



GREETINGS FROM MIKE

Fall 2019

Black asphalt has never looked so beautiful! You would think it was made of precious gemstones when you consider how long we waited and the financial resources it took to complete this important project.

First, I want to say "Thank You!" to each donor who gave to help us fix a growing safety and access problem at Heritage Living Center. Secondly, I say

"Thanks" to the Cheyenne elders and staff who patiently parked their cars great distances and walked up the steep hill to get to work for nearly two months while the demolition and construction of our new parking area progressed this summer.

Our founder, Father Emmett Hoffmann was still living when he and I first began talking about the cracks and potholes forming on the road leading up to the

Center, the place Father fondly called "The Miracle on the Hill." The blacktop surface had begun to show its age and thin areas built on clay soil (we call it gumbo in the west) would swell in the winter and spring months and break up the pavement.

I remember one day when Father, his little dog, Fergie, and I were out for a walk. Fergie was chasing rabbits while Father Emmett and I looked at cracks in the asphalt. He lamented that something had to be done but didn't know where the money would come from as we struggled to pay for food, heat and staffing. From that moment we started planning. This time we wanted it engineered right so that snow and rain would properly drain off the hill rather than seep underneath the pavement surface.

Father Emmett passed away in February 2013 and it took Soaring Eagle a couple of years to rejuvenate from losing him. After the food bills, payroll and other daily expenses were covered,

The asphalt crew had to work quickly to move the heavy smoldering material into place.



continued, page 2 ►

we were able to save some funds and this past winter an engineer and paving company were secured for the short road building season in Montana. So many projects of this type get planned years in advance and in our remote location, you have to wait for a good company to



An HLC elder is escorted through the construction area by a resident assistant.

become available. That's what happened when Century Paving said they could do our project.

On September 26, our road and parking area were completed, and the elders and staff were able to more easily access the Heritage Living Center.

That is not the only project we have undertaken this year thanks to our understanding and generous donors. Upgrades to our security cameras are in place. We can see the public areas, hallways, hidden areas, like stairwells, in case a resident falls or needs assistance. We can even see outside the building with some strategically placed cameras. We are adding electronic devices to our doors to better secure entrance into the building. You can't be too safe in today's troubled world.

We've also fixed a drainage problem near the dining room. During heavy rains and snowmelt, water would not drain

away from the building. Sometimes it was so heavy that water ran under the door and soaked the carpet in the dining area. That is now fixed with better drainage and protection around the building.

We also were able to replace our medical transport van. The elders are so grateful for the new comfortable ride they take oftentimes as far as 125 miles to see the doctor. We say thank you to everyone who contributed to make the new van possible.

There is still more to do. In the coming weeks, we will be adding a family area in Eagle Ridge Park behind the Center. It will be a fun area where grandkids can play while grandma and grandpa watch them from a comfortable shaded area. We poured a new sidewalk to make it possible for an elder to walk using a cane, walker or wheelchair to access this area. Later this fall and winter, we will relocate

our reception desk and upgrade our fire alarm and safety panels. The relocation will have a direct view of the front entrance which is especially important for safety at night when fewer staff are on duty.

Yes, we've been busy making Heritage Living Center a better and safer place to live for the elders. It has been a costly undertaking and our funds have been depleted. The cost of care, food and transportation continues even when important projects are completed while the weather is good. A day of assisted-living care costs \$131 for an elder. If you could send a generous gift in the enclosed envelope, we would be deeply grateful.

We couldn't have done all of this without your prayers and financial support. A group of elders gather each day in our little chapel to pray for each other and our donors. During their prayers they thank God for you and the home your gifts make possible.

Please keep us in your prayers and in your heart when year-end giving appeals start arriving in your mailbox. Please remember us in your year-end giving plans.

With a grateful heart,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Shuff".



Electrician crew upgrading the Center's security system cameras to ensure the safety of our residents throughout the building and on the grounds outside.

THANKS FROM YOUR CHEYENNE FRIENDS



Francis Limpy - resident, ceremonial man, smudged (blessed) our new van (several hundred miles on it already), burned cedar and directed the smoke with ceremonial eagle wing. He told our group that in his prayers he prayed for the safety for the elders and drivers as they travel Montana's highways often great distances for medical appointments. Everyone thanked him and shook hands with Francis.



David & Dominga Bixby

It is a wonderful blessing to have a new parking lot and road.



