

Dear Friends,

I want to share a few thoughts with you today about why I feel privileged to live with the Northern Cheyenne elders at the Soaring Eagle Heritage Living Center. In the main lobby entrance, above the front doors, we have

Amazing works of art using only a magnifying glass and sunlight

placed likenesses of the great Cheyenne Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf. These were burned into wood by solar artist Jonathan Maxwell Beartusk, who used only a magnifying glass and sunlight to create these amazing works of art.

The pictures are daily reminders of the famous warrior grandfathers of the people I rub elbows with day after day, people who I love and respect with all my heart. In 1954, their elders welcomed me to the reservation and began to teach me about their lives and culture. My life has been enriched many times over because they asked me to listen and to learn about their cultural heritage.

I heard them describe the sufferings, the broken promises, and the starvation their parents and grandparents had endured at the Fort Robinson Breakout on January 9, 1879. Chief Dull Knife's band was at Fort Robinson in Nebraska when they were ordered to walk and ride in wagons in the dead of winter to Oklahoma, Indian Territory.

Dull Knife's people were mostly women and children and the chief knew they would perish in the

cold if made to walk in severe weather. He refused to go. To punish them, the U.S. military locked the Indians in log barracks without food or water for many days. Temperatures dropped to below zero.

Among the many people crowded into the barracks were pregnant women and elders and many small children. The Cheyenne decided they would rather die running for their lives than to die like dogs with children in their arms. Desperate for food and water, they

broke out of the barracks. Seventy Cheyenne were immediately shot down and died in the snow from wounds and exposure. Within the next 24 hours people were found and shot at point blank range, including little children who were coaxed out of a hole and then shot to death when they climbed out.

Chief Dull Knife, his wife and son were among the few who made it to another agency and eventually returned to Montana. They survived to tell the story of the torture and inhumane treatment they had endured.

Each year on January 9th, the Northern Cheyenne make a pilgrimage to Fort Robinson, Nebraska, to honor Chief Dull Knife and their ancestors who

died for their freedom. In 2005, eight of our elders, some in wheelchairs, were among more than 300 Cheyenne who attended the ceremonies to honor their slain relatives.

Our elders want to build a memorial to honor their ancestors and to mark the beginning of the route taken by their ancestors from *(continued, inside)*



Fort Robinson when survivors ran from the pursuing troops. The walls of the shrine will face the four directions and at the top will appear the Morning Star symbol of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. Bronze plaques embedded into the walls will recall what happened to their ancestors at Fort Robinson on January 9, 1870.

It is a privilege to live with Cheyenne elders here at the Soaring Eagle Heritage Living Center. I thank you, our friends, for making it possible for us to care for them. Each day in my prayers I ask God to bless you for your sacrifice and love for these deserving people.

Father Emmett Hoffmann

This memorial is being constructed near Fort Robinson, Nebraska to honor the Northern Cheyenne nation.



First aid training for Resident Attendants.



Edna Foote admiring the beauty of Eagle Ridge Park.



Carl Braine gets set to enjoy a delicious bowl of ice cream during his 91st Birthday Party.



Sylvia Elk Shoulder and daughter Ruby assemble jigsaw.



Herb Bear Chum's biography

...continued from the last edition of *Signals* ————— by Renee Sansom Flood

Marie and Herb had been apart for nearly 20 years when the tragic death of the son Byron, brought them back together again. The family buried Byron behind the house and when they lowered the coffin, Herb thought he

was going to faint. To find out what had really happened to Byron, Herb went on a 4-day fast and vision quest at Bear Butte (in South Dakota) where his son came to him in spirit:

"Dad," he said, "you haven't cried. Go ahead and cry. You'll feel better."

I broke down and I couldn't stop crying. "Lean back dad and the spirits will show you how I died." I was shown that Byron had been killed by a skinhead.

While dealing with his grief, Herb left Montana but he returned in the 1990s to his ancestral homeland. He was just in time to take part in the repatriation of ancestral remains that had been housed for more than a

century in the Smithsonian. Herb felt as if he was supposed to have returned to take part in the ceremony close to his ancestors in person and in spirit.

Herb and Marie were happy together. One day, they ran into Father Emmett. He told them he was building the Heritage Living Center for Cheyenne elders. Would they be interested in living there? It was a good idea. When the Center opened, they were among the first to move in.

Herb had his family, work that he loved and they were comfortable in a nice apartment near friends and relatives. But life isn't always what it seems. Herb was shocked to learn that he had cancer. After cancer surgery, he recuperated and took it easy, but Herb is not the kind of person who likes to sit around. In 2005, he resumed his career as Master of Ceremonies for special events.

