



We're dodging tornadoes and golfball-sized hail folks!

After record-breaking snowfall this past winter, Mother Nature still isn't giving us a break. Judging from news reports, you may be experiencing similar unpredictable weather as well. Due to the dangerous spring storms with high winds, lightning and hail, we're holding more fire and evacuation drills than usual at the Heritage Living Center. During our latest drill, it took 7 minutes to evacuate 40 elders plus staff. That's pretty good when you consider how many are in wheelchairs and using walkers.

This May, Neil Andrew, a long-time donor from Ohio, surprised the elders with a generous gift from his heart. He bought nearly 60 bags of steer manure and a truckload of flowers from the greenhouse at St. Labre Indian School. Then he and Richard Miner, our maintenance supervisor and HLC employee Erica Hayes, filled 12 wooden planters with the manure and planted colorful flowers. They also made an 8' x 8'

Greetings From Mike

vegetable garden box, bought and planted it with vegetables.

"I was amazed!" Richard says. "I thought we'd be doing the work, but Neil was right in there getting dirty. He was out in the heat pulling

weeds and planting right along side us. It was meaningful to me to see him working so hard to make the elders happy. It was good knowing he cared."

But that wasn't all. Word got



Heritage resident Herb Bearchum, center, receives prayers and blessings from traditional Cheyenne Hubert Black Wolf.

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around and the residents were thrilled when the Greenhouse manager donated even more flowers for HLC. Neil then made sure that all the residents who wanted a pot full of flowers could have them for their decks and patios. The next day all



Dwarfed by the sheer mass of equipment in the second-story mechanical/boiler room, Mike Skaggs, Jerry Thex and Hubert Black Wolf discuss the engineering required to move nearly five tons of equipment to the lower level at HLC.

the residents could be seen busily planting their flowers and tending their vegetables.

Neil also sponsored a flower pot contest. The elder who grew the biggest and best pot of flowers this summer would win 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes. What an uplifting way to start the summer! Despite some scary weather, it was exactly what the residents needed to enjoy the month of May, or “the Planting Moon” as the Cheyenne call it.

We also welcomed our long-time friend Max Bennink and his son Corey, who have been kind and faithful donors since we opened the

Center in 2003. They drove all the way from Pennsylvania to join the elders in a traditional sweat lodge ceremony conducted by Cheyenne elder, Richard Tall Bull. Max and his son found the experience exhilarating. They were given a heartfelt welcome by the residents and staff, who spent quality time visiting with them.

On another note, we have come up short on meeting our goal to pay for the boiler room reconstruction. If you could send an extra donation at this time, the elders will be grateful for your help to resolve

this problem that’s compromising the integrity of our mechanical systems. Please look for the donation envelope inside this newsletter.

You will also find photographs in this newsletter of a special occasion at the Center that staff and elders will not soon forget. Hubert Black Wolf held a meaningful blessing ceremony in which I also took part. Hubert comes from a traditional family and he follows the old Cheyenne ways as much as he can. He got us all together and burning a pinch of herbs, including bitterroot, he smudged everyone individually and passed an eagle feather fan over us from head

to foot. He prayed for each of us, for our good health and the continued future success of the Center in the coming years.

In recent months we welcomed new Cheyenne friends who have chosen HLC as their home. It’s only because of compassionate friends like you that we’ve been able to offer Native elders a safe, Assisted Living Center for almost 13 years. Rita Shoulder Blade, Gloria American Horse, Joyce Knows His Gun, Cora Bird Hat, Lloyd Little Bird, Evelyn Bear Ground and Joseph White Wolf have finally found comfort and security in their twilight years.

Now, thanks to you, they have a safe, cozy home where they can sit in the “Night Hawk” recreation room, sip coffee and look out over the pine-covered hills of their homeland. It can’t get any better than that.

With a grateful heart,


Mike Skaggs

P. S. During the summer months, if you are traveling to Yellowstone National Park or to other interesting historic sites in Montana, stop in as our guest at the Heritage Living Center for a complimentary overnight stay and a meal with the Cheyenne elders. Please call and let us know when you are coming so we can arrange the guest room for you.

