

A Note From Father Emmett

It's the end of January 2012 and we're in the midst of winter. The days are beginning to get a wee bit longer but my heart is still filled with the marvels of Christmas. As I look around the Heritage Living Center I ask myself why my thoughts linger on Christmas. The celebration of the birth of Jesus was the happiest time of the year when I was a child. My parents really made it special for our family and I suppose I'm a little nostalgic about the past, as many of us are.

The large Christmas tree in the lobby and the decorations have been put away, but there is something going

on here that is more lasting than tinsel and Christmas candy. I'm thinking about how you have always reassured me that I am not alone. Your love for the elders, expressed so well by your gifts for their care, lives on throughout the year and fills our home. I am always grateful for that love, especially during the winter months after Christmas when people are recovering from holiday spending and donations are down.

At the same time, I am proud to tell you about the greatest compliment the Heritage Living Center has ever received! Recently, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council sent me a

special letter by messenger. The Council had passed a resolution officially expressing their gratitude for our assisted living home for the care of their beloved elders.

I was surprised and humbled by their resolution, which also requested that Soaring Eagle construct and operate a nursing home. The need for a nursing home is not new. It goes back decades to the "old chiefs" who were worried about what was happening to their many old people who were being sent far away from their reservation, only to die alone when relatives did not have transportation to visit them.

Our Soaring Eagle Board knows of this critical need for a Cheyenne nursing home and they are pleased the tribal council has asked us to sponsor such an endeavor. But at the present time, our primary responsibility is to operate and maintain the Heritage Living Center, which has become more difficult due to the financial condition of the country. We basically operate from month to month, paying bills and when possible, putting a little money aside for future needs.

I'm cautiously hopeful, yet realistic in saying that to build a nursing home near or as a part of the Heritage Living Center would take a corporate sponsor



A little elf offers assistance during Christmas gift-giving.

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with approximately six million dollars. This would be a much appreciated gift but one that we could not accept unless it included a generous endowment to help with operating costs. As much as we would like to help the Northern Cheyenne Tribe by building a nursing home at this time, it now seems more like a worthwhile dream instead of an attainable goal in the near future. But I haven't forgotten that the Heritage Living Center was also just a dream but it turned into a, "miracle," so I won't

give up hoping for another. Just yesterday I learned that Andy, one of my favorite little rough necks at the mission school years ago, has suffered a paralyzing stroke. He is now being sent to a nursing home in Billings, a four hour round trip for his Cheyenne speaking friends and relatives who will find it difficult to visit him.

We realize that it's only with your help that we can continue to provide the best care possible for the

Cheyenne elders in our remote location at the Heritage Living Center. We are deeply grateful for all that you do and we ask, "Maheo," Creator God, to bless you every day.

Your beggar friend,
Father Emmett Hoffmann
Father Emmett Hoffmann



Father Emmett is joyful following a Christmas service.

The Northern Cheyenne tribal resolution asking Soaring Eagle to build a nursing home.



(Above) Father Emmett, staff and guests thank HLC veterans for their service.



(Top photos) During Veteran's Day ceremonies, a Cheyenne drum group sings while veterans and residents pay their respects as a new American flag is raised over the Heritage Living Center. Resident and Marine veteran, Peter John Wilson, is honored with the gift of the retired flag.

(Bottom photos) Santa sorts gifts for the elders on Christmas Day. Thanksgiving and Christmas meals with all the trimmings are made possible by gifts from our generous donors.

Chief Dull Knife's Descendant Continues Brave Legacy



Chief Dull Knife

BY RENEE SANSOM FLOOD

Everyone has a story and this one is about a little Cheyenne boy named Arthur Ghost Bull, who was born in a log cabin on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana. As a youngster, he was adopted by his step-dad, a mixed-blood coal miner, Guy R. Lester, who nicknamed the boy, "Al." Growing up, Al remembered his father as "a strict but good man."