Herb has no qualms about his future. He has decided to leave it all in the hands of the Creator. "All my life," he says, "I've been a homeless person. I never really felt like I fit in anywhere. When you're an orphan, you want to pay back the kindnesses others have shown you. It will take me forever."

Native Voice Waterfalls

Eagle Ridge Park is an important part of the Heritage Living Center. The park was developed for the resident elders giving them a place where they can leisurely walk outdoors to enjoy a special closeness with nature and to watch deer, antelope, wild turkeys, ducks, (a quick glimpse of a cougar) and Canadian geese.

Winding paths with benches and picnic tables allow residents to enjoy visiting outdoors with relatives and visitors. From the dining room they can see Native Voice Waterfalls that connect three small ponds and the peaceful sounds of rippling water in the surrounding pine-hills. The falls are a memorial gift from Simone Nahman Leibowitz to honor the late Liliane Esquiez LaFerla.

The memorial walls around the ponds honor the living and deceased loved ones of donors whose contributions helped build the park.

The larger pool and waterfall at the end of the winding path is named "Muriel" to honor a gift from the Paul Morigi family.

Contributions toward landscaping, trees, shrubbery, benches, picnic tables and to maintain the park are welcomed. Your loved one will be honored with a plaque displayed on the Memorial Wall with your name as the donor.



Christmas Memories 2005

I can't let our Christmas Day memories this year fade into history without sharing some of them with you. At the Heritage Living Center, the Cheyenne elders eagerly awaited Christmas morning to open the many gifts beneath our beautiful Christmas tree in the lobby. For the newer residents, the day was filled with special anticipation because they had heard about last year's Christmas party.

"I am 79 years-old and I've never had a Christmas like this in all my life!" were the grateful words of an elder enjoying his first Christmas with us two years ago. Each year without saying a single word their twinkling eyes and joyous laughter expresses how much fun they have when they open their gifts. They are enjoying the Christmases they never had as children.

During the weeks before Christmas, it was mostly the ladies who gathered little gifts and carefully wrapped them for their great-grandchildren who came to visit. They joined together to bake ginger bread and then built ginger bread houses with frosting roofs and candies as part of the Christmas decorations in all the common areas of our home.

The week before Christmas was filled with activities. Choral groups from the schools, girl scouts and churches came to sing Christmas carols and brought gifts of cookies and candy. We even had a Christmas violin concert by Christine Valentine from Birney, Montana. The Montessori Christmas program was a special treat as the little children's parents, grandparents, friends and relatives joined the elders to watch the children reenact the Christmas message.

The greatest blessings for the elders and all of us at the Soaring Eagle Heritage Living Center are the generous donations from you, our friends. It is your generosity, gifts and encouragement that make this beautiful home, "the miracle on the hill," possible.



Montessori Christmas program St. Joseph



Montessori children's Christmas program



Singing Christmas carols for the elders



A church group leaving after singing carols

Soaring Eagle Societies

Soaring Eagle has established societies to give proper recognition for outstanding gifts that have been given for the construction of the Heritage Living Center. Each society shows the level of donors and our gratitude for their generosity.

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B. "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."

C. "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 \$_____."

D. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at 745 Indian Trail, P.O. Drawer 879 in Billings, Montana, 59103, the sum of \$_____ for the Wall of Living Memories Fund, to care for Cheyenne elders, the principal of which shall remain in perpetuity."

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

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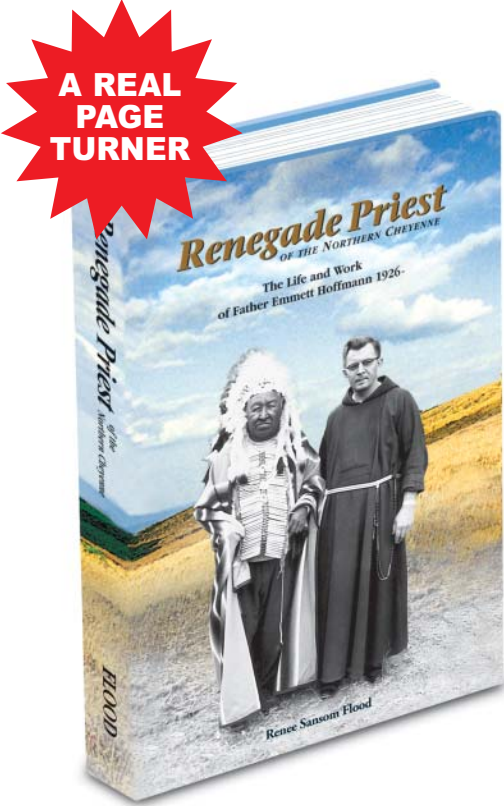
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Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne

The Life and Work of
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in the American West.



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