An Indigenous rights movement known as Idle No More has spread across Indian country and subsequently around the globe during the last few months. Idle No More began in Canada as a response to legislation that would adversely affect the environment and tribal sovereignty. It was the mission of four women -- Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean and Nina Wilson -- to educate others about Omnibus Bill C-45. The four held multiple teach-ins and rallies beginning in October in their home province of Saskatchewan to educate First Nations communities about this impending legislation that attacks the land base reserved for Indigenous people and removes protection for hundreds of waterways across Canada. Through social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, the Idle No More movement quickly grew into one of the largest Indigenous movements in Canadian history. Organizers set aside December 10, 2012 for a National Day of Solidarity and Resurgence. The very next day, Attawapiskat First Nations' Chief Theresa Spence began a liquid-only fast and demanded a meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and all Assembly of First Nations chiefs. It was after Spence began this fast that the movement started to receive national media attention. Prime Minister Harper initially refused to even acknowledge the demand, but eventually a thirteen point declaration of commitment to First Nations was agreed upon and signed. Among other things, it addresses the omnibus bill that was the original catalyst for the Idle No More movement.

Spence’s actions motivated countless individuals in North America and beyond to stand up and assert Indigenous sovereignty and ensure the protection of Mother Earth, her lands, waters, and people. (Continued on page 6)

**MITW Changes at NMU**

By Gabe Waskiewicz
Northern Michigan University
President David Haynes recently made changes to how the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver will be enforced. The waiver will no longer be affected by federal financial aid guidelines. For example, limitations on the number of semesters a student is enrolled will no longer be applied. NMU, which currently ranks third behind Central Michigan University and Lake Superior State University in MITW applicants, will still require degree-granting status from students on the waiver.

Dr. Martin Reinhardt, Assistant Professor in Native American Studies (NAS) said that though removing satisfactory academic progress from the tuition waiver is a nice step, he would recommend a requirement that students not need to be enrolled in a degree-seeking program.

These latest changes are part of a long path of evolution for the waiver. To fully understand how the MITW came into being it must be seen in the context of two historical paths.
### Petition to Stop Michigan’s Wolf Hunt

Opponents of a new law defining the wolf as a game animal in Michigan are in the process of gathering enough signatures on a petition calling for a statewide referendum of the new law. The bill, introduced in the State Senate by Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), was passed by lawmakers in Lansing last December during the lame-duck session. The bill, signed into law by Governor Rick Snyder, turns the status of the wolf into a game animal and gives Michigan’s Natural Resources Commission the power to decide to create a wolf hunting season. Organizers have until Wednesday, March 27 to obtain the necessary 161,305 signatures of registered Michigan voters to force a November 2014 referendum on the legislation.

Organizers have a goal of 225,000 signatures in case some are ruled invalid. Without the petition signatures there is a possibility that the Michigan Natural Resources Commission could implement a hunt beginning as early as this fall. The petition initiative is being led by Keep Michigan Wolves Protected. The U.P. coordinator is Adam Broehl, who recently gave a lengthy interview in *The North Wind*, NMU’s student newspaper, in which he was quoted as saying, “It may feel closer to being something like our brother.”

At one time, it is believed that wolves inhabited a vast majority of Michigan’s natural territories by the mining and logging driven out of their homeland and estimated to have been 15,000 by 1900, yet there is still estimated to be less than 700 wolves in the state. In 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed western Great Lakes wolves from the endangered species list. Many feel that returning to hunting a creature that has just recently been removed from the endangered species list is reckless and detrimental to the recovery the wolves have made. Proponents of the wolf hunt claim that controlling the wolf population is necessary to the safety of deer herds, livestock, and pets. There is evidence to the contrary, however, that wolves actually strengthen the deer population by culling sick ones and preventing the spread of disease.

Several environmental groups and tribal organizations have also shown their support. On Wednesday February 27 a “Wolf Hunt Petition Signing Night” was sponsored by NMU’s campus by the NMU Earthkeepers II Student Team and the Native American Student Association (NASA). The student groups showed a short video titled, “The Timber Wolf of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.” Several members of both organizations expressed their dismay at the possibility of a wolf hunt in our state. NMU Earthkeepers II Student Team member Katelin Bingner said, “the wolf isn’t our enemy, the wolf is closer to being something like our brother.”

At one time, it is believed that wolves inhabited a vast majority of North America before being shot, trapped and poisoned to the brink of extinction by the middle of last century. Once they were given legal protection in the 1960s and 1970s, which eventually led to their placement under the endangered species list, their numbers have steadily increased in certain regions. Migration from surrounding areas allowed the animals to reestablish themselves in Michigan by as early as 1990, yet there is still estimated to be less than 700 wolves in the state. In 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed western Great Lakes wolves from the endangered species list.

Many feel that returning to hunting a creature that has just recently been removed from the endangered species list is reckless and detrimental to the recovery the wolves have made. Proponents of the wolf hunt claim that controlling the wolf population is necessary to the safety of deer herds, livestock, and pets. There is evidence to the contrary, however, that wolves actually strengthen the deer