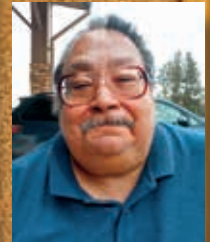
Lazona Harris

Thank you for all that has been done at Heritage Living Center.



Francis Limpy

We are thankful for all the donors have made possible for us.



Paul Beartrack

Glory be to God. Thank you to our "Angel" donors.



Pauline Eaglefeathers

I'm glad we have a smooth ride up the hill. Our grandkids can safely visit.



Jerry Thex, HLC Administrator

The parking lot was crumbling right before our eyes. Our elders and staff will be safer and what a blessing it is done before winter.



Pete Rising Sun

Thank God for our donors who made the new parking lot and long driveway up the hill possible. We're really going to appreciate it in the winter.



Susan Braine

I'm so appreciative to the donors for the new parking lot.



Richard Foote

I'm so glad it was done right so that it will last a long time.



Kenneth Beartusk

I watched the workers throughout construction. I'm thankful for all that was done for us.

THE LEGEND OF SWEETGRASS AND THE CHEYENNE WAY

BY PETE RISING SUN, HERITAGE LIVING CENTER RESIDENT



Sweetgrass (*Motse'eo*) is a sacred plant to Native Americans and to many cultures. I can only speak of the Cheyenne Way of Life from the teachings of my elders. I am a fifth-generation descendant of Chief Iron Shirt, a member of the Chiefs' Society and a lifetime ceremonial man. Chief Littlewolf showed favor to Iron Shirt for his brave warrior spirit and excellent skills in warfare at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. My great, great-grandfather, Chief Iron Shirt (*b. July 1831 – d. March 18, 1929*), at the age of 97, still rode his horse to the Busby Fair Rodeo.

Maheo' (the Creator) instructed Sweet

Medicine, a Cheyenne Prophet to ascend the Sacred Mountain (*Novavose*) and fast for four days and four nights. *Maheo'* then entrusted to Sweet Medicine the Sacred Arrow Covenant for the Cheyenne people. The sacred arrow ceremony is the highest of all ceremonies of the Cheyenne. When the new life season comes each year, the arrow ceremony is held - the first ceremony before all others, including the Sun Dance. The sacred arrow bundle contains four powerful arrows, two are for food (buffalo) and two protect the Cheyenne from enemies.

Maheo' gave Sweet Medicine instructions for the sacred arrows:

Pete talks to his grandson, Skyler, about the beautiful braids of sweetgrass and the historical, cultural significance of the plant to the Cheyenne.

- *You will place them in a medicine lodge and select one man to be the keeper (guardian).*
- *You will use sweet grass in a cleansing ceremony. You will know this sacred plant by the way it smells and it grows beside the water.*
- *You will burn 444 blades of sweet grass in braided bundles.*
- *I will be there with you to speak the Cheyenne language you must follow for this ceremony.*

Sweetgrass is a sacred plant, a gift from our Creator of Life. Cheyenne believe life is a spiritual journey with the sacred spirit of *Maheo'*. We believe in an invisible spiritual power greater than our own spirit.

Sweetgrass smells like its name, a natural sweet fragrance that invites your spirit into the Circle of Life. We smudge (bless) ourselves with the smoke from a burning braid of sweet grass to receive spiritual cleansing and healing from *Maheo'*. We smudge ourselves and pray for the blessings of *Maheo's* gifts, that only he can bless us with. These gifts are a clear mind and clean heart from which keen vision, acute hearing and thoughtful speech of wisdom are received. *Maheo'* answers our prayers and blesses us with

his Love, Joy and Peace, always.

Cheyenne Smudging

Sweetgrass blessing is a spiritual cleansing, removing the negative spirits from our mind, body and spirit. The smoke carries our prayers to *Maheo'*. Prayer is practiced with a sincere heart, open mind, meaningful thoughts and words of wisdom.

Sweetgrass is also used to bless the inside and outside of our home to remove any negative spirits. We light the braid outside the home, then we bless ourselves - drawing the sweet smoke across our bodies with our hands, asking *Maheo'* to bring peace into our home. Then we enter the home, opening all entrances to and from the home, as any negative energy exits. Once we are inside the home we smudge every room. Then we close all doors of the home and return outside. Then we walk around the four sides of our home pausing to pray in all four directions, asking *Maheo'* to protect and bless our family and home.

