights into key aspects of regenerative agriculture, including:

Feb. 10: Grazing in Cropping

Systems — integrating livestock to improve soil and reduce costs.

Feb. 12: Residue Risks and Rewards — understanding residue's impact on soil and seed environments.

Feb. 17: Cover Crops in Perennials — boosting biodiversity in orchards and vineyards.

Feb. 19: Lake Associations and Farmer Partnerships — collaborative efforts for water quality.

Tribal Chairman urges tribal citizens to stay safe during times of ICE aggression

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich.

— The following statement was recently issued by Sault Tribe Chairman Austin Lowes in response to recent aggressive Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities.

"The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians strongly condemns recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities that have created fear, confusion, and anxiety within Indigenous communities and among minority communities more broadly. Enforcement actions that rely on intimidation and racial profiling undermine public trust and place innocent people at risk.

"Let me be clear: the Sault Tribe opposes any ICE activity that creates fear and anxiety in both tribal communities and larger communities as a whole. No one should feel unsafe in their neighborhood, workplace, or homeland because of how they look, the language they speak, or the country they were born in.

"Recent incidents involving the unlawful detention of tribal citizens from federally recognized tribal nations are deeply troubling and unacceptable. Tribal citizens are members of sovereign governments. These actions disregard tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and the United States.

"In light of these events, I encourage all Sault Tribe citizens to remain safe and be proactive by knowing their rights and taking the following precautions:

"First, tribal citizens concerned about potential encounters with ICE are encouraged to carry their tribal identification card or a copy of their degree of Indian blood, along with a state-issued ID at all times. Tribal identification affirms tribal citizenship and political status and establishes your identity as a member of a federally

recognized tribal nation and as a United States citizen.

"Second, if you are harassed, stopped or detained by ICE, remain calm. You have the right to remain silent and the right to ask to speak with an attorney. Do not sign anything ICE gives you. As a tribal citizen, you cannot be deported. ICE cannot enter your home without a warrant signed by a judge, and you are within your rights to ask them to identify themselves as ICE agents with proper documentation.

"Third, if you are detained, or if a family member is detained, I strongly encourage you to state, 'I am a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, a federally recognized tribal nation. Under the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, all Native American people born within the territorial limits of the United States are recognized as U.S. citizens by birthright. I am both a tribal citizen and a U.S. citizen. Therefore, ICE has no lawful authority to detain me.'

"In addition, I encourage you to contact the National Immigration Detention Hotline at (866) 376-FREE (3733) (for family/friends) or use 9233# from an ICE phone and also call our tribal Legal Department at (906) 635-6050. Timely legal assistance is critical, and no tribal citizen should navigate these situations alone. The Sault Tribe remains readily available to work with officials to provide enrollment documentation and otherwise work towards the release of any tribal citizen who is illegally detained by ICE.

"The Sault Tribe stands in solidarity with other tribal nations and with minority communities who have been impacted and targeted by enforcement actions that rely on fear rather than fairness. We will continue to assert our inherent tribal sovereignty, protect our citizens, and speak out against actions that violate the human rights and dignity of Indigenous people and minorities who are unjustly targeted."



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MSU announces 2026 Regenerative Agriculture Winter Webinar series

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Feb. 17: Cover Crops in Perennials — boosting biodiversity in orchards and vineyards.

Feb. 19: Lake Associations and Farmer Partnerships — collaborative efforts for water quality.

ty.

Feb. 24: Strategic Tillage & the Gray of "No-Till" — balancing soil disturbance with soil health.

Feb. 26: Growing Native Plant Seeds — diversifying farm income while supporting ecosystem services.

The webinar series is free to attend. Registration closes at 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 25. Register at

**FREE
WEBINAR!**

events.anr.msu.edu/regenagwinter26/. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with specialists and take away strategies for applying regenerative principles in their own operations.

Register for the 2026 MSU Regenerative Agriculture Winter Webinar. Contact Christine Charles at char122@msu.edu or (973) 255-6097 for more information.

Researchers study the health properties of maple sap

This story is part of a series highlighting MSU AgBioResearch's work related to One Health, the concept that the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment is deeply related. MSU has created an initiative called One Team, One Health to promote university-wide efforts in this space. To view the full series, visit the MSU website.

ESCANABA, Mich. — A forester, psychologist and microbiologist meet with each other in the woods of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

No, this isn't the start of a sappy joke. However, the story about to be told is sappy.

Jesse Randall, director of the Michigan State University (MSU) Forestry Innovation Center (FIC), is working with a multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional team of researchers across the U.S. to study the One Health properties of maple sap.

The concept of One Health illustrates how animal, environmental, human and plant health are closely connected to and interdependent of each other in ways that are cross-disciplinary yet unified. It's a strength MSU is tapping into as a university with its One Team, One Health initiative, and it's something the MSU AgBioResearch-supported center has been incorporating in its mission since Randall took over as director in 2018.

"It starts with a team approach we've taken here at the center," Randall said. "We've put together a world-renowned team of experts from Northwestern University and Montana State University. We were first in really the nation to have this idea that maple sap and maple syrup could be viewed beyond just something you put on pancakes."

For David Victorson, a professor of medical social sciences and director of research at the Osher Center for Integrative Health at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, no project he's worked on better reflects this idea than the one he's doing in collaboration with FIC examining whether maple sap can be used as a hydration beverage for cancer survivors.

Originally from Escanaba, Victorson was familiar with FIC and friends with Randall, whose team helped him build a small sugar shack (a simple building where maple sap is processed and boiled down into syrup) at a cancer support center in the U.P. called the WALDEN Institute. This is part of a national nonprofit Victorson co-founded and leads called True North Treks, which supports young adult cancer sur-

vivors and caregivers through connection to nature and peers.

Beyond that effort, though, Victorson never considered how his nonprofit or integrative medicine research with cancer survivors could line up with the work being done at FIC — until one day.

"I was talking with Dr. Randall and he said, 'You know there are these grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that focus on promoting education and research about maple products. I was wondering if you'd be interested in thinking about how we might connect some of our work around this,'" Victorson said.

Victorson told him he didn't think there was much of a link between maple syrup and cancer survivors. That's when Randall mentioned how in South Korea, more and more people are drinking maple water — the water that comes directly from the tree before it's processed to become syrup — as a functional hydration beverage because it has similar electrolytes and nutrients that coconut water has, but with half the calories and half the sugar.

"And then a light bulb went off," Victorson said.

Victorson shared with Randall that dehydration can be a significant problem during and following cancer treatment, which can result in unplanned hospital visits, increased complications and side effects, such as fatigue, anorexia, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.

"Sometimes taste and smell receptors can become damaged from treatment," Victorson said. "This, combined with the metallic taste of chemotherapy, can make drinking plain water difficult. That's why it can be recommended to add a small amount of flavor, like fruit juice, to help. So, we already have a precedent for how this might be helpful."

Victorson also shared that among cancer survivors, there's a desire for ecologically sustainable, functional beverages that have less sugar and artificial sweeteners and more natural ingredients that can assist in hydration.

Maple drinks aren't new. Canada, for example, sells UnTapped Mapleaid. But most people in the U.S. aren't familiar with this type of drink, according to a national survey the team conducted with 100 young adult cancer survivors. And when the team had people try it in a formal taste test, Victorson said they were pleased.

"Like a wine tasting, we had over 50 cancer survivors view, smell and taste it, and it was very highly rated as a lightly sweetened, crisp and refreshing bev-

erage," Victorson said. "It didn't taste like maple syrup to the surprise of many people. They said it was more like a lightly sweetened water."

To date, Victorson and Randall have received USDA funding to work with food scientists to evaluate the nutritional properties of maple water and explore the drink's potential as a functional hydration beverage in a controlled treadmill walking study.

