



American Indian Institute

Report 2015



Above All, Respect

The American Indian Institute and Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth continue along a wisdom guided journey into mutual respect; following the Elders' counsel that above all else, respect for self, respect for others and respect for Mother Earth must guide our lives.

Mission

The mission of the American Indian Institute is to perpetuate the ancient wisdom and cultural heritage of North America's Native peoples, and to promote a greater understanding of that wisdom among all people. The Institute achieves its mission by serving as the administrative agency and support source for the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, a coalition of grassroots spiritual leaders from Indian nations throughout North America.

Vision

The American Indian Institute recognizes traditional Indian wisdom as an endangered human resource that is relevant to today's world and that holds keys to our common survival. Looking seven generations into the future, we see a world in which the values and traditions of indigenous peoples are respected for the wisdom they hold for the Earth and all its peoples. We pursue this vision by supporting the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth as it teaches, motivates, and celebrates traditional Indian peoples today.

We act as facilitators of gatherings of traditional peoples, promoters of healing of Indian communities, and supporters of efforts to educate non-Indians about the wisdom and harmony inherent in the traditional indigenous worldview.

Trustees Report

In 2015, continued support from an extensive network of generous individuals and foundations provided the financial strength needed to continue fulfilling the Institute's nearly 40-year long commitment to support the programming directives of the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders & Youth – a large group of traditional Elders and leaders from the Four Directions committed to the ceremonial ways of their people, and to their sacred obligations to the Earth and all life.

The 38th annual Elders & Youth Council was hosted in August by the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and was attended by approximately 450 indigenous Elders, youth and family members from across North America. In the month prior the 4th Weaving Webs of Women's Wisdom gathering took place in Sauk-Suiattle Territory in Washington State around the theme, "Reclaiming the Voice and Authority of our Medicine Women Grandmothers". This was special convening because it was the fourth gathering in the Four Directions over four years, fulfilling an obligation and completing a sacred path set out before the women in 2012.

In March of 2015, a meeting of Indigenous Timekeepers/Calendarkeepers was held at Synergia Ranch south of Santa Fe, New Mexico. A total of thirty-five delegates attended from Mexico (Otomi, Aztec, Maya), Guatemala, Belize, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and from the Taos, Hopi, San Idelfonso, and Tesugeh Oweengeh Pueblos of the Southwest to discuss cycles of time as a way to bring harmony back to communities. Then in May at a remote camp on the Ft. Belknap Reservation, Montana, hosted by traditional leaders of the Nakoda Nation, A Gathering of Young Chiefs, was held involving thirty men from the Four Directions. They gathered at a sacred location to share with each other what their current spiritual Elders and traditional leaders see as the most important issues for tomorrow's traditional leaders.

During the year the Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative provided major administrative and financial support for Elder-led youth programming for Akwesasne Mohawks of New York, Teton Lakota at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, and for the Salish/Kootenai of the Flathead in Montana.

The Institute board and staff thank all of those who helped make the important work of the Institute possible. Your comments and questions about this report are always welcome.

Executive Committee Members

Lisa Smith, Paul Fees, Clark Sherman and Stan Moser

The 38th Annual International Elders & Youth Council Ho-Chunk Nation Territory, Wisconsin August 2015

The longest running annual program of the American Indian Institute is the International Elders & Youth Council, held each year in a different location in Indian country since 1977. Each year traditional Elders, leaders and youth from the Four Directions gather in council in the continuation of an ancient practice of joint council among the most respected traditional leaders of Indian nations. The purpose is to nurture a grass-roots renewal of traditional values and worldviews among Indian peoples, to ensure the continuity of Native wisdom, and to bring that wisdom to bear on important issues facing all peoples of the earth.

The 2015 Council was hosted by the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and was attended by approximately 450 indigenous Elders, youth and family members from across North America, including people from as far away as Toluca, Mexico and Arctic Village, Alaska. Prior to the Council a small delegation of Ho-Chunk young men were ceremonially bundled as “runners” and travelled to Native nations within Wisconsin and to the East bringing greetings from the Ho-Chunk people and an invitation to attend the Council.

At the Ho-Chunk Council, the typical daily format was followed whereby in the morning at the fire under the arbor, the oldest Elders spoke with reminders of the fundamental truths of the Laws of Origin as the guiding principles for indigenous people. The oldest of the Elders present this year was David Bald Eagle, Traditional Chief of the Minnicoujou Lakota, who is 96 years old.

Afternoon activities involved group break-out sessions based on age groups, gender, and issue. The youth were provided a separate meeting space for the afternoons where youth leaders facilitate sessions focused on youth issues. Back at the fire, delegates brought up issues of specific concern from their communities, and as each day flowed on, a dynamic group give-and-take occurred where teachings from the mornings often provided insight and direction with regard to the issues raised in the afternoons.



“I was worried about how to remember everything that was being said, but now I realize that I am carrying everything in my heart. I’m taking the fire home with me.”