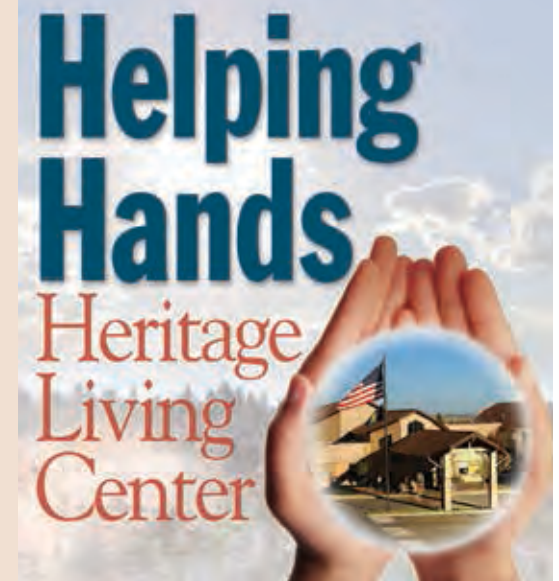
Healing on the Red Road: Maintenance Supervisor Richard Miner

Richard Miner is a Miniconjou Lakota from White Horse, South Dakota and a descendant of Chief War Eagle, an Isanti Sioux. War Eagle kept the peace between tribes and the U. S. Government. Today, his large statue stands on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River in Sioux City, Iowa, a reminder that peace and good will is possible between nations.

Richard recently accepted the job as Maintenance Supervisor after working for the Heritage Living Center for two years. Born in 1980, Richard remembers having a tough time growing up. His parents had 6 kids

and they traveled around from place to place as the jobs warranted. Work was scarce on the reservations so they decided to live in cities where there were more opportunities.

But Richard was blessed to have known and loved his great grandmother, Maxine White Dog, who practiced her old time Lakota ways. He remembers watching her blend chokecherries and eggs to use as a traditional shampoo. He was a little amazed at first while she was mixing her ingredients, but she just smiled. “It worked!” he remembers. Grandma White Dog will always hold a



special place in his heart.

It cannot be said that Richard had a happy, easy life. His father and mother separated and he grew up without a male mentor in his life. In a world of anger and hurt, he fought his way through school playing football and basketball but when he turned 14, he quit school, earned his GED and went to work.

Richard’s life changed when he turned toward his traditional, spiritual beliefs, taking part in sweat lodge ceremonies and following the “Red Road,” the ceremonial way of life and prayer of his ancestors. Richard’s life was blessed with a supportive and loving Cheyenne wife, Michelle Thex and five children. Richard says he has no regrets. “I feel like I’m home. I love and appreciate working with the elders at HLC. What I went through as a kid made me what I am today. It makes me feel strong knowing that Crazy Horse camped on the land where the Heritage Living Center now stands.”



Maintenance Supervisor Richard Miner places a new plaque on the memorial wall just outside the Heritage Living Center.

A Forgotten Woman of the West

By Renee Sansom Flood

In frontier history, we recognize the names of famous Indian chiefs and warriors, but how often do we read about the patient wives standing beside their famous husbands? They are usually referred to as “squaws,” a

denigrating, despicable term, which should never be used to describe these brave souls who suffered the most during Northern Plains warfare. As their ancient customs weakened and their homelands were taken away,

most stood as silent witnesses to a history not of their making.

Heritage Living Center resident elder, JoAnn “Estatoto” (Blue Eyes) Elliott, is a member of Sitting Bull’s Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. In this article she graciously shares the story of her Assinaboine great grandmother, Susan Kills Wood, the daughter of Chief Got Wolf Tail and his wife, Walking Blue Mane.

The story begins with Susan’s birth in 1843, during epidemics of smallpox, cholera and whooping cough that swept across the plains killing thousands of tribal people. Battles with U.S. soldiers annihilated thousands more. As Indian girls witnessed the humiliation and death of their tribal fathers and brothers and the extreme poverty on fenced reservations, they often became prey to immigrant soldiers stationed at Western forts.

Amidst this upheaval in tribal living conditions, 16 year-old Susan survived somehow, but her childhood didn’t last long. Henry Archdale, an

English soldier rode into camp one day and “bought” her. Eight years later, Archdale, by then a trader, “went away and didn’t come back.” That was the last Susan saw or heard of Archdale, who left her with a toddler and a small baby. Susan never found out in her lifetime that Archdale had gone on a buying trip to St. Louis, stopping at Fort Buford along the way. Records show that an epidemic spread through the fort and Henry Archdale caught the disease and died. He was buried in the military cemetery.

