



GREETINGS FROM MIKE

Spring 2015

The Cheyenne elders have been watching the terrible news of floods ravaging Texas and other parts of the South. They want people living in those areas of our country to know their prayers are with them and their lost loved ones.

We, too, have lost a great friend, Peter John Wilson, who had been a resident at HLC for 7 years. I attended his funeral with other friends from the Heritage Living Center, including Susie Cain, JoAnn Elliott, Dixie Young, Clinton Bird Hat, Hubert Black Wolf and HLC Administrator Jerry Thex. Hubert was a drummer/singer and Clinton spoke as a veteran. Dixie Wilson (Peter John's niece, a dentist at the Lane Deer Clinic) read the eulogy.

Peter John's grandson, Zack, sat next to me and asked me, on behalf of the family, if I would speak. I had met the family while visiting

P.J. in the hospital. I was honored to speak because Peter John was special to me. After Deacon Joe Kristufek offered a prayer and the drummers sang a veteran's song, there weren't many dry eyes. I



Peter John Wilson shares a story of adventure with Mike.

know mine weren't.

Then I was honored when asked to speak. Barely able to fight back the tears, I told them about my first meeting with Peter John. Father Emmett had pointed him out to me, "That's Peter John Wilson. He's a Marine and proud of it. You're going to like him." But Peter John seemed kind of gruff - almost unapproachable. It was weeks before I got the nerve to talk to him. I was in Eagle Ridge Park alone. He was busy preparing wood and stones for a sweat lodge ceremony.

I was sure he'd seen me so I introduced myself to him. "I know who you are," he said with a sly grin. From that point on, I enjoyed being around him. He was easy to talk to, even when he was in pain. He could always make me smile, not just with a joke but in the way he said things. Always friendly, P.J.

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let me know that I was okay. We were friends.

Then I told Peter John's friends and relatives at the funeral about how P.J. had helped during the 2012 Ash Creek Fire, when all the elder residents had to be evacuated to safety from HLC. This was a stressful time for staff and residents who were moved to Billings and then to Red Lodge, Montana away from the acrid smoke and fire.

When we arrived at a new facility in Red Lodge called the "Willows," the elders were silent and uncomfortable being in

a strange place. One lady said, "Nobody told me to take extra underwear!" Everyone was worried about the Heritage Living Center burning down and the safety of relatives and friends back home. Their fears were justified, as some later found their family homes and horses had burned, as well as many thousands of acres of land.

Meanwhile, I noticed Peter John was missing. That afternoon, here came Peter John, dripping wet and holding 9 golf balls. He had gone hiking in the blistering heat and when coming home he was so hot he jumped into the golf course pond next door and found the golf balls at the bottom of the pond. When he handed me the wet balls everyone started laughing. It broke the ice. After that, the elders loosened up and felt more comfortable.

But Peter John wasn't done. The next day I again noticed P.J. missing. This time he came rushing in, covered in sweat. He'd been up in the hills when he surprised a mother moose and her young one. She took off after him and Peter John hadn't run downhill that fast in years. Of course, his hilarious story about the chase again made everyone laugh. That was Peter John! I'll never forget him.

On another note, I'd like to tell our donors how much we appreciated your help in buying propane at this time of the year when we can get it at a much lower



Peter John was a gifted craftsman making native pipes, breastplates and back rests. He collected earth and minerals mixed with buffalo tallow to color and stain his work.

cost. We take advantage of lower costs whenever possible to prepare for the safety and comfort of our Cheyenne residents.

Summer is a slow time of the year for donations with graduations, family reunions and vacations. Please don't forget the Cheyenne elders during these lean months by giving as generously as possible.

Last but not least, please look for our newsletter calendar of tribal events for this summer and fall. If you are in our area and want to enjoy these special events, please come and join in the traditions of the Cheyenne and Crow Nations and stop in to the Heritage Living Center to see us. You are always welcome.

With a grateful heart,


Mike Skaggs

HAND GAMES BRIDGE GENERATIONS

Recently the Colstrip High School Indian Club came by for a visit at the Heritage Living Center and the students quickly settled into several rounds of hand



games with the residents. Native Americans have been playing hand games for centuries. There are "hiding teams" and "guessing teams", with the object to trick the opponent through slight-of-hand into wrongly guessing which hand you've hidden short sticks. The games are played to native drumbeats and often result in laughter. They have become so popular that serious hand game tournaments are played at powwows and Indian gatherings throughout the country.