In high school the young Cheyenne lettered in football and basketball, earning two college scholarships. But Al wanted to see the world. Five days after graduation, he joined the Navy during the Cold War. Although he found the Navy as strict as living at home, Al liked his new life. Within a year he had graduated from Aviation Electrician School. But when he came home on Christmas leave, he was surprised to hear from his Dad that CIA agents had been nosing around the reservation asking all kinds of personal questions about him. "Don't worry Dad. I didn't do anything wrong," Al assured him. The sailor went back to base after the holidays and forgot all about it.

The Cheyenne was boxing on a Navy team when America entered the Vietnam conflict. Al shipped out on board the USS Bennington,

the flagship of the 7th Fleet. One day, a couple of serious-looking men approached him. "Sailor, how would you like to work for Admiral Wayne Caldwell on his personal flight staff?" one asked. "You'll be part of a special 4-man flight crew, traveling with the Admiral everywhere he goes. His plane always has to be in good shape. This is a top secret assignment."

"I thought they had the wrong guy," Al recalls. But no, they'd been checking his background, even going so far as to send CIA agents to his remote reservation in southeastern Montana. Al must have passed the test because he was suddenly catapulted into an exciting position, working with top naval brass and traveling to exotic places. His dream of seeing the world had come true.

Operation Silver Lance was a complex counter-intelligence mission. There were 3,000 men on board the carrier with a squadron of jet fighters. The USS Bennington was watching for Russian submarines in the waters of the South China Sea. The jets were to seek out and destroy Russian subs.

Al remembers a close call when a Russian spy plane was discovered taking aerial photographs of the flagship. The

plane was discovered by radar on the Bennington and two, A-4D fighter jets were immediately dispatched to intercept and take the plane out if necessary. But the Russians realized they were in danger and beat a hasty retreat.

Fortunately, Admiral Caldwell was easy to work for. "If we gave him a western book to read during flights, he was happy. If he was happy, we were happy," Al says. While in Japan, he was waiting in the airport for a flight when he was again approached by men who led him to a secluded office. "Here I go again," he thought to himself. "What next?" This time they asked him to be a special courier and again, he agreed. A briefcase was handcuffed to his left wrist and he

was given a 45 mm pistol and told that no one was to sit with him or come closer than 15 feet from him. If someone breached that space, he was to yell, "Halt!" If a person, any person, continued toward him, he was to shoot to kill. When he arrived at his destination, a man walked into Al's restricted space and Al yelled, "Halt!" The Naval Commander

quickly identified himself. "Good job, sailor!" he told the Cheyenne. Al didn't tell him how close he had come to pulling the trigger. He never found out what was in the suitcase but he was, "... glad it wasn't a bomb." In later years he wondered if it had contained classified photographs about covert operations.

After six exciting years in the Navy, Al was honorably discharged. With his extensive background and experience, he soon landed a good job as a top notch electrician, which satisfied him. But it wasn't meant to be. After some time, he began to notice that he couldn't see as well as he used to, especially when he was driving. Al felt good otherwise, but he was floored when a doctor diagnosed him with glaucoma and told him he had probably had it for ten years. Al was going blind and there was no cure. The diagnosis shattered him. All the things he liked to do now seemed out of reach. He was married and had children but tragedy struck again when his beloved 6 year-old son died. Three years later, his wife also passed away. He was no longer boxing but these were knock-out blows. By then, he was legally blind.

Angry at being disabled and questioning whether to live or die, Al went through some rough times. "I didn't handle it well," he admits. "I got depressed and started to drink, asking myself, Why me?"

It wasn't until he attended a school for the blind in Washington that Al began to accept his disability. "They gave me a lot of insight into why life was worth living," he says. Al lived with his sister for awhile and then moved around, not wanting to be a burden to anyone. Finally, a friend brought him to the Heritage Living Center. When he arrived, he wasn't in great shape but during his first week at HLC, Al gained seven pounds.

Today, the descendant of Chief Dull Knife is happy to be living independently. Like his famous forbearer, Al Lester Ghost Bull's courage and faithful service were tested during times of war. We are proud the US Naval Veteran calls the Heritage Living Center, "my home."