- A Neets'aii Gwich'in First-time Council Participant, from Arctic Village, Alaska

Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative

The goal of the Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative is to promote the work that the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders & Youth wishes to do with youth to ensure the survival and revitalization of the spiritual and ceremonial knowledge indigenous to this hemisphere. By transmitting to their youth the knowledge still preserved in their ancestral memory, the Elders are passing on the wisdom that defines Indian people, and that may hold keys to our common survival.

Programs involve hundreds of youth at many different Native communities across the country. In each case it is the traditional, spiritual Elders who are putting their visions into play by structuring activities for youth outside of school where they are free to follow the spiritual teachings of their ancestors that

form the framework for the youth to be able to know their place in Creation.

Current programs are under way in the Four Directions in the following Native communities.

- Bitterroot Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai (Flathead Reservation, Montana)
- Haudenosaunee Territory, the Six Nations of New York & Canada
- Teton Lakota, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota
- Diné Navajo Nation, Arizona



"I will always be eternally Thankful for the revival of this ancient Haudenosaunee ceremony. You have affected the life paths of many Native youth and their parents. Oherokon has provided assistance to me in guiding my daughter to a good path and the red path. I will never forget what you have given to me as a parent and father."

- Father of a participant at the 2015 Akwesasne Mohawk Ohero:kon Rites of Passage Program

4th Weaving Webs of Women's Wisdom Gathering Sauk-Suiattle Territory, June 29 – July 2, 2015 "Reclaiming the Voice and Authority of our Medicine Women Grandmothers"

The central theme of the Weaving Webs of Women's Wisdom Gatherings is a return to "Original Principles" in order to reclaim the inherent authority women carry as the bringers of life. The Haudenosaunee concept of Mother Law (matrilineal order/clanship inherent in the natural human pattern of life's vital flow) was introduced by Haudenosaunee clan mothers to the participating women during the first gathering in 2012 at Akwesasne and has provided a thematic guide ever since.

The 2015 Weaving Webs of Women's Wisdom gathering was special because it was the fourth gathering in the Four Directions over four years. Being in the Northwest Coast, and specifically near the Sauk River and under the gaze of Whitehorse

Mountain, fulfilled an obligation and completed a sacred path set out before the women four years ago.

The Sauk-Suiattle host women provided a beautiful, safe, and loving container within which thirty-five women met for three days around the theme of "Reclaiming the Voice and Authority of our Medicine Women Grandmothers". Women gathered from the Four Directions: East from Onondaga, Tuscarora, Cayuga, and Mohawk; South from Hopi, Havasupi, Taytsugeh Owingeh, O'Otham, and Guatemala; West from Yokut, Miwuk, Western Shoshone and Northwest Coast; North from Apsáalooke, Northern Cheyenne and Anishinaabe. The women met in council, prayed at the sacred fire, and shared purification and moon lodge ceremonies with each other.



"Our minds, spirits, bodies and emotions need to be acknowledged and nurtured together, not separately. There is no "program" for this in tribal communities. Instead, we are the program. This requires a major, foundational shift in the way we do things. We need to trust that we know what works for us and what does not. The good news is that we cannot do worse than what has already been done to us. We will keep gathering and keep carrying these ways forward. Most importantly, we cannot give up. Our grandmothers would have none of that."

- Beverly Cook, Mohawk Wolf Clan

Timekeepers Gathering Synergia Ranch, Santa Fe, NM March 23-26, 2015

For many Indigenous cultures the ancestors left precise instructions on how to continue with the spiritual ways. Recovery of the spiritual/cultural wisdom contained in the traditional calendars is one such source and is vital to survival. The calendars provide the living framework for daily life among the members of those cultures. The Institute's Timekeepers program is helping assemble a growing Indigenous network of calendarkeeping/timekeeping authorities from North, Central and South America to revitalize the Calendar wisdom for cultures which depend it for survival.

In March of 2015, a meeting of Indigenous Timekeepers was held at Synergia Ranch south of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where

a total of thirty-five delegates attended from Mexico (Otomi, Aztec, Maya), Guatemala, Belize, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and from the Taos, Hopi, San Idelfonso, and Tesugeh Oweengeh Pueblos of the Southwest.

During this meeting the Indigenous representatives discussed the ancestral conception of time and time-space, and the transcendence of this cosmovision today, and how indigenous communities might embrace it to bring back harmony and balance in their lives.



"Time is energy, and we cannot afford to let it go anymore. We need to bring back all the spiritual ways of our forefathers and mothers. We need to take back our mission to organize and harmonize our lives with the cycles of time as a way to fulfill our covenant with the Creator."

- Kogi Delegate from La Sierra de Santa Marta, Colombia

"The reason for the calendars and why we need to use them today is so humans can live in harmony with the natural world and so we can teach our children how to live a good and happy life. The Cosmic energy is what unites us as a human family. It transcends the color of our skin, who are grandparents were, and where we came from."