"We have a lot to learn," Victorson said when asked about the possible role maple water might take on for cancer survivors experiencing dehydration. "Even if maple water shows promise as a hydration solution, we'll still recommend that cancer survivors drink water — lots of it — and when they don't, we might recommend trying maple water."

As this work has continued, more interdisciplinary collaborations have emerged. At the center of those connections, Victorson said, were Randall and FIC. "Dr. Randall is the glue," Victorson said. "FIC is the nexus of all this work."

Through the center, Randall connected Victorson with Seth Walk, a professor of microbiology and cell biology at Montana State University, who could help answer questions about the maple drink such as: How should it be stored? How long will it last on the shelf? Does it have to be refrigerated or frozen? And so on. Like Victorson, Walk had a previous connection to Randall: They were both doctoral students studying together at MSU.

"That goes right back to the strength of what MSU offers through its undergraduate and graduate mechanism," Randall said. "I did my doctoral work at MSU, and so did Dr. Walk. It's a lifelong partnership that we've built because of our graduate school connections."

The work being done by Walk to understand questions about the maple drink at a microbial level

are ongoing, and results are forthcoming.

In addition to this project, Walk is working with Randall in other ways to study how to manage microbes when collecting maple sap and producing maple syrup.

Randall said Michigan's maple syrup industry has enormous potential to grow in the future, so research that advances how it's produced is critical.

"When you look at Michigan's forestry inventory and analysis data — especially in the U.P. — we sit here with tappable trees that are available, and that number is larger than all of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine combined," Randall said.

"We are blessed with the Great Lakes. We are blessed with some level of a climate buffer, at least here in the U.P. Those who are producers on the fringe of the maple region are beginning to catch hold of the fact that Michigan is the future. We are the sleeping giant of the maple industry. They're coming here because they know they have at least their lifespan, and perhaps their children's and grandchildren's lifespan, to set an operation up because of that buffer. So, we're helping producers at all levels.

If they want to scale from 25 taps or if they want to start at 25,000 taps, we've invested in the systems that allow us to showcase both the research and the demonstration at those smaller scales and help them build up as they go."

One area of research where Randall has teamed up with Walk is to find ways to transform low quality sap that's usually produced toward the end of maple season and discarded by producers into a distilled spirit or other alcoholic beverage. They're doing this by isolating yeast strains from this sap and identifying which ones could be used as an alternative to traditional types of yeast.

"That was the brainchild of

Dr. Randall," Walk said. "I didn't know anything about that industry, but I did know a little bit about the microbiology behind it. So, it became a cool collaboration where he's had the nose for how this could increase production and market value of the sap, and my team has been helping with the microbiology behind it."

Another effort they're jointly engaged in is reducing microbial biofilms in the maple tubes that collect sap. Walk said these biofilms, a community of microorganisms that stick to each other and a surface, can inhibit the collection of sap and create off-flavored and lesser quality maple syrup.

Walk said the pathogens that cause these biofilms are also common in the medical industry and can appear within catheters of all different uses. Taking what he's learned from his research in that field — done in conjunction with the Center for Biofilm Engineering at Montana State University — and applying it to maple syrup production systems serves as another great example what it means to study through a One Health lens, he said.

"One of the major goals of One Health is to understand a problem by bringing in the knowledge gained from studying a similar problem in a totally different field," Walk said. "We can address the types of things we see growing in these maple sap lines because of information we already know, either in biomedicine or other production environments such as the brewing industry.

"I'm learning things about engineering that I never knew, and I'm learning things about how leaves look under different spectra of light to make sense of whether a tree is healthy or not. I didn't know any of that before. It's fun as a scientist. The holistic view, I think, is a much more powerful approach to research than it is coming from any one discipline alone."

OVW hosts 20th annual tribal consultation and announces awards of more than \$75M

WASHINGTON — On Jan. 21, 2026, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) convened the 20th Annual Government-to-Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation on the lands of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community in Prior Lake, Minnesota.

The Justice Department announced Jan. 23 that it awarded over \$75 million through six grant programs that support American

Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and communities in combatting domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, sex trafficking, and stalking.

The awards announced were:

The Tribal Governments Program — Nearly \$47.5 million through 64 awards.

The Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Initiative — More than \$3.3 million through three awards.

The Tribal Sexual Assault

Services Program — More than \$8 million through 17 awards.

The Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction Program — More than \$7 million through eight awards.

The Tribal Coalitions Program — More than \$8 million awarded to 21 tribal nonprofit coalitions.

The National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault — One award of \$980,100 to provide resources on effective responses to sexual assault of American Indian and Alaska Native women.

Walking on...

MARGARET MAE BEDARD

Margaret Mae Bedard, 101, of Farwell, Mich., passed away with her family by her side on Jan. 11, 2026, at her home under the care of Heartland Hospice.



Margaret was born on Jan. 5, 1925, in Detroit, Mich., daughter of George and Jessie

(Brooks) Hall. During World War II, Margaret was a "Rosie the Riveter" and vigilantly helped during the war time effort in any way she could. She married the love of her life, John Fredrick Bedard, on Jan. 1, 1944, in New York, NY. Margaret worked as a realtor for over 50 years in the Clare and Farwell area, retiring in her mid '90s. She was proud of her work with the Blue Star Mothers, working her way up to being state president and then national president. She had the

honor of laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, being escorted by her son, Lt. Colonel Craig Bedard, with President Bill Clinton in attendance. In her youth, Margaret enjoyed bowling, playing softball, and running trap lines with her father during the depression. Margaret always attended her children's sporting events and performances. She was a lifelong angler, and enjoyed watching the wild-

life, and going to the casino. Margaret was often found going to flea markets or yard sales and was an avid Detroit Tigers fan.

Margaret is survived by her sons, John "Craig" (Linda) Bedard of the Grand Rapids area, David (Cindy) Bedard of Harrison, Mich., and William (Lisa) Bedard of Ionia, Mich.; grandchildren, Kirk, Brian, Sara, Morgan, Renée, Justin, Andrea, Riley and Wyatt; 10 great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren; and many

nieces and nephews.

Margaret was preceded in death by her husband, John Fredrick Bedard, in 1997; son, Michael Bedard, in 1984; parents; and brothers, Larry and Dick Hall.

In following with Margaret's wishes, cremation has taken place. A Memorial Service will take place at a later date.

Inurnment will take place at Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

See "Walking on," page 19

Walking on continued from page 18...

BILLY J. OBESHAW

Billy Jack Obeshaw, 46, of Rudyard, Mich., died on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, at his home. He was born July 26, 1979, in St. Ignace, Mich., to Duane "Dude" Joseph and Debra Jean (Belonga) Obeshaw.



Bill grew up in St. Ignace and attended St. Ignace Area Schools. From a young age, he was known for his strong work ethic, beginning his career as a dishwasher and cook before finding his calling in construction. In his 20s, Bill became a heavy equipment operator, a role he dedicated himself to for the next 20 years. He worked with pride for Belonga Excavating, Drummond Island Dolomite, and, most recently, Matheny Excavating.

Bill had a deep love for the outdoors and felt most at peace surrounded by nature. He enjoyed ice fishing, hunting, camping, boating, and riding four-wheelers and snowmobiles. When he wasn't outside, he could often be found relaxing with his favorite old westerns, Gold Rush and Moonshiners.

Bill is survived by his fiancé, Shannon Rose; his daughters, Bridgette (Lucas) Mahanna of North Dakota, Tiffany Obeshaw of St. Ignace, and Kayleigh McCall of St. Ignace; grandchildren, Mason and Lexxi Mahanna; brothers, Duane "Chris" Obeshaw of St. Ignace and Ray Prevost of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.; and sisters, Renee LaPonsie of Rudyard, Amber York of Maryland and Polly (Bryan) Davis of Ohio. He is also survived by several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and a few close friends that were as good as family.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Duane "Dude" and Debra. A celebration of life will be held in the summer of 2026. Family Life Funeral Homes – Pickford assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left for the family at www.familylifefh.com.