Sweetgrass is also used in our own individual prayer life. During prayer and smudging we are asking *Maheo'* to align our spirit with His, so we can have a clear mind, clean heart, which brings keen vision, acute hearing and thoughtfulness of speech. One of my favorite places to smudge and pray is on a hilltop under the beautiful blue sky, overlooking the Tongue River Valley with the rising sun. *Maheo'* and I connect as one, which brings peace to my spirit.



Botanical Profile:

"Sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*) is a perennial grass that forms thick rhizomatous mats. Stems grow up to 3 feet high, and are usually purple at the base. The grass has a sweet, pleasant smell. Flowers are formed in a branched, tapering cluster called a panicle.

Sweetgrass is a wetland plant found in moist meadows, along riverbanks, and near the ocean."

(Courtesy of USDA, Forest Service)

Hundreds of sweetgrass blades can be wrapped into a single braid as thick as an axe handle.





Above Left: The scope and scale of the parking lot project is put into perspective in this panoramic view from the rooftop.

Above Right: Mike and resident Clinton Bird Hat visit at the powwow grounds during the annual Father Emmett Hoffmann Birthday Service, Celebration and Powwow.

Middle Left: Father Larry Webber greets HLC elders before Father Emmett Hoffmann's memorial and storytelling service.

Bottom Left: In the front lobby, it's rare for a minute to go by without hearing laughter amongst the residents.

Bottom Right: HLC elder, Kenneth Beartusk, was a daily observer during the week-long asphalt project - earning the nickname "The Foreman."



HLC RECEIVES MHCA AWARD



Heritage Living Center was recently recognized by the Montana Health Care Association with the “Enrichment of Life Award for Innovative Program in Customer Service.” The award recognizes assisted-living homes that have committed time and resources to activities and life events special to residents. Some of the Heritage Living Center activities include powwows, buffalo viewing and hunts (a sacred Cheyenne activity), dry meat cutting, Native hand games, singing and dancing. Jerry Thex (at podium in modern native vest) told the audience these activities make Heritage Living Center unique among assisted-living homes in Montana. Mr. Thex was recently elected as the First Native American to serve on the Montana Health Care Association Board of Directors.

DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHT LIFE AT HLC



Bobbie Strange Owl has worked for Heritage Living Center for many years. She has cared for the elders as a Resident Attendant and she is also a Certified Nursing Assistant. Bobbie now cares for the elders in a very special way as our Cultural Activities Coordinator. Crafting activities keep elderly hands nimble doing projects with a Native American theme like tipi center pieces. Bobbie also arranges for cultural activities like trips to sacred sites, hand games, Native singing and dancing. The unique and interesting activities helped HLC gain special recognition from the Montana Health Care Association noted on page 7 of this newsletter. Thank you, Bobbie, for enhancing the lives of our elders. Thank you to our donors whose gifts make this unique service available to the Cheyenne elders.