- Jorge Garcia, Mexica - Kuachichi

In Memory of Tim Babcock



The American Indian Institute lost the last member of its charter trustees in the passing of Tim Babcock on April 7, 2015 at the age of 95.

Tim was of my generation, two years older, and my good friend. A generation born into a world little changed from the 19th century but who participated in a social, cultural and economic renaissance following World War II that changed America and the world.

Tim will be remembered for his long political career but I remember him as one of the first among movers and shakers who became interested in the idea that became the American Indian Institute. At the suggestion of George O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer of the Montana Power Company, his close friend, I met Tim at his office in The Colonial in Helena. He was busy but listened to me carefully for a few minutes and said "Come back and see me". George O'Connor was with me when I returned to see him, and in that meeting the Institute gained the two most influential board members of its early years.

Many meetings were held in Tim's office as plans for the American Indian Institute took shape. Tim's status, along with other trustees, gave the Institute its impetus to raise the first contributions that brought the American Indian Institute into being. I was with Tim in New York City when we received the first grant of \$20,000 for the Institute.

In the process of making contacts over the first years of our new enterprise, Tim, and others, were subject to verbal abuse, only some of which was good natured, for their involvement in an enterprise on behalf of Indians. Conditions have improved over the lifetime of our organization but animosities ingrained over centuries will take the efforts of more generations to overcome. Still, today's generation can't know the depth of vitriol and hatred that prevailed when the American Indian Institute was formed.

All of us are benefitting from the courage and temerity of our charter trustees to take positions counter to prevailing attitudes and to use their influence in developing a radically new idea in the history of Indian/non-Indian relationships. Given Tim's political prominence, he was the least likely to be involved. His support was testimony to his character and compassion.

His passing leaves an empty spot in our organization and in my life. We are all grateful for his time with us.

Bob Staffanson
President Emeritus

In Gratitude to All Our 2015 Financial Supporters

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Volunteers

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George Kahrl
Emily Lewis
Hannah Sutton
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Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2015

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
General Account	295,380.76
Checking	789.07
Investments	<u>51,213.14</u>
Total Checking/Savings	347,382.97
Accounts Receivable	
Endowment Earnings due from MT	
Community Fdn Agency Endowment (MCF)	<u>47,722.32</u>
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>47,722.32</u>
Total Current Assets	395,105.29
Fixed Assets	
Furniture & Fixtures	24,055.55
Library	8,924.79
Program Equipment	55,595.73
502 Mendenhall - Real Property	511,101.32
502 Mendenhall - Land	68,827.80
LESS Accumulated Amortization	-60.78
LESS Accumulated Depreciation	-137,396.13
Leasehold Improvements	<u>9,023.83</u>
Total Fixed Assets	540,072.11
Other Assets	
Plantagon International Share	152.56
MCF Agency Endowment	963,622.80
Restricted Fund	683,601.43
Art Investments	<u>57,840.50</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>1,705,217.29</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>2,640,394.69</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Temporarily Restricted Funds	
Restricted Fund	683,601.43
Temporarily Restricted	
Program Funds	<u>168,169.00</u>
Total Temporarily Restricted Funds	851,770.43
Unrestricted Funds	826,381.10
Permanently Restricted Funds -	
MCF Agency Endowment	963,622.80
Net Income/Loss	<u>-1,379.64</u>
Total Equity	<u>2,640,394.69</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>2,640,394.69</u>

Statement of Activities

January through December 2015

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income	
Corporate & Foundation Grants	
Foundation Grants	552,726.57
Corporate Grants/ In-Kind Donations	19,994.79
Individual Donors	143,236.64
Change in Value of Investments	-39,842.20
Dividends & Interest	70,034.42
Program Revenue & Sales	147.15
Royalty Income	<u>1,143.72</u>
Total Income	747,441.09
Expenses	
Direct Program Expenses	
561,326.03	
General Operations Expenses	
Bank/Financial Advisor Charge	18186.31
Commercial Building Expenses	3,254.52
Consultants	9,158.04
Fund Development	5,844.42
Insurance	5,056.75
Office Supplies	631.14
Postage and Freight	660.39
Printing & Publications	3,025.62
Professional Fees	7,940.98
Public Relations/Marketing	288.97
Rent	1,020.00
Taxes & Licenses	5486.66
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	243,942.64
Telecommunications	3,623.57
Vehicle Expense	<u>4,371.16</u>
Total General Operations	
Expenses before	
program allocations	<u>312,491.17</u>
Less indirect costs allocated	
to programs	<u>-124,996.47</u>
Total General	
Operations Expenses	<u>187,494.70</u>
Total Expense	<u>748,820.73</u>
Net Income/Loss	<u>-1,379.64</u>

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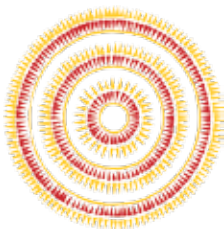
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