GLORIA THERESE NEDEAU BROWN

Gloria Therese (nee Reffruschinni) Nedeau Brown, 94, of Munising, Mich., died Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026, at the Schoolcraft Medical Care Facility in Manistique, Mich. She was born on Sept. 17, 1931, in AuTrain, Mich., to Joseph and M. Leona (Burke) Reffruschinni by a mid-wife. Gloria grew up in the Paulsen House in AuTrain before moving to Frog Hollow in Munising in 1938 to the home her father had built for the family. She attended AuTrain School and then Sacred Heart School and graduated from Wm. G. Mather High School in 1949. In September, Gloria moved to Detroit where she met and married Roland Nedeau in 1951.



Together they had four children, Dan (Denise) Nedeau, Tom (Tami) Nedeau, Catherine (Paul) Smith, and Ed (Debbie) Nedeau. Gloria moved back to Munising in 1963 where she raised her children. Gloria loved to sew, garden, cheer for all the sports teams of Detroit, and was a big Munising Mustang fan. She also loved to cook and bake (everyone loved her chicken pot pie) and make donuts at Christmas time.

She loved her music and playing cards. Gloria had an open-house policy. She loved company at her home on Brook Street where she lived for 62 years. She was very proud of her Indian heritage and belonged to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She had a phenomenal memory and loved her heritage and history. Gloria was interviewed by the Sault Tribe because of her knowledge of the Chippewa Indians and her family's stories. Her great-great-grandfather William Cameron was the lighthouse keeper on Grand Island. Her great-grandfather Frank Cameron was a hunting guide in the AuTrain area and was a personal guide to Bishop Baraga.

She leaves behind her four children; grandkids, Dan (Leanne) Nedeau, Lindsey (Jeremy) Robbins, Jill (Brett) Bednarski, Katie Nedeau, Scott (Mary) Nedeau, and Jordyn (Brandon) DeFrancesco; great-grandchildren, Addison, Emerson, Hunter, Harper, Bexley, Bently, Beau, Lyla, Leon, and Leto; many nieces and nephews; sister, Sherill Hendrickson; and sister-in-law, Loretta Reff.

Gloria was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Leona; brothers, Jim (Shirley), Alvin, Rodney, and Bernard; and brother-in-law, John Hendrickson. Gloria's funeral mass and burial will take place in the spring. Her obituary and online guestbook may be viewed and signed at [bowermanfuneralhome.net](http://www.bowermanfuneralhome.net).

JOSEPH THOMAS CARSON

Joseph Thomas Carson was born on July 14, 1963, to Joseph A. and Darlene S. Carson in Fort Collins, Colo. Joe was taken from us suddenly on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.

Joe attended public schools in Sundance, Wyo., and Hardin, Mont. He was proud of his heritage and his country, and he was enrolled in the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

After leaving high school, Joe joined the United States Army. Following in the footsteps of his father; he was a hard worker and demonstrated many talents throughout his life. Joe worked in the woods as a logger, served as a ranch hand, truck wash, and took on various odd jobs across the country until he became disabled. Joe regularly attended LifeSpring Methodist Church and Celebrate Recovery meetings in Sturgis, S. D. He cherished the outdoors and spent much of his summers

camping, fishing, or working in the yard. He loved gardening, rock hunting and he spent hours on the riding mower ensuring the yard was always manicured. Joe had a kind and generous heart, always ready to help others without expecting anything in return. He had a special love for animals and was affectionately called "the dog whisperer."

He is survived by his siblings: Carol A. Carson-Hull, Michigan; Gary L. Carson (Denise) of Washington; Kathy J. White (Ron) of South Dakota; Kevin J. Carson (Diana) of Montana; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and special friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph A. Carson; his mother, Darlene S. (Peters) Cayton; his brothers, Terry A. Carson (Justine LaBlanc), Richard N. Carson, and David J. Carson; his sister, Judy M. Cayton; his nephew, Charles Wood; his nieces Michelle Seymour and Shyla Cayton; his great-nieces, Angel Duvall, Kassidae Carson and Aylssa Reardon; his great-nephew, Brendon Carson and brother-in-law, Scott Hull.

Joe was laid to rest with military honors at Black Hills National Cemetery, Sturgis, S.D., on Jan. 30. His family wishes to thank everyone for their thoughts, love, and prayers. Joe was deeply loved and will be greatly missed.

WILLIAM I. MASTAW

William I. Mastaw, born Dec. 2, 1955, to Mary D. (Bell) Mastaw and William J. Mastaw, passed away peacefully on Jan. 15, 2026.

He had a unique sense of humor and spoke his mind with honesty and spirit. He loved spending time with his sisters, enjoying card games that showcased his keen mind and friendly competitiveness. His candidness, warmth, and love for family will be his enduring legacy.

William was preceded in death by his loving wife, Cheryl Mastaw; and his sisters, Linda Savoie and Shelly Mastaw.

William is survived by his two children, Wendy (Allyson) Martin and William J. Mastaw. He is remembered by his two grandsons, Brandon (Danielle) Nickerson and Z. Vaugh Gauger; two great-grandsons, Jayce and Jaxson, who brought him great joy. He is also survived by his siblings, Harvey (Lisa) Bell, Diane (Foster) Boutilier, Wayne (Annette) King, Ronda Mastaw (Chris); brother-in law, Ken Savoie, lifetime friend of the family, Maureen Burke-Weller, and many nieces and nephews.

William was a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Services will be scheduled in the spring. Arrangements have been entrusted to the W. L. Case and Company Funeral Directors, 4480 Mackinaw Road, Saganaw, MI 48603. Share your thoughts and memories with the family through www.casefuneralhome.com.

FRANK LESLIE MONGENE JR.

Frank Leslie Mongene Jr., 61, of Dafters, Mich., passed away Feb. 6, 2026. He was born Feb. 24, 1964, in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to Frank and Marsha (LaPonsie) Mongene.



Frank grew up in Dafters and throughout his life was known for his strong work ethic and wide range of skills. Over the years, he held many professions, including logger, snowplow driver, airport track maintenance worker, and school bus mechanic for Brimley Schools. He also worked at U.P. Tire and served as an MEA union representative for school employees. Frank owned and operated a vulcanizing and excavation business and proudly ran Mongene's Game Bird Hunting Preserve for 23 years on a 160-acre farm in Dafters.

Frank was deeply involved in his community and affiliations. He was a member of the National Rifle Association, the Michigan Game Bird Breeders Association, the Eastern Upper Peninsula Antique Association, and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, where he served as a Crane Clan Elder. He also dedicated his time to local service as a member of the Dafters Township Board of Trustees.

An avid outdoorsman, Frank had a lifelong love for fishing and hunting deer, birds, coyotes, and even those "pesky squirrels." He found great joy in farming, plowing the land and watching it grow. In his downtime, he enjoyed watching westerns and classic cowboy movies, the History Channel, and attending tractor pulls.

Frank will be remembered for his hard work, love of the outdoors, and deep connection to his land, community, and heritage.

Frank is survived by his wife, Florence Anderson; daughter, Meagan Mongene of Grand Rapids, Mich.; sons, Tony Mongene of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., Steven (KC) Kuehl of Sheboygan Falls, Wis., and Tyler (Diane) Kuehl of Thomaston, Conn.; grandchildren, Connor, Callan, Eliana, Julius, Jalen and Javion Kuehl; mother, Marsha Mongene; brother, David (Noelle) Mongene of Orion, Mich.; sister-in-law, Wendy (Joe) Rudolph of Mukwonago, Wis.; brothers-in-law, Gordon (Cindy) Anderson of Rapid River, Mich., Marty Anderson of Lake Villa, Ill., and Scott (Bridgette) Anderson of Rapid River; his children's mother, Nancy (Ken) Miller of Saluda, N.C.