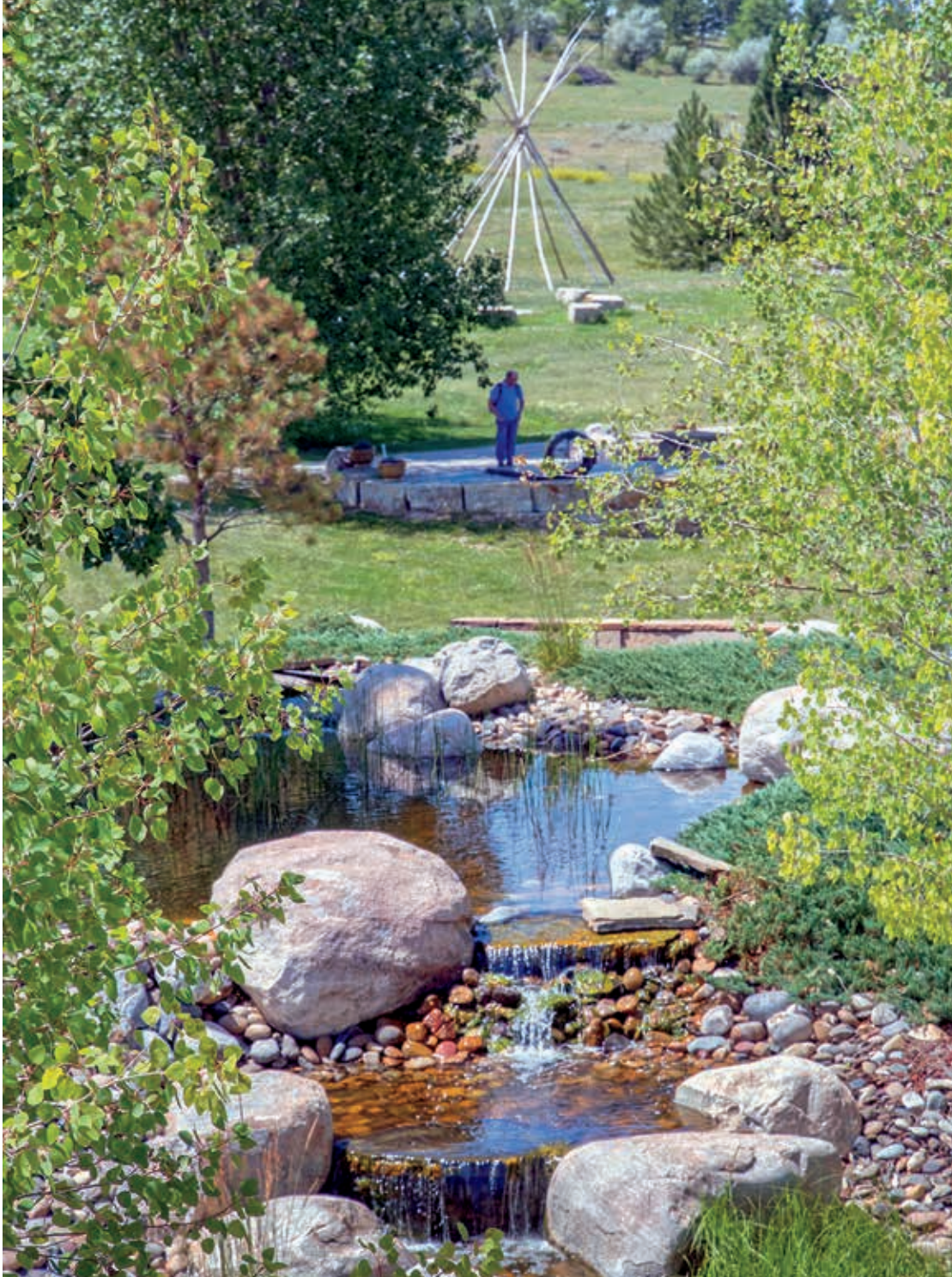
Above:
Lazona Harris (left) and Grace Morin (right) show off tipi centerpieces they made.

Above Top:
Bobbie Strange Owl leading crafts with the elders.



Mail Always Gets Through: Some crazy things happen with our mail. A donor from New York recently sent us the mail she received in the condition it was placed in her mailbox. She said a mail truck caught on fire and this photo shows the mail piece she received. Thankfully, it was still delivered, and the donor was able to respond to our plea for help. As the old saying goes "Through rain, hail, sleet or snow and now, fire, the mail goes through!" God bless the mail carriers who deliver our message to generous donors.

YEAR-END GIVING



This is a wonderful time of year. It is a time when we give thanks for the blessings of living in a free country and gather with our family and friends to celebrate, each in our own way, the traditions of Thanksgiving. Soon after, we start to think about Christmas and the giving of gifts to loved ones and favorite causes.

We hope that Soaring Eagle will be one of the charities you bless with a year-end gift in 2019.

The most convenient way to donate is by check or credit card. It's quick and easy to do. Please remember gifts that you want credited in 2019 need to be dated no later than December 31, 2019 and completed or mailed by that date. A December 31st postmark on a mailed check indicates that your gift was intended to be credited in 2019.

Some donors choose to make tax-wise gifts of stock. Since most stocks are now held in an account with a financial advisor, transferring a gift of stock to Soaring Eagle is relatively easy. Please call, write or have your advisor contact us for instructions on how to transfer securities directly to us. If you have stock certificates you want to give, there are specific instructions on how to accomplish this transaction which we are happy to send to you.

If you are considering a gift of stock, please consult with your advisor to determine the best stocks to give. One

Donor, Dave Fitzsimmons pauses at the grave of Father Emmett Hoffmann while touring the Heritage Living Center's grounds.

strategy is to consider giving stock that has appreciated significantly. By doing so the cost of your gift is the cost basis, in other words what you paid for the stock, and the current value is the amount of your gift for tax purposes. Each donor's situation is different, so visiting with a trusted advisor is always a wise decision.