Susan went back to her tribal camp, but she was again sold, this time to a German Army Scout named Jacob Wirth. Her second life of bondage began with a foreign stranger who could not speak her language.

Susan toiled in silence for more than two decades with one goal always on her mind – the survival of her children. Two incidents in Susan’s life demonstrated her love for them. The first was a heart wound from which she never fully recovered. Jacob Wirth decided to send three of Susan’s daughters, the youngest one only 6 years-old, away to boarding schools. Susan begged Wirth not to send them away, but he wouldn’t change his mind. The devastated mother would not see two of her children for nearly 10 years.

A second ordeal showed this mother’s incredible bravery in the face

of danger. Jacob Wirth went hunting in the mountains one day, leaving Susan and her youngest children along the trail, sitting in a wagon full of buffalo hides. Smelling the hides, a hungry grizzly attacked. With her young ones screaming and clinging to her, Susan faced the furious grizzly, allowing the bear to charge. When he stood up and roared over her with his mouth wide open, she fired her pistol up into the bear’s mouth, hitting him

stress her point in a public demonstration of disgust, she “threw him away” by Indian custom. Not long afterward, Jacob married a prosperous woman and moved into her fine home. To be fair, the Wirth sisters wanted the best for both parents. While their mother left a lasting impression of loyalty in their lives, the girls also enjoyed visiting their father in his big house.

Showing the changing opportunities for Indian women, Susan’s youngest daughter, Nettie, became a star basketball player on the Fort Shaw Girls Basketball team. The squad became famous when they played to victory at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis. Competition seemed to inspire the girls to even greater heights. In 1905, they appeared at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland. The Fort Shaw Champions were never defeated. In at least one, local exhibition game, Nettie’s proud mother Susan sat with her Indian husband on one side of the court, while Jacob Wirth and his well-to-do wife sat across on the other side. It was a day their children would never forget.

Susan died at the age of 75 in 1918. Most stories about the selfless courage of Native women have faded into the past but today, we remember Susan’s many sacrifices. Nobody really knew her joys and sorrows, but one look at Susan’s face and you can see what words cannot tell.



Top Row – left to right: Christine (Wirth) West; Louise (Wirth) Cain; Nettie (Wirth) Mail – Nettie gained fame as a star player on the unbeaten Fort Shaw Girls Basketball Team. This squad played under coach, Fred C. Campbell when they became Basketball Champions of the World in the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis.

Center: Elizabeth (Wirth) Smith

Seated – left to right: Mother Susan Kills Wood; Christine Davis



HLC resident, JoAnn "Estatoto" Elliott

in the brain. The huge, ferocious bear fell dead at her feet.

By the early 1890s, the constant loneliness, toil and strain had aged Susan and she finally revolted against Jacob Wirth. Something happened that made her furious and she chased him with her butcher knife. To further



Right: April showers bring...joy from youths attending a Heritage Living Center outing.



As mentioned in Greetings From Mike, lightning and hail storms have hammered eastern Montana this spring.



Left: HLC resident Edna Seminole and her son Vincent share a lighter moment with Mike Skaggs.

DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

What Soaring Eagle's Friends are Saying

We love your letters and notes!



Give and Receive with a Gift Annuity

For many years, Father Emmett wrote about gift annuities in his newsletters to you. Back then and now today, a charitable gift annuity is a good way to give for many donors. With the stock market setting record highs and interest rates historically low, you might find that a gift annuity is a “win, win, win” way to give to Soaring Eagle. A “win” for you as it will produce a fixed income for the rest of your life. A “win” also for you in that it can provide tax savings. And, a “win” for the Heritage Living Center elders who benefit from your generosity that provides assisted living services.

What is a Gift Annuity?

A charitable gift annuity is a way for Soaring Eagle's donors to make an important gift and enjoy income and tax benefits today and in the years ahead. After giving cash or stock, you or a loved one you select receives fixed income payments for life. When the gift annuity is funded, the payment rate is fixed. The rate never changes and the payments continue as long as the recipient

lives. It's a reliable income that you can't outlive.

Tax Savings

Based on sound financial calculations and estimates accepted by the

Additionally, part of each annuity payment may be free of income tax for a period of years. If the annuity is funded with capital gains property, then the capital gains tax can be spread over a period of years. The



IRS, part of a gift annuity will be used for charitable purposes and, the donor is able to take a federal, and possibly state, income tax deduction in the year of the gift. If the charitable deduction is too great to use in the first year subject to tax rules, any unused portion can be carried forward during the next five tax years.

amount funding an annuity may also be free of state and federal gift and estate taxes.