(Far left) Al poses for a picture before a boxing match in the 1960s.

(Left) Veteran's Day 2011.

Father Emmett and Al shake hands on Veteran's Day.

(Above) Waiting to enjoy a delicious meal.

Greetings From Big Sky Country

Imagine that you’ve made the decision to spend your golden years in a nice assisted living apartment. You will likely be moving from a home filled with cherished belongings. To fit all of your possessions into your new living space, you will have to size down. Which items would you definitely want to bring with you to your new home? Family photo albums? A beloved pet? Your grandmother’s antique bedroom set? You would undoubtedly choose all the things closest to your heart.



At the Heritage Living Center, Cheyenne elders make similar decisions when they move in, but it may surprise you to learn that for many, their move to the Center is the best thing that has ever happened to them. Some move in with few possessions and for some residents the furnishings in the new apartments are nicer than anything they have had.

The stark reality of life on the reservation means that some elders have lived in back rooms of overcrowded, dilapidated homes with many children, while others slept wherever they could find a weathered couch. Others moved from place to place, eating whatever food they could find, never staying long in any one location. Some have slept many a night in a cold, abandoned car.

During a recent conversation with Al Ghost Bull, one of our residents, he told Fr. Emmett, “This is a wonderful place for a blind veteran. I’ve been here for eight years. That’s the longest I’ve lived anywhere!”

Now imagine how a Cheyenne elder feels when he or she moves into the Heritage Living Center, after spending many years living in under-heated, substandard conditions, having no transportation to a doctor and not nearly enough food to stay healthy. I’ll tell you how they feel. They are wheeled or walk through the front door and they come to a complete stop in the

lobby. They smell dinner on the stove and a safe feeling comes over them. Indian artwork is everywhere and they are welcomed with a big hug from friends and relatives.

Elders enjoy 3 healthy meals a day, warm, furnished apartments, medical and dental transportation and Resident Attendants on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the Heritage Living Center they receive better shelter, care,

and nutrition than most have had in their lifetimes. Your gifts have made this “miracle on the hill” a reality.

This fall and early winter you helped us to complete some important work at the Center. Donations made it possible for us to repair a dangerous leak in our propane tank and to replenish our supply of fuel just before winter set in. We also repaired buckled concrete at a blocked fire exit door to eliminate a major safety concern.

Your gifts also made it possible for us to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas with nutritious, festive meals with turkey, ham and all the trimmings, including traditional Cheyenne dry meat soup. At these important gatherings, Father Emmett asks Creator God, “Maheo,” the One Above, to bless our donors for all you do for the Cheyenne elders.

Millions of Americans go through each day of the week – for some, even a year – where no one says a prayer for them or thanks God for them. You are not one of those individuals. A prayer of thanks is spoken on your behalf each day at the Heritage Living Center.

So long from Big Sky Country.



Mike Skaggs
Soaring Eagle CEO



Your Will Keeps on Giving

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

A. (Whatever is left after other bequests have been granted) “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.”

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.”

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

Soaring Eagle Annuity Rates

One Life Annuity
Rates Effective 1-1-2012

Age	% Rate	Age	% Rate
65	4.7	79	6.6
66-67	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
78	6.4		

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

Start 2012 with a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity

Plan for your future and the future of the Cheyenne elders.

Consider for a moment how you can...

- Receive a fixed income for life.
- Save money on your taxes.
- Help Cheyenne elders at the Heritage Living Center.

Soaring Eagle offers gift annuities with income rates as high as 9.0% (see table at left).

To learn how a Soaring Eagle charitable gift annuity can benefit you, please request our free, no-obligation proposal.

Return the gift annuity coupon in this newsletter or call Mike Skaggs at 406-256-8500.



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Bertha Hogan enjoys scrapbooking in the Activities Room.



Father Emmett and Fergie head out for a brisk walk down the hill at the Heritage Living Center.