The elders pass along some sly and deceptive moves to the younger ones to carry on the traditional hand games.





Crow matriarch, Evelyn Bear Ground, holds a biography of her great-grandmother, Pretty Shield.

A BIGHORN BATTLE MYSTERY REVEALED

By Renee Sansom Flood

Evelyn Bear Ground, 81 year-old resident at the Heritage Living Center in Ashland, Montana, has kept a family secret which may add more mystery to the history of the Battle of the Little Bighorn of June 25, 1876. Evelyn is the great granddaughter of Goes Ahead, (1851-1919) a Crow Scout for Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry

and his wife Pretty Shield, who died when Evelyn was 9 years old. Evelyn considers herself lucky to have been close to her famous great grandmother and learned Crow customs from her.

The mysterious secret began back in 1952, when Evelyn was an 18 year old girl. She and her older sister Emma were walking along the rim rocks overlooking their home,

the hereditary land belonging to Goes Ahead. The girls were happily talking when they suddenly stumbled on a rim rock burial. A skeleton lay on its back facing East inside a narrow cave. There were no clothes, not even a button on the skeleton. The girls didn't touch the burial but they studied it carefully. Indians can tell the difference between the skeleton of a white man and that of an Indian. Evelyn saw that this was the skeleton of a tall, young white man with perfect teeth. There were no marks of foul play on the bones.

The girls immediately climbed down from the rim rock to the beautiful trees and lush grass below, where their father and mother were living not many miles from the site of the Bighorn Battlefield, the scene of the most famous fight in Western Frontier History.

The girls ran into the house excited to tell their parents what they had found. But when they told their father, he became upset with them. "Did you touch anything in that grave?" he demanded to know. They assured him they had not. "Never tell anyone about what you saw. No one! I don't want white tourists coming on our land and digging up that grave! It might be a Custer deserter buried up there! You shut up about this! Never talk about it again! The girls stood with their heads down. They were surprised that he was so upset about it, but from that day on, neither said a word about their discovery.

Evelyn grew up, married and made her home on the Goes Ahead property. By then, her parents had passed away and Evelyn raised her family in the shadow of the rim rock burial where she and her sister had made the discovery so many years before.

But Evelyn remained unsettled in her mind about



Sketch of a soldier's headstone at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.
— Drawing by Don Griffiths

the skeleton of a man she believed might have been in the Bighorn fight. Often, in the late afternoon when the birds fell silent in the trees, she looked up to the rim rock to see a lone, black shadow figure of a man walking above the grave. Other relatives saw it as well but they thought best to leave it alone.

"What if he was an angry soldier who had survived the

Evelyn Bear Ground points to the rim rock where she found the mystery skeleton.





battle only to have crawled away and died of thirst on that hot day?" Evelyn says. "I've often thought that Park Service officials at the battlefield and Crow historians should come and take care of the skeleton. They could compare the height and age of the skeleton with the 7th Cavalry enlistment records. Maybe this wasn't a deserter. Maybe he was wounded and hid in the trees.

Custer's Crow Scout, Goes Ahead and his wife Pretty Shield.

In that case, why call him a deserter? He should be called a survivor! No matter who the man was, I would feel better knowing he is at peace instead of walking the hill above my house!"

Evelyn is a respected Crow matriarch and traditional doll maker. She is proud to carry on her tribal culture, much of it learned from her great grandmother Pretty Shield, a sought after source of information concerning the battle late in her life.

NOTES FROM SOARING EAGLE'S FRIENDS

Thank you so very much for all the stories I receive about the real first citizens of the U.S.
- Olga, Puerto Rico

I enjoy the smiling faces of some of my American Indian friends. May God bless you and the Heritage Living Center and all who live and work there.
- Marta, California

I feel a strong bond of friendship to you all. It is always great to hear from you, kinda like family you know. - Joan, Ohio

Soaring Eagle is on the list of bills I pay very first.
- Beulah, Florida

I thank God every day, that there are still people who care for the Cheyenne elders with love and devotion.
- Helga, New York



Some of the elders and staff gathered for a "family" photo to say thank you to our donors.

DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

NORTHERN CHEYENNE SUMMER CALENDAR

COME VISIT MONTANA & HERITAGE LIVING CENTER!