Funding an Annuity – Cash or Securities?

Most donors fund a gift annuity with cash. It is an easy way to transfer an asset. The donor writes

a check and mails it to Soaring Eagle along with the information needed to create the gift annuity agreement. The date on the check is the gift date. On receipt, the Soaring Eagle office acknowledges the gift and writes the gift annuity agreement and sends it to the donor for signature.

An overlooked asset that may be a better option to fund a gift annuity is appreciated stock. The stock market has set some records in recent months. Investors have seen some remarkable gains on their investments and along with those gains can come a sizable capital gains tax when a stock is sold. Donors can fund their gift annuity with appreciated securities by transferring the stock to Soaring Eagle in exchange for the annuity. Usually, the gift is made at a lower cost than using cash to fund a gift annuity. Part of the capital gains tax is avoided due to the charitable gift portion of the annuity and the remainder is spread over the donor's life expectancy. If the stock was sold and the annuity funded with the proceeds from the sale, the entire capital gains tax would be due in the year



of the gift. If the donor designates someone other than the donor to receive the annuity payment, then some special rules may apply to reporting the capital gains.

Transferring stock to Soaring Eagle is relatively easy. We have instructions that we can send to you for transferring gifts of stock.

Act Today for Favorable Rates

Charitable gift annuities can offer favorable fixed rates compared to other returns and you have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping others with your gift. Check out the current rates in the table on the next page. If you are interest-

ed in funding your annuity with cash, please indicate a dollar amount you would consider. If you think you might fund an annuity with appreciated securities, please include a note estimating the current market value and your cost basis. (Note: We do not need to know the company name of the stock or number of shares.) To learn more about a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity and how one could work for you, please call or write to us and request our free booklet, "Giving Through Gift Annuities" at: Soaring Eagle, Attn: Mike Skaggs, P.O. 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 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 the gift annuity. It was free and with no obligation. It was straight forward and simple to complete, so I sent \$10,000 for a 7.2% annuity. Now, I can count on my payments for the rest of my life and help care for Cheyenne elders at the Heritage Living Center. I received a tax deduction when I set up my annuity. Best of all, part 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 or write Mike Skaggs at 406-256-8500, Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103.

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66	4.8	79	6.6
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69	5.0	82	7.2
70	5.1	83	7.4
71	5.3	84	7.6
72	5.4	85	7.8
73	5.5	86	8.0
74	5.7	87	8.2
75	5.8	88	8.4
76	6.0	89	8.7
77	6.2	90+	9.0

*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.

Reminisce with Father Emmett Twelve Years Ago...

In 2002, Father Emmett shared in the newsletter about his good friend, John Woodenlegs:

In 1981, my friend, Dr. John Woodenlegs, died at the age of 71 years. The visionary leader had worked as a cowboy, road worker, coal miner and rancher. He also served as President of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe from 1955-1968. John was the first Native American to receive an honorary degree from the University of Montana, a Doctorate of Humane Letters.

In the 1960s and 70s, I had the pleasure of working with John to provide a factory where 150 tribal employees held full time jobs. For many of them it was the first time they had regular paychecks and were able to buy cars, furniture and new clothes for their families.

Like Chief Dull Knife before him, John valued education. "The time is past," he told his tribe, "when we have to keep living in some old, broken down way . . . Education is the key to our future."

As Tribal President, Woodenlegs started off with a small education budget, but ended up with a full college budget for Dull Knife

Memorial College, located in Lame Deer, Montana. He had lived to see his dream come true. "We have been mistreated in the past," he told graduates, "but we can forgive and forget because God forgives all people."

John Woodenlegs was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to the National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty in 1966.



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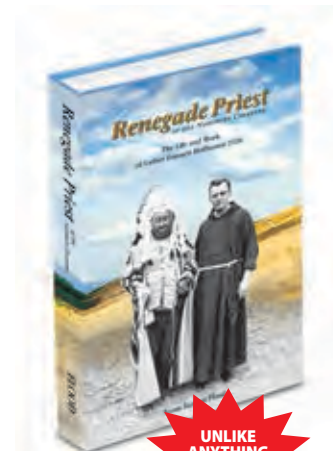
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