Gifts of stock take time to complete, so start planning early to beat the December 31st deadline.

The holidays are a time when folks think of family and the legacy they want to share with their children, grandchildren and close friends. If you are preparing your will or updating an old will, please consider adding a charitable dimension by including Soaring Eagle in your plans. Talk with your attorney about how best to accomplish all you want to share with others. Write to us or call for our free, no obligation booklet "Giving Through Your Will."

Many Americans are making their charitable gifts from their Individual Retirement Accounts. More and more Soaring Eagle donors are taking advantage of this tax-wise way to give. This might be especially important if you have discovered that you no longer need to itemize your deductions to reduce your federal income tax bill. If you use the new, higher standard deduction, then making a Qualified Charitable Distribution from you IRA will likely reduce your tax bill on retirement income.

The charitable IRA rollover was made permanent in 2015 with the signing of the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes

Act (PATH). With each passing year, the charitable IRA rollover has become an important source of gifts to charities like Soaring Eagle. The charitable IRA rollover offers donors who have reached age 70 ½ the same tax benefits whether or not the donor itemizes. Donors can also fulfill their required minimum distributions by making charitable IRA rollover gifts.

To make a gift from your IRA account, simply tell your financial advisor to make a distribution directly to Soaring Eagle, not to you. If the distribution is made to you, then it becomes taxable income. Tell your advisor how much you want to give and pass along our address – Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103. It will take your financial institution a few days to process your gift, so start early. Don't wait until late December and hope your gift is transferred before the December 31st deadline.

An increasing number of Americans have check writing privileges on their IRA accounts. It is a convenient feature to use when making major purchases and donations. But there is a trap to be aware of. When a bank check is written the date on the check is the date of the transaction. When a check is written on an IRA account, the date of the transaction is the date when the IRA administrator transfers the funds to the recipient. If you make an IRA gift by writing a check on your IRA account, do so with plenty of lead time for your check to reach us, allowing us time to deposit your check and have it reach your administrator to transfer the funds to our account. If that occurs late in the year, the fund transfer might not happen until 2020. If that happens two

problems can occur:

- 1) The donor will have to declare their Qualified Charitable Distribution on their 2020 tax return.

- 2) If the donor misses meeting their required minimum distribution for the year due to a delay in transferring funds, the donor will have to pay a substantial penalty tax on the amount of the under-distribution.

So, for your peace of mind and the benefit of the Soaring Eagle, please be sure to make a charitable IRA rollover gift at least a few weeks before the end of the year.

To learn more about how planning your giving can benefit you and the mission of Soaring Eagle, please write or call us at Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103, 406-256-8500.

The information in this newsletter is presented to Soaring Eagle's donors and friends to provide general information and encourage charitable giving. Soaring Eagle is a public charity incorporated in the state of Montana and does not engage in rendering legal, tax, financial, or any other professional advice. Consult your own professional advisors as it pertains to your individual situation. Consult an attorney if your plans require the creation of or revision of a will, trust or other legal document. Tax deductions vary based on numerous factors including personal financial circumstances, tax codes, and applicable federal discount rates, which can change each month. Charitable gift annuities may not be available in all states.



I RECEIVE HIGH FIXED PAYMENTS FROM MY SOARING EAGLE GIFT ANNUITY!

"I learned that I could receive a good return with a gift annuity. I asked Soaring Eagle to send me information illustrating the benefits of a gift annuity. It was free and there was no obligation. It was straight forward and simple to complete, so I sent \$10,000 for an annuity. Now, I can count on my payments for the rest of my life and help care for elders at Heritage Living Center. I received a tax deduction when I set up my annuity. Best of all, most of each payment is tax-free."

To learn more about the benefits of a Soaring Eagle gift annuity, please use the coupon in this newsletter or call Mike Skaggs at (406) 256-8500, Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103.

2019 Annuity Rates One-Life Annuity

Age	% Rate	Age	% Rate
65	5.1	78	6.8
66	5.2	79	7.1
67	5.3	80	7.3
68	5.3	81	7.5
69	5.4	82	7.7
70	5.6	83	7.9
71	5.7	84	8.1
72	5.8	85	8.3
73	5.9	86	8.5
74	6.1	87	8.7
75	6.2	88	8.9
76	6.4	89	9.2
77	6.6	90+	9.5

*Lower two-life rates are available.
Please contact us for information.*



YOUR WILL KEEPS ON GIVING

Please use one of the following sample forms of bequest when preparing your Will:

- A. Giving a Specific Amount – "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, the sum of \$_____."
- B. Giving a Specific Property - "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, (identify specific property, example: 500 shares of XYZ stock)."
- C. Giving a Percentage – "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, _____% of my estate."
- D. Giving the Residue - "All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, I bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana."
- E. Giving a Contingent Bequest – "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana my bequest to (name of intended recipient) should he/she not be living or be able to accept my bequest."

