

MEMBERSHIP AND CULTURE: AN UPDATE FOR THE MEMBERS OF BINGWI NEYAASHI ANISHINAABEK



GOVERNANCE UPDATE

NEWSLETTER
FALL 2016

Over the past several years, the Governance Coordinator has been working with the Membership Committee to draft a Membership Code for Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek. This year, a lawyer was consulted to review and help complete the Membership Code. A Community Meeting was held on September 24, 2016, where the final draft of the Membership Code was presented to the membership, and amendments were made based on the feedback from the members. The final step in the process is the ratification of the Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek Membership Code. All Members of BNA that are 18 years old and over were mailed a ballot package so that they could vote on the new Code. A full copy of the code was included in the package for all Members to review.

It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that BNA have a Membership Code ratified by the Members so that BNA has the right to accept or reject people into our membership as opposed to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) making that choice for us. Under Section 10 of the Indian Act, Bands can choose to develop membership rules and assume control of their own membership if the majority of the membership consents to do so. The band will then be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date, accurate Membership List. If Members wish to vote in -person as opposed to mailing in a ballot, they may do so by attending the voting pole that will be set up at the Victoria Inn on November 19th, 2016 from 10 am to 8 pm.

A database has been created that allows for all Member & family information to be kept up to date. Any changes in address or member information are processed through the database, ensuring that BNA's Membership is accurate and up-to-date. Members with any changes in their personal information should contact Tracy Gibson, the Governance Coordinator at the BNA office.

Another big development for Bingwi Neyaashi is that Tracy attended training at INAC's offices in Toronto in January of this year, and was certified as the Indian Registration Administrator for Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek. Tracy is now certified to make Certificate of Indian Status Cards for the Members of BNA, as well as a Commissioner for the taking of Oaths. Many of BNA Members have benefited from this service that is now offered at the BNA Office. If your Certificate of Indian Status needs to be replaced, call Tracy at the office @ 807-623-2724 to set up an appointment.



BNA CULTURAL UPDATE

BNA Ojibway Language Class

Once again this year, BNA received funding to provide Ojibway Language classes to interested participants. Last year's class developed a deck of playing cards. Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek along with the BNA logo are on the back of the cards, and on the face of each card is an Ojibway word with the corresponding English word. If there are any BNA Members who have not yet received a deck of these cards, please contact the office to make arrangements to pick up a deck. This year the class will be recording an Ojibway word along with the corresponding English word on a USB stick. A USB stick will be made available to all BNA Members once they are ready.



BNA Women's Drum Group



Several Members of BNA have joined together to form BNA Women's Drum Group. BNA's Drum Group is asked to perform at many functions and there is always room for more Members to join. Anyone wanting to join the group can call the office.

Current Drum Group members include Lillian Calder, Audrey Mandula, Keri Esquega and Margaret Grimard. Congratulations for all of your great work so far!

Un-Silencing the Truth

Another Cultural initiative that took place was "Un-Silencing the Truth". A two-day workshop took place in 2014 where Elders shared their stories. The knowledge of their traditions was recorded and a booklet was published for future reference. Anyone wanting to read a copy of this booklet should stop by the BNA office on Court Street. Events like these help to ensure that our culture and traditions will be passed on to future generation.

The Blessing of the BNA Cemetery

One of the most important cultural events that took place over the past 4 years was the dedication and blessing of the newly-discovered BNA cemetery right in the heart of the BNA Cultural Area. The regional catholic Bishop attended the ceremony in 2014, and conducted a culturally-appropriate ceremony. In order to protect the area and improve the aesthetics, BNA erected a white picket fence around the outskirts of the cemetery, erected a large white cross, and placed a stone bench at the entrance. The BNA cemetery dedication was a critical event in the continuing process of cultural reclamation being undertaken by the First Nation since the return of its reserve lands in 2010.



BNA Quilting and Regalia Classes

Another cultural initiative that was offered to BNA Members this year is a quilting class. All participants were given the supplies to make the quilt and a teacher was hired to take them step-by-step through the process. The first session of the classes started in October of this year, and will run until mid-December 2016. A second session of the class will be starting up again in January of next year.

Along with the Quilting Class, Members of BNA were invited to join in on Regalia Making classes in 2015. Participants received all the supplies, along with all step-by-step instructions from a qualified instructor to complete a traditional dress or skirt that can be worn at a traditional gatherings.