June 25: Dedication of Ice "White Bull" Memorial at Busby

June 25-26: Anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn at Little Bighorn National Monument

June 26: Ash Creek Fire Anniversary & Family Fun Day at HLC

June 26-28: Battle of the Little Bighorn Reenactment, south of Crow Agency

July 2-5: Lame Deer July 4th Pow Wow & Rodeo

July 27: Father Emmett Hoffmann Birthday Celebration at HLC

August 12-17: Crow Fair & Rodeo at Crow Agency

August 31: 13th Anniversary of Heritage Living Center

September 4-7: Ashland Labor Day Pow Wow

September 25: Cheyenne Heritage Day/American Indian Day



While visiting Montana, please stop by the Heritage Living Center in Ashland. Our guest room is available.

Call 406-256-8500 for a reservation. We would love to see you.



Elders start the day with the morning news before breakfast.

in your will or trust.

Alice, a donor from New Jersey, has donated to Soaring Eagle since 1999. In her planning for loved ones, she included us in her carefully crafted plans.

On page 11 of this newsletter are some ideas about giving through your will. Remember, to always seek the counsel of a competent attorney when preparing your estate plan.

Gift Annuities – Giving and Receiving

Some of Soaring Eagle's friends choose to go ahead and make an important gift to us while they are living. A concern for many is their belief they will not need the asset but need the income from that asset.

A charitable gift annuity may be the answer to giving a significant donation today and receiving an income for the remainder of your life. By giving a donation in exchange for a gift annuity income, you receive a fixed income that can never change for as long as you live. The rate you receive is based on your age at the time of your gift. You also receive a charitable deduction in the year of your gift. Imagine, a gift that helps Cheyenne elders and pays back to you a reliable, fixed-rate income that you cannot outlive.

William, a donor in Wyoming, set up a gift annuity many years ago

PLANTING SEEDS FOR A FUTURE HARVEST

This spring, the elders began their summer garden by starting seeds next to a bright southern window at the Heritage Living Center. There were a variety of seedlings including squash, cucumbers and tomatoes. Rather than just one crop of beans or peas, they understand the importance of many healthful and fresh vegetables. The seedlings have now been moved to the garden, where they will be tended in raised beds awaiting a bountiful harvest. They look forward to the first ripe tomato.

Like the elders' garden, a variety of donations are "healthful" for the financial stability of Soaring Eagle. We always welcome and need your faithful cash gifts. There are other ways of giving that can be bountiful for Soaring Eagle, so here are a few

seeds sown to germinate and grow in your thoughts and plans for the future.

Wills and Bequests – A Meaningful Gift at the End of Life

At the end of life, a person's assets, whether small or large goes to someone else, the government, or both. With careful planning, a generous person can make the decisions about where their accumulated assets will go when they no longer need them.

Giving through your will or a living trust is a good way to give to loved ones and Soaring Eagle when you are uncertain what the future will hold. Your assets remain yours for whatever needs you might have. Only after you have passed on, will they be distributed as you planned

and has received a fixed income. He recently established another gift annuity with us using his now older age for a higher rate.

Look on page 11 to see the rates we can offer next to your age. If you are closer to your next birthday, then we can offer the higher rate. There are also two-life rates for couples or any two persons. The two persons do not need to be related. Two-life rates are generally lower.

Another option with gift annuities is to delay receiving the income until a later age. Some donors who are still working may want to make a gift today but put off receiving the annuity income for 5-10 years, when they plan to retire. A deferred rate is generally higher and that income is waiting for you to begin when those golden years arrive and the additional income is needed.

Life Insurance – A Forgotten Resource

Life insurance is an often forgotten asset in an individual’s estate. Insurance is usually purchased at a young age to protect family or business partners. Oftentimes, a policy is paid up and remains in force after its original purpose has been fulfilled. The kids are grown and established or the business partnership has been dissolved, yet the insurance still remains.

Some donors will re-evaluate their beneficiary designations and find that an old life insurance policy can be given a new purpose to help out a favorite charity.

Adelaide, from Minnesota, named Soaring Eagle as beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Her thoughtful planning now benefits the elders living at the Heritage Living Center in Ashland, Montana.

Talk to your financial advisor to see if updating your beneficiaries on a life insurance policy makes sense in your overall plans.