The above are sample forms only. Consult your attorney when preparing any legal document.

To learn more about giving to Soaring Eagle through your will, request our free booklet "Giving Through Your Will" by writing or calling: Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103 (406) 256-8500.

The following excerpt from one of Father Emmett's letters highlights the difficulties of the heavy clay "gumbo" soil in our part of Montana and the challenges we faced when rebuilding our road and parking lot. You'll smile at Father Emmett's first encounter with gumbo mud.

This time of the year weather changes can be extreme within a few short hours. I will never forget, and I love to tell the story about the spring of 1955, my first Easter on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

Palm Sunday began with three feet of snow, the first moisture we'd had since my arrival in Montana the previous July. We were snowbound for three days without telephone service and our only contact with the outside world was an old short-wave radio.

In those days the priests wore heavy, brown woolen robes that couldn't be washed. The summer heat was unbearable but, in the winter, we were glad to have woolen clothing. The problem was that when our robes got dirty, all we could do was rub out the dirt. After a couple of weeks, you could tell what we had eaten!

After the Palm Sunday storm, warm Chinook winds began to blow from the Southwest. By Easter Sun-



Reminisce with Father Emmett

12 years ago . . .

day, the snow was gone. But water was everywhere. I drove down to the Ashland Indian Camp to visit the sick and elderly who couldn't get to church. Since it was Easter, I had on a spotless robe.

I went from tent to tent and to several dilapidated log cabins. Everyone was very friendly and kept smiling at me. I congratulated myself on what a good job I'd done. As I got into my car to leave, I noticed that all the Cheyenne, young and old, had come out of their tents and cabins to see me off.

I only got a short distance toward the main gravel road and I had to drive around deep wagon ruts filled with water. Suddenly, my tires began to spin, and great

gobs of gumbo flew up and covered my windshield. I opened the car door and stepped into ankle deep gumbo mud. After a couple of steps my shoes felt like heavy lead and the hem of my long robe was even heavier.

I looked back at the Cheyenne crowd and shrugged my shoulders. They burst into hysterical laughter. When they had recovered, some of the younger men pushed the car to the main road. They never let me forget the lesson

I learned about gumbo mud.

My thoughts are focused on your goodness and generosity. In my prayers I ask God to bless you for helping us care for the Cheyenne elders; because without your help we couldn't meet their daily needs. You are our lifeline for the elders.

You are a special benefactor and friend and I know you really care for the Cheyenne elders. I cannot begin to tell you how indebted I am for your continued help. Words don't express the gratitude that fills my heart. Without your generosity the Heritage Living Center couldn't exist and the vision of the "old chiefs" would be meaningless.

*Your beggar friend,
Father Emmett Hoffmann*



Visit us at www.soaringeagle.org



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SOARING EAGLE GIFT INFORMATION REQUEST

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email *(Promise we will not share)* _____

YES, I'm interested in a Soaring Eagle Charitable Gift Annuity. Please send me more information.

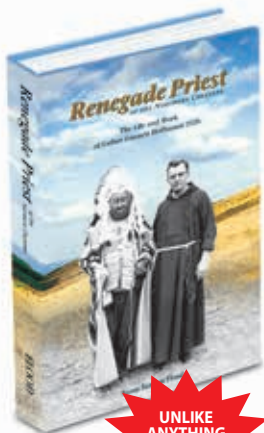
Birth date(s) of annuitant(s) _____

Annuity Amount \$ _____ *Minimum annuity amount \$5,000 (up to 2 names/birth dates allowed per annuity.)*

This is a non-binding proposal. Upon receipt of actual payment for an annuity, a formal contract will be mailed. For more information call (406) 256-8500.

Please send to me the following:

☐ Giving Securities ☐ Giving Through Retirement Plans ☐ Giving Through Your Will ☐ Guide to Effective Giving after Tax Reform



Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne

The Life and Work of
Father Emmett Hoffmann
1926–2013

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