Frank is preceded in death by his father, Frank Mongene Sr.; brother-in-law, Daniel Anderson; sister-in-law, Lynda Anderson. A celebration of life will be held in May 2026. Frank's final resting place will be at Kinross Lakeview Cemetery in Kinross, Mich. Family Life Funeral Homes – Sault Ste. Marie assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

SHAUN MICHAEL MURRAY

Shaun Michael Murray, 43,



of Cedarville, Mich., died on Jan. 20, 2026, at home surrounded by family. He was born on March 6, 1982, in Gaylord, Mich., to Walter and Reinette (Powers) Murray.

Shaun grew up in Livonia, Mich., and graduated from Livonia High School. He went on to graduate from Michigan State University in public policy before earning his master's degree from Eastern Michigan University. Shaun was deeply dedicated to his career and took great pride in his work. He began his professional journey with the Washtenaw Builders Association in Ypsilanti, Mich., later working as a lobbyist for Allen County in Fort Wayne, Ind., and then with the Toledo Builders Association in Ohio for 10 years before working at Hylant Insurance Company. Most recently, he worked remotely from his home in Cedarville for a private cybersecurity firm until his passing. Above all, Shaun truly loved what he did for a living and took great satisfaction in his work.

A man of strong faith and community, Shaun was a proud lifelong member of St. Anne's Catholic Church. He was also a member of the Inverness Country Golf Club in Ohio, the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dublin, Ireland, and the Mackinac Island Yacht Club on Mackinac Island, Mich.

Shaun found joy on the water and loved boating whenever he could. He was an avid soccer fan, both as a player and a devoted supporter, especially of Manchester United.

Shaun is survived by his parents, Walter and Reinette Murray; brother, Walter (Carolyn) Murray III, of Mackinac Island and Northville, Mich.; nieces and nephews, Trey, Eleanor, Millie, and Ronald Murray; and his beloved dog, Harpoon, who was never far from his side.

Shaun was preceded in death by his grandparents, Walter Murray Sr., Georgene Murray, Ronald Powers, and Barbara Powers; and uncle, Timothy Murray.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, June 26, 2026, at St. Anne's Catholic Church, 6836 Huron Rd, Mackinac Island, MI 49757. Time will be announced at a later date.

Shaun's final resting place will be at St. Anne's Catholic Cemetery.

Memorials in Shaun's honor may be made to St. Anne's Catholic Church, 6836 Huron Rd, Mackinac Island, MI, 49757, or the Navy Seal Foundation, 2100 Mediterranean Ave., #12, Virginia Beach, VA, 23451.

"Courage can be quiet, like a lighthouse holding its beam in fog." – Harpoon's Adventure by Shaun M. Murray.

Family Life Funeral Homes – Pickford assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be given to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Serving Our People

A monthly update from Chairman Lowes



AUSTIN LOWES
TRIBAL CHAIRMAN

As Chairman, one of my responsibilities is keeping our tribal citizens informed about what has happened over the past month, and what issues are coming next. Below is a summary of key updates, along with important work that will continue in the weeks ahead.

Constitutional Amendment Workshops

Over the past several months, the board of directors has held a series of workshops focused on a proposed constitutional amendment that would separate the political powers currently consolidated within the board. As most of our citizens know, the concept of separating tribal powers into three branches of government has been strongly supported for many years. This was recommended by our Constitutional Committee, and more recently, it was supported by our tribal citizens through the Constitutional Survey that was sent out last year. That survey showed overwhelming support for a three-branch government.

These workshops have now concluded. The board completed

a full review of the amendment and made changes where they felt appropriate, including polling adjustments where recommended. I support some of the changes that were made, but there are others that I do not support.

The next step is for the tribe to receive feedback from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and our tribal departments regarding how this amendment would impact our operations and governance. Once that feedback is received, the board of directors will vote on whether to send the proposed amendment to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. If the Board votes to move forward, the BIA would then conduct a secretarial election on the tribe's behalf.

I continue to support a three-branch government because it would create checks and balances that strengthen our tribal government and help protect the long-term interests of our citizens.

Resolutions Mandating Zoom Cameras and Motor-Pool Vehicle Usage

Last month, I introduced two resolutions aimed at increasing transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility within the board of directors. The first resolution would have required board members to turn their Zoom cameras on when attending meetings remotely.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the tribe allowed Zoom participation to support social distancing and public health. However, we have not been in a COVID emergency for many years, and the board continues to utilize Zoom. Unfortunately, this has been abused at times, including repeated instances where board members attend via Zoom with their cameras off while at

their day jobs.

Requiring cameras to be on is a simple and reasonable step. It ensures board members are present, paying attention, and that no unauthorized individuals are in the room during confidential discussions. The board voted this resolution down.

The second resolution would have required board members to use tribal motor-pool vehicles instead of personal vehicles when traveling for board business, rather than charging the tribe the full mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.72 per mile. Our Chief Financial Officer informed the board that using tribal vehicles would save the tribe a significant amount of money.

I did the math, and if every board member attended the weekly workshop and meeting, mileage reimbursements alone would exceed \$180,000 over four years. That estimate does not include additional trips that may be reimbursed for pow wows, cultural events, conservation meetings, elder meetings, and other board travel. The board voted this resolution down as well.

The reasons given for opposing it were largely excuses that could be solved with simple solutions, such as key drop boxes and basic scheduling. I intend to reintroduce these resolutions in the future because I believe tribal citizens deserve accountability, and our tribe deserves responsible spending.

Bison Donation

Earlier this year, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians received a generous donation from Indian Energy that allowed us to purchase three bison from a ranch on the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation. I was honored



State Senator John DaMoose and Tribal Chairman Austin Lowes (L-R) at the Black Rock opening.

and Federal Level

I continue to advocate for our tribe and our citizens at the local, state, and federal level to the best of my ability.

Last month, I issued a series of communications criticizing the federal government's actions involving ICE agents in Minneapolis, which is one of the largest urban Indigenous communities in the country. It is worth noting that over 400 Sault Tribe citizens live within a 60-mile radius of Minneapolis.

One of the major concerns with current ICE operations is that they appear to be relying on racial profiling to determine who they believe may not be a U.S. citizen.

Many Native Americans across the country have reported being stopped, questioned, detained, and even assaulted by ICE officers due to their skin color, with officers mistaking them as Hispanic. This is unacceptable.

In addition to these communications, I testified before the Michigan Senate last month in support of three bills that would increase accountability for ICE operations. These bills would prohibit ICE from concealing their identity with masks, require ICE to have warrants when carrying out their duties, and prohibit ICE from targeting individuals at churches, hospitals, schools, and other sensitive locations.

Separate from this issue, I also met with State Senator John DaMoose, State Representative Parker Fairbairn, and Congressman Jack Bergman to discuss how prediction markets threaten tribal gaming operations.

This is an issue I will again raise with our elected leadership in Washington D.C. next month during my annual Capitol Hill visits. Prediction markets have the potential to undermine tribal gaming, and tribal gaming funds the majority of the services we provide to our citizens with tribal support.

Protecting our gaming operations is protecting the services our citizens rely on.

As always, it's an honor serving as your chairman.

Austin Lowes
(906) 635-6050



I continue to serve as the coordinator for the Feeding America distribution at Big Bear in Sault Ste. Marie. For anyone interested in receiving food through this program, we distribute food on the second Thursday of every month at 4 p.m.

This is a mobile distribution, and our volunteers work outdoors to help community members meet their nutritional needs. This winter has been extremely cold, and I have tremendous respect for the volunteers who show up each month and work alongside me in frigid temperatures to make sure our families have food. Their service is deeply appreciated.

Black Rock Restaurant

The tribe's partnership with Black Rock Restaurant has been very successful so far. The restaurant is consistently packed, and patrons often have to wait for tables on Friday and Saturday. The tribe has a profit-sharing arrangement with Black Rock, which provides a direct financial benefit to our tribe. It is also important to recognize that restaurant patrons are spending money in other areas of our casino while they visit, including the gaming floor and the gift shop.

Black Rock is widely considered one of the best restaurants in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Our tribal citizens should take pride in the fact that it is located in our casino, and that a large portion of its staff are Sault Tribe citizens.

Advocacy on the Local, State,

Unit 5's activities and events this mid-winter



TYLER LAPLAUNT
DIRECTOR, UNIT V

Aanii, Boozhoo,

As we move into February, winter continues to hold us, offering teachings of perseverance and endurance. The long nights and deep cold remind us that progress is made one day at a time. Though the land appears quiet, life is gathering strength beneath the snow, teaching us that growth often happens unseen. This season calls us to patience, reflection, and trust in what is still unfolding.

February also reminds us to check in with ourselves and one another. Winter fatigue can weigh heavily, making kindness and community care even more important. Reaching out to relatives, sharing encouragement, and

supporting one another helps us endure the hardest stretch of the season. As the days slowly lengthen, we are reminded that change is happening, even if subtly. By honoring these teachings, we carry ourselves and our community forward with resilience and hope.

Separation of Powers

Over the past year, the tribe has continued important work to clearly establish a separation of powers within our tribal government. This effort is grounded in our shared commitment to strong governance, accountability, and transparency, ensuring our governmental structure serves the best

interests of the tribe now and for future generations.

We have now completed our review of the proposed constitutional amendments, and they are open for public viewing and public comment. Following the comment period, the decision will rest with the citizenship through a secretarial election. I strongly encourage all eligible citizens to review the materials, share feedback, and participate. Educational information will continue to be shared across tribal communication platforms to support informed participation.

Cultural Activities Update

I am excited to announce

that Stacie Chambers has taken on the role of Unit 5 Cultural Coordinator for the Munising and Marquette areas. She has already begun planning activities that were previously on hold. Please feel free to reach out to her with ideas or questions at SChambers1@saulttribe.net. Miigwech, Stacie, and welcome back!

Black Ash Basket Weaving Classes in Munising and Marquette are currently full with overflow lists. Miigwech for the strong interest. These classes will return in the future.

Winter Storytelling and Soup
See "LaPlaunt," Page 23

My fight against cancer & tribal board hateful retribution



AARON PAYMENT
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

CANCER DIAGNOSIS

First of all, I have shared publicly and will do so here that I was recently diagnosed with cancer, which it appears I have had for some time. Prayers are welcome. I have had a few medical procedures since in the last year that temporarily alleviated some of the symptoms. I have my treatment plan set up to rid myself of the cancer. I am supposed to avoid stress but I'm under an immense amount of it and the hands of tribal board's habitual retribution, which is an indelible stain on our tribe and has caused us to lose political capital.

Censuring me hurt our tribe. The punishment occurred the same day the allegations were shared with no evidence, which violates our Constitution as notice of proposed action was not provided. If we had a separation of powers then, you and I could have filed a lawsuit to overturn such action based on not complying with our Constitutional five days' notice requirement and a denial of any due process. The board acted without any evidence, based on allegations alone.

CONSPIRACY OR COLLUSION?

Not only were the allegations made without one stitch of evidence or truth, the censure allegations were identical to the removal petition that was circulating by the very candidate I defeated in the 2020 chair's election just 1.5 years prior. What are the chances that the removal petition could be identical with the censure document and not be collusion? Despite the censure investigation finding no criminal or civil violations, this

whole ordeal led to my forced resignation.

FORCED TO RESIGN?

Was a tribal elder correct in claiming a "political coup"? Another issue cited in the censure document was what I believe is a cover-up of the Unit 2 trailer give away. This, too, is an example of the retribution I faced for exposing this corruption. It started in the fall of 2020, when a senior Sault Tribe accountant alerted my office that an executive staff member was fractionating invoices over his signature authority and signing checks beyond his lawful authority. Was this to cover his tracks? I called the EDC secretary to ask why these checks were cut like this and she explained that she was directed to.

Next, the chair's office administrative assistant was contacted by a board member to ask, "Why is our Unit 2 trailer being held up by the chairman?" With this convergence of facts, I reported this information to the tribal board and my concern over misuse of Cares Act funds by giving away to a non-Sault Tribe individual a trailer while not complying with any known eligibility criteria in amounts, presumably to avoid detection. With the convergence of these two events, fractionating checks to purchase a trailer (presumably to avoid detection) and a complaint from a board member that I was holding up a trailer give away for her unit, I contacted the tribe's General Legal Counsel to inquire if any emergency housing had occurred with Cares Act Funds. He checked with the EDC CEO, who said "no."

The following shows that I cautioned the General Legal Counsel against caving to board coercion in the form of thinly disguised

demands. I then asked that the task force authorized to spend Cares Act funds (with the chair's concurrence) to review such actions to shield our tribe against a serious "misappropriations of funds, which is likely to open us up for an audit...of our Cares Act funding." I also made it clear that I did not "concur" to give away a trailer and find this action to be either a misappropriation or embezzlement. Was this information turned over to the BIA criminal investigator and FBI? If not, why?! A review then by the General Legal Counsel, CFO and Governmental CEO concluded a gross violation of our signature policy by illegally fractionating expenditures to appear under \$30K.

Before I returned to office in 2024, at least a few of the new 2022 board members (Tyler LaPlaunt, Isaac McKechnie, Kim Hampton and Rob McRorie), and board members Austin Lowes and Betty Freiheit, repeatedly asked for reports regarding a Unit 2 trailer that was purchased outside of any eligibility criteria. What I did not know was that tribal Legal Counsel conducted a legal investigation and reported to the board on Dec. 12, 2023, detailing the investigation and findings. I can't share this report yet, but will bring a resolution to publicly release these results. I can, however, comment on the leaked investigation posted on social media. If the post is authentic, the cost of the trailer give away was over \$76,000 to a non-tribal member, off reservation land with no regard to eligibility criteria. While, the tribe did establish an emergency housing program during the pandemic, the program was **only for temporary housing on the reservation for Sault Tribe members**.

In this case, we are not talking about tribal members who were gifted the trailer or who owned the property, so this is NOT a client-based issue

for which client confidentiality applies. There is no reason to refuse to release this information.

WHY DID THE BOD VOTE TO REIMBURSE THE CARE ACT?

On Jan. 16, 2024, the board voted to pay back the Cares Act. Read between the lines. If something illegal or improper did not occur, why vote to return the Cares Act Funds? In Resolution 2024-33, the board voted to return these funds. Releasing the report will reveal how it all happened and if board members coerced staff to gift the trailer despite tribal Legal repeatedly advising against the use of the Cares Act. This issue was one of the censure allegations. The retribution censure investigation cost the tribe over \$100,000. Recall when the board voted to direct the prosecutor to reconsider her declination to prosecute me.

Time will reveal that I was forced to resign in a political coup with no due process rights. This and appointing to replace me with a primary election loser is precisely why a Constitutional Amendment is needed. Just 23 days after I resigned, on June 2, 2022, disparaged me on social media suggesting I illegally paid for the campaigns of the new six board members who won in 2022. In her July 27, 2022, Unit Report, Director Sorenson again disparaged me by saying,

"It is no secret that the message has been anti-board for at least the last year with Aaron so to be so cocky win this election is comical."

This was long before I said anything about the outgoing losing board hate-faction.

Tribal members, please take care and love yourself, your family and your tribe!

Chi Miigwech, ~Aaron
Phone (906) 440-8946
AAPayment@saulttribe.net

From: Aaron Payment <aaronpayment@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 10:16 AM
To: Christine McPherson <cmcperson@saulttribe.net>
Cc: Jeremy Patterson <JPatterson@nativelawgroup.com>
Subject: Cares Act Units

Joel just got a consensus to set the sites which I believe he understands means he has full authority to provide emergency housing. I asked if there were any applications at this time. He said no. I asked if there was any eligible criteria set up. He said no.

So it will be interesting to see if he caves to individual requests and starts handing out homes like an episode of the Oprah Winfrey show.

I think the Task Force needs to review whether or not this is consistent with the Task Force's oversight. It will be a misappropriations of funds which is likely to open us up for an audit on an entire Cares Act funding.

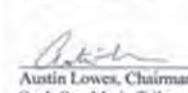
RESOLUTION NO: 2024-33

REIMBURSE CARES ACT FUNDS

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Board of Directors of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby approves the FY 2023 expenditure of \$76,468.75 from Tribal Operations (Cost Center #1160) to reimburse CARES Act Funds that were originally utilized for Emergency Housing.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, as Chairman and Secretary of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, hereby certify that the Board of Directors is composed of 13 members, of whom 11 members constituting a quorum were present at a meeting thereof duly called, noticed, convened, and held on the 10 day of January, 2024; that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at said meeting by an affirmative vote of 8 members for, 2 members against, 2 members abstaining, and that said resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.


Austin Lowes, Chairman
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians


Kimberly Hampton, Secretary
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Reporting on board meeting actions and issues



**BRIDGETT SORENSEN,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

At the Jan. 13 board meeting, the board voted for housing to submit a LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) application through MSHDA (Michigan State Housing Development Authority) to build 36 supportive housing units at Odenaang. This would allow for a next step for those at the homeless shelter. We will not know for several months if we qualify.

The board also voted to establish a lease for the Savard Property in St. Ignace from the tribe to the Housing Authority for 50 years and then another 50 years automatically renews. This is the 36-acre property that the tribe has owned for at least

a couple decades that the Unit 3 ARPA money is being used for infrastructure for future housing.

A resolution was passed to allow a waiver of sovereign immunity for Housing to get new software for billing. This will allow electronic payments in the future.

There was a resolution on the agenda to expand JKL School to include a high school. Most if not all board members support the idea of having a high school but the vote was 6-6 with the chair breaking the tie to move forward with the proposal. Some, including myself, would have preferred to build a new building on the current campus. The current plan is to start a ninth grade in the fall using our old Enrollment building for administration and the current Inland building (old police building) for classrooms. We were told a few years ago how bad the buildings were so that is why Enrollment moved into the old Head Start building and Inland will be getting a new natural resource building on 3 Mile. I think it was an election feather for some to rush it through.

A resolution to force board members to use a tribal vehicle was voted down. Board members have always received mileage at the government rate to attend

workshops, meetings, etc. The ones supporting it are the ones who do not have to drive to meetings. I personally feel safe in my own vehicle, I grocery shop after meetings/workshops and if I get in an accident, my insurance pays for it. The tribe is self-insured, so if there is an accident using the tribe's vehicle, the tribe is out the money.

This was never an issue in all the years I have been on the board but board members who were elected in 2022 seem to claim for many things that we never did either.

Also on the agenda was a resolution to force board members to turn on their cameras during the workshops or meetings. That also did not pass. Those board who supported it can feel free to turn their cameras on but didn't before and after the vote. I understand that some people think some board may not be paying attention but I am not one of them. I always answer and make comments on items of discussion. I feel like some of these are petty and retaliatory resolutions.

The last resolution on the agenda was to add the Mackinac Band into the separation of powers document. Since the Mackinac Band is the majority of our current membership this is a no brainer. We deserve to have

protection in our tribe. I do wish we would have separated the issues though, because I do not support a three-branch government. This resolution passed.

At the Feb. 3 board meeting we had many resolutions for Natural Resources establishing 2026 budgets. We also passed the Health Division Budget for 2026.

The board has been working on the separation of power amendment during workshops. The court of appeals judge who is a Sault Tribe member got on the call last week to discuss many concerns the Court of Appeals had with the document. I was happy to hear members say take your time and do it right instead of those trying to use it as an election feather.

The Housing Commission has conducted interviews for the Housing Director position and that position will be offered soon. The position has been vacant since the passing of Joni Talantino in June. Housing has many projects and grants so they need to fill positions as soon as they can.

On Jan. 17-18, we hosted Josh and Sarah Homminga to do a basket workshop. We had 18 people make their own baskets. Everyone had many laughs and enjoyed themselves.

On March 15, we will be host-

ing a feast and storytelling with Dean Sayers. Times will be finalized soon.

High school seniors, please keep an eye on the Sault Tribe Education page for scholarship opportunities and deadlines.

Indian Energy donated \$15,000 so the chair selected three tribal members to go out west to shoot bison with the money. He went with the three people and drove a tribal truck. The meat was processed and it is being distributed at each unit's elder meetings. I believe there is 250 pounds per unit.

Unit 3 is hosting a community potluck and games on Sunday, Feb. 22, at the McCann School from 1 to 3 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass and come and have some fun.

I would like to thank Elder Dell Powers on his 12 years of dedication and time to our Unit 3 Elder Subcommittee and the Elder Advisory Committee. He also was an active member of the Wequayoc Cemetery Committee. Dell will be moving closer to his children in the near future. Good Luck on your move, Dell!

Anyone who has any questions or concerns, please contact me at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, bridgett91@yahoo.com or (906) 430-0536.

Stance has never wavered on 3-branch government



**SHAWN BOROWICZ,
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

Boozhoo, my fellow tribal members

It's been quite the winter in the U.P. and from what my kids downstate tell me it's not much better down there. My son in Texas also states the weather there has also been below average. Great season for snowmobilers, ice fishing, and the general tourism with the ice bridge to the island. Spring is around the corner and I'm hoping for a good warm summer.

My recent resolution to add the Mackinac Band members to the Constitution was in no way an attempt to derail the three-branch separation of powers; it was done to protect the Mackinac members when this new government is put in place. If this

would have been done 17 years ago when the elder committee finished the review, there would not be all this name calling. If the previous boards would have acted on the issues that affected us members instead of in fighting like spoiled/entitled children, we would be further ahead. But once again this board (or most of us) are acting like adults with the best interest of the tribal members in mind. Again, I have advocated for the three-branch government since prior to being on the board and continue to do so currently, my stance has never wavered on this issue.

This tribe has always been known for covering up issues

and not being transparent to the tribal members. I was not brought up this way — I have always owned up to my mistakes and took full responsibility for my actions. Since being elected I've asked the tough questions and will continue to do so. No coverups or sweeping any issues under the rug. We are getting better at having more open workshops for the members and will continue to ask for this to happen on a continued basis.

The elder checks were mailed to all elders over the age of 60 and I've heard nothing but positive feedback from the receiving elders in Unit 3. We are a large, spread out tribe. In years to come

I hope this can be increased and will continue to work on ways to see this happen.

Our Unit 3 housing project is still moving forward. Bids for the property infrastructure will be opened and reviewed this month and the infrastructure down the road to the property is complete. The property phase consists of sewer, water, gas, streets and sidewalks. If the bids are within reason and accepted, this phase should begin when the frost is out of the ground.

Respectfully,
Shawn Borowicz
(906)430-7612, (906)379-8511 or sborowicz@saulttribe.net

Take time for self-care during mid-winter blues



**KIMBERLY HAMPTON,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV**

Anii kina waya. As we move through the heart of winter, often bringing shorter days, colder winds off the lake, and long evenings. In our Anishinaabe teachings, winter is a time of rest and reflection. The land slows down

so that new life can come in the spring. Yet in today's world, many of us are balancing work, caregiving, and school without the chance to slow down. It's important to remember that mental health is just as important as physical health. Checking in on one another can make all the difference, we have always been strongest when we walk together.

There are also many ways to care for ourselves during these weeks. Getting outside, even for a short walk when the weather allows, helps remind us that the seasons are moving forward. Staying connected to culture grounds us in who we are. If the winter blues feel heavier than usual, reaching out to tribal health services, behavioral health, or trusted relatives is a sign of strength, not weakness. Let's use this time to care gently

for ourselves and for one another so we can meet the new season with good hearts.

Reminders:

Niwin Noodin Pow Wow
SAVE THE DATE for the 2026 Niwin Noodin Pow Wow, which has been scheduled for June 6, 2026.

I encourage everyone to "like" the Niwin Noodin Pow Wow Facebook page.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, at 5 p.m., Manistique Tribal Health Center. Zoom option is available with Group ID: 906 440 8138, Password: KimHampton. There will be a full meeting schedule published soon.

Unit 4 Elder Meetings

The next meeting in Manistique will be held March 11, at 11:30 a.m. EST.

The next meeting in Escanaba will be held March 11, at 4

p.m. EST. If you plan to attend, please RSVP the week before by calling (906) 635-4971.

The next meetings in Marquette, for Units 4 and 5, are scheduled for March 5, at 5 p.m. EST at the Community Center located at 204 Cherry Creek Rd, Harvey, Mich.

Board Member In-Person Office Hours

Manistique Office Hours held at the Manistique Tribal Health Center:

Feb. 25, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

March 11, 9-11:30 a.m.

Escanaba Office Hours held at the Escanaba Community Center:

Feb. 20, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

March 6, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Town Hall Meetings

Manistique Community Town Hall Meetings located at the Manistique Tribal Health Center are scheduled as follows:

Friday, March 13, 5-7 p.m. EST.

Escanaba Community Town Hall Meetings located at the Escanaba Community Center are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, March 19, 4-6 p.m. EST.

I want to give my sincerest thanks for trusting me to represent Unit 4 members and Sault Tribe. I am always available for questions, comments, and ideas for growth. I encourage members to participate in Maamawi Craft Nights, office hours, community input sessions, Katchup with Kim, and all other activities and events occurring throughout Indian Country.

My contact information is below:

Kimberly Hampton, Unit 4 Representative
(906) 440-8138
KHampton@saulttribe.net

Tribe moves forward with constitutional reform



ISAAC MCKECHNIE
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

Dear Citizens,
The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is taking a major step toward strengthening its system of self-governance. On Feb. 6, 2026, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors and Legal Department released a public summary of proposed constitutional amendments that aim to modernize our governing structure, clarify the balance of power,

and increase accountability. These amendments are now moving into federal review, and ultimately, tribal citizens will decide whether to adopt the new Constitution through a secretarial election conducted by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

A Constitution centered on sovereignty and accountability

The revised draft introduces a strengthened Preamble focused on protecting Anishinaabe identity, ensuring transparency, and affirming the tribe's inherent sovereignty. It presents the Constitution as a living document designed to evolve with the needs and expectations of our people.

Key articles in the Proposed Constitution

Article I – Sovereignty

Reaffirms that all authority comes from the citizens and that the Constitution stands as the Tribe's highest law.

Article II – Territory & Jurisdiction

Defines territorial authority and recognizes treaty-based

rights, including those affirmed in the Treaty of 1836.

Article III – Citizenship

Clarifies citizenship requirements: Indian blood, U.S. citizenship, and not being enrolled with any other tribe. All current citizens and their descendants remain eligible.

Article IV – Bill of Rights

Enhances protections for free speech, religion, press, due process, worker rights, and whistleblowers.

Article V – Separation of Powers

Formally establishes three co-equal branches—Legislative, Executive, and Judicial—to prevent the concentration of power.

Structure of the Three Branches

Article VI – Judicial Branch

Creates a two-tier system: Trial Court and Supreme Court. Judges must follow strict ethics rules and may review laws or government actions for constitutional compliance.

Article VII – Legislative

Branch

Maintains the 12-member Tribal Council elected by five voting units. The council is responsible for lawmaking, establishing departments, approving budgets, and setting taxes and fees.

Article VIII – Executive Branch

Creates the Tribal Ogemaa as head of the Executive Branch, responsible for managing government operations, enforcing laws, and appointing key officials (subject to council approval). The ogemaa may veto council actions, which can be overridden by a three-quarter Council vote.

Accountability, Elections, and Citizen Rights

Article IX – Removal, Recall & Vacancies

Citizens may recall elected leaders. Officials may be removed for misconduct or criminal conviction.

Article X – Elections

Defines nominations, five voting units, and staggered terms.

Article XI – Sovereign

Immunity

Protects the tribe and officials while allowing constitutional challenges in tribal court.

Article XII – Referendum

Allows citizens to overturn council decisions with a petition equal to 5% of voters from the last ogemaa election.

Article XIII – Amendments

Constitutional changes require a secretarial election with at least 20% voter turnout.

Next Steps

The Legal Department will submit the draft to the BIA for informal review. A full implementation plan is due by March 6, 2026, and the board has set May 6, 2026, as the target date to vote on initiating the secretarial election.

Citizens may submit comments to constitution@saulttribe.net.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Isaac McKechnie

Unit 1 Board of Directors

imckechnie@saulttribe.net

(906) 440-6661

Our tribe needs an independent court system



MICHAEL MCKERCHIE,
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

The board has made a lot of progress on the proposed constitutional amendment language. As I write this, our Legal

Department is preparing a draft for the membership to review and provide input on. I still believe our tribe would benefit more from a two-branch government and it is more aligned with balancing our traditional ways while still protecting members with an independent court system. With that being said, I do agree with moving it forward with advancing the amendment to the BIA and letting the members decide.

Over the course of the last few years, many things have demonstrated our tribe needs a separate court system. Many have talked about failed businesses and bad court decisions, which can still happen in any type of government — with or without a chairman having a veto; but often

overlooked is when a super-majority board can run over members' rights without consequences. The board shouldn't have the authority to void elections because they feel like it — our courts should determine guilt or innocence. And if the board does infringe on a member's constitutional rights they should be able to bring their case to court. Members used to be able to do that, but four years ago Legal was instructed to remind the

Court that they don't have that authority. Which was wrong; the board should have stayed out of the courts.

There are a lot of changes proposed and I urge the members to read through the draft. The board is planning on post-

ing it soon along with a memo from Legal explaining the many changes. There is a lot, some members will like certain aspects of it and others may think the proposals go too far or not far enough. At the end of the day, there was a lot of compromising and good debating that got us here. Not everyone will be happy, but I do think we came together and produced a good document for the membership to consider.

I realize it's election season and it will bring out the best and worst of us at times. I urge members to get to know the candidates, not in just what they say but also on how they treat people and those that have difference of opinion than theirs. From my

time on the board, it's been the biggest obstacle of getting things done. There are a few that if you disagree with even one portion of their agenda, you get treated like an enemy of the state and suddenly they put words in your mouth and attack you. Our tribe doesn't need that type of politics — I hope we can continue to move forward without the drama that has plagued our tribe for a long time.

As always, I urge members to attend events when you can and get both sides of a any story you hear. Please reach out to me to discuss any issue or if you want to discuss any portion of the proposed amendment. I can be reached at (906) 440-7768. Chi Miigwech.

Strengthening roots – Barbeau's Unit 4 update



LARRY BARBEAU,
DIRECTOR, UNIT IV

Aaniin,
It sure has been a cold winter so far. I cannot wait for spring, warmer temperatures, and fishing. As the new year continues on, I am still focusing on reviewing plans, setting goals, and engaging with members more to better our tribe.

2020 Consent Decree Update

We are deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision not to hear our decree case. This outcome is disheartening, as we

firmly believe the issues raised warranted further judicial consideration at the highest level. While we respect the court's authority, this decision leaves significant concerns unresolved and is a setback to our continued efforts to seek clarity and fairness.

Upcoming Meetings/Important Dates

We have quite a few scheduled meetings coming up for the month of February; including, board workshops/meetings, JKLFC meetings, Kewadin Gaming Authority meetings, Enterprise Authority meetings, Conservation meetings, etc.

Feb. 3, 2026 – Board workshop at 10 a.m. and the board meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Feb. 10, 2026 – Board workshop/JKLFC meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Feb. 17, 2026 – Board workshop/Enterprise Authority meeting starting at 9 a.m. and the

board meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Feb. 23, 2026 - Conservation Committee meeting starting at 5 p.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Feb. 24, 2026 – Board workshop/KGA meeting starting at 9 a.m. in the Whitefish Point Room at Kewadin Casinos, Sault Ste. Marie.

Unit 4 Elder Meetings
We encourage all tribal elders to attend the elder meetings. The next meeting in Manistique will be held Feb. 11, 2026, at 12 p.m. EST at the Manistique Tribal Center. The next meeting in Escanaba will be held Feb. 11, 2026, at 5 p.m. EST at the Escanaba Community Center.

SAVE THE DATE –
Honoring our Elders Pow Wow – April 18, 2026 from 1 to 7 p.m. at the Escanaba High School. Doors open at 10 a.m., Grand Entries at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., feast at 4:30 p.m. For vendor information contact: chuckjennifer09@

gmail.com

Contact information

Larry Barbeau, Unit 4

Representative. Phone (906) 259-3040. Email lbarbeau@saulttribe.net

I would like to thank all tribal members for your continued support and cooperation. Your participation and trust motivate us to work diligently for the benefit of our tribal community.

LAPLAUNT REPORT CONTINUED—

From "LaPlaunt," Page 21

Contest will be held on Feb. 28, from 12 to 2 p.m. at the Munising Tribal Health Center Community Room. No registration is required.

Marquette Culture Night

continues on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Marquette Tribal Community Center (204 Cherry Creek Road). Upcoming dates: Feb. 12, Feb. 26, March 12, and March 26.

Miigwech to Larissa

Beun for hosting Beginning Anishinaabemowin Language Nights on the first and third Wednesdays, 6 to 8 p.m.

We truly appreciate your role in strengthening our shared goals. I value all of your contributions and remain committed to serving the tribal community with transparency and dedication. I want to give my appreciation for believing in me to represent Unit 4 members and the Sault Tribe. I am always available for questions, comments, and ideas for growth. Miigwech.

Upcoming dates: Feb. 18, March 4, March 18.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss something with me, please use my contact information below. You can also reach out to Unit 4/5 Liaison Mary Jenerou at mjenerou@saulttribe.net or (906) 450-7011 or (906) 341-8469.

Chi Miigwech for all you do to strengthen our community.

Tyler Migizii Migwan

LaPlaunt

Unit 5 Director / Vice-Chairman

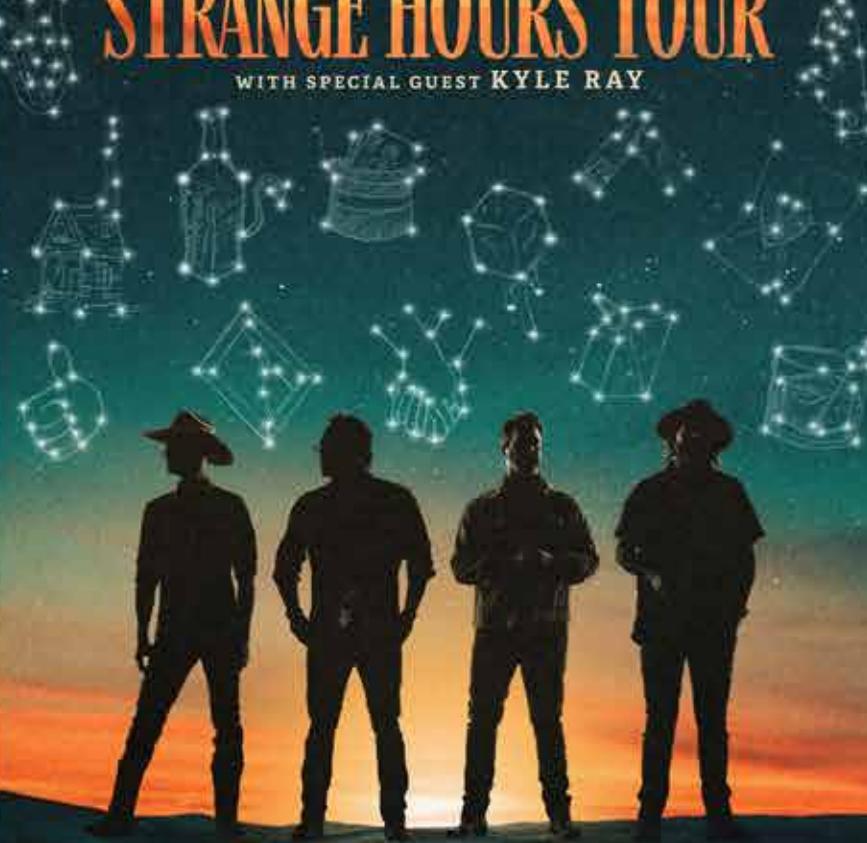
laplaunt@saulttribe.net

(906) 440-8294

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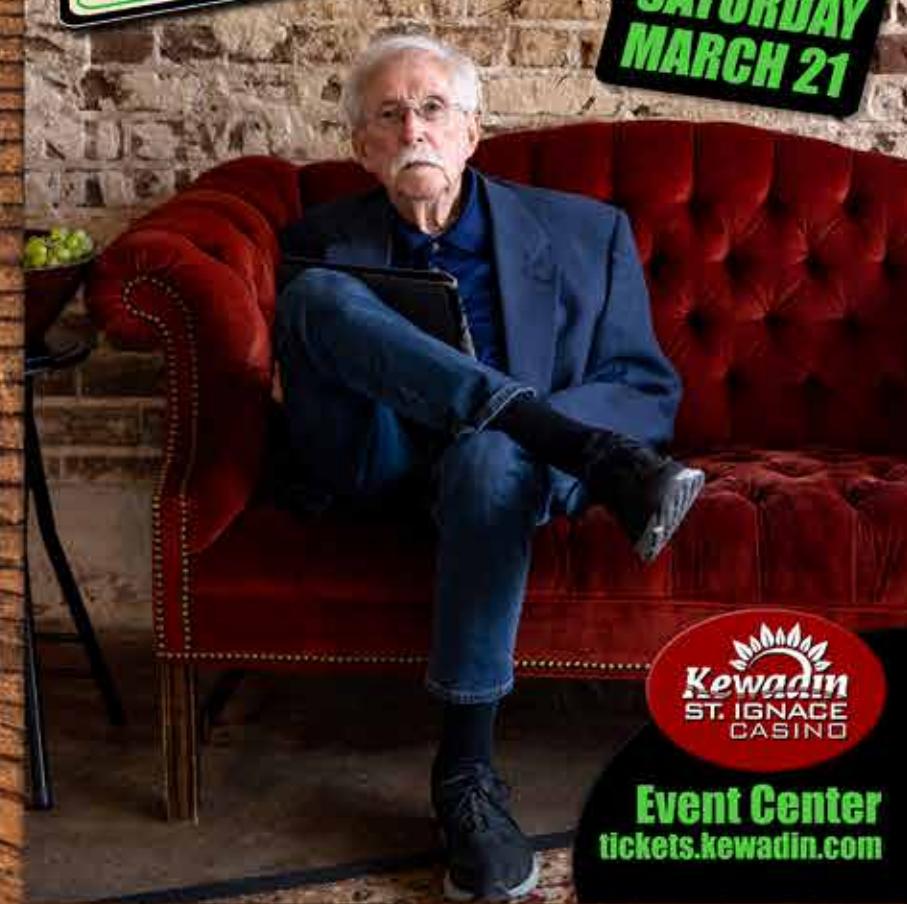
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