Gifts of Other Assets

Donors may find they own an asset that they no longer need. If it has considerable value, such an asset might make a wonderful gift for the right charity. It is important to consider the asset and the purpose of a charity. A gift of an antique doll collection might be a very good gift to a local museum, but not to an animal shelter. Also, consider how liquid or disposable the asset is for the charity. Don’t hinder your favorite charity with a gift that is difficult for them to convert to cash.

Also, keep in mind that gifts of appreciated property over \$5,000 will likely require a special appraisal to establish a value if the donor intends to take a charitable deduction.

Soaring Eagle has received many gifts over the years including land, homes, vehicles and art. Please understand that we have to be careful when we accept such gifts so that we are confident they make good gifts for us and for our donor. For example, Alice, in Montana, gave Father Emmett some of the land on which the Heritage Living Center

is located today. She believed in the work he was doing for elders and wanted to be a part of it.

I trust some of the “seeds” I have sown will take root in the fertile plans of our friends. Sometimes, a seed will germinate almost immediately and start to grow. Radishes in my garden are like that. Other times, a seed remains dormant for years, like the seeds of a Lodge Pole Pine, and when conditions are just right a new tree springs to life.

If you want to consider a gift that requires some planning by you and Soaring Eagle, please contact Mike Skaggs, CEO, Soaring Eagle, P.O. Box 879, Billings, Montana 59103, or call 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!

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.

“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.”

Soaring Eagle Annuity Rates One-Life Annuity

Age	% Rate	Age	% Rate
65	4.7	78	6.4
66	4.8	79	6.6
67	4.8	80	6.8
68	4.9	81	7.0
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.

In 1997, the Heritage Living Center was just a dream. Father Emmett wrote a letter that brought together Princess Diana, Mother Teresa and a lonely Cheyenne woman, Rose Medicine Elk. Read Father Emmett’s moving words about why he had to build an assisted living home for the elders.

I make a special effort to visit elderly shut-ins on the reservation whom I know are struggling to provide for themselves. Visiting Cheyenne elders can be an emotionally draining experience. Many are alone and forgotten with fears about going to the hospital never to return or fears of imposing themselves on their grandchildren who are equally impoverished and living without even the barest essentials of life.

When I visit these dignified old friends I often take gifts of bananas, oranges and grapes to them because by the middle of the month, the little money they get is already gone; and they must make do with meals that consist mainly of crackers and cereal. Elders in this proud Indian nation prefer to live in abject poverty rather than face their



Reminisce with Father Emmett 18 Years Ago...

only alternative – a nursing home far from family and friends.

Not long ago, I visited Rose Medicine Elk, who once did some of the most beautiful Cheyenne beadwork I’ve ever seen. Today, her fingers are crippled with arthritis and her eyesight is failing. Making beaded necklaces, earrings, coin purses and buckskin dresses has become almost impossible. She is no longer able to supplement her meager income. I found Rose very sad and disappointed that she couldn’t watch Princess Diana’s funeral and Mother Teresa’s rites on television. It might strike many of you as odd that a poor, elderly Cheyenne woman whose

grandfather fought at the Battle of the Little Bighorn would have been so profoundly moved by the deaths of two women in far off lands, but Rose really cared. I ended up buying a \$200 television that was worth millions in the happiness it brought her. When I came in carrying the TV set, words cannot express the grateful look on Rose’s beautiful, wrinkled face and in her dancing eyes. It was an absolute joy for me when I explained how the remote control saved her from struggling to her feet to change channels or to adjust the volume. Rose watched the gracious Queen of Hearts and the much loved Mother Teresa “move on to the next camp,” as the Cheyenne say.

To say that I am indebted to you is an understatement. Your response and contributions have been a source of real encouragement. Thanks to you, my dream is now within reach but it is only with your continued help that a home for the Cheyenne elderly will become a reality.

*Your beggar friend,
Father Emmett*



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

Name _____

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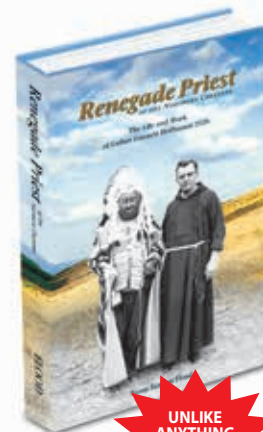
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birth date(s) of annuitant _____ E-mail _____

(optional)

Annuity Amount \$ _____ Minimum annuity amount \$5000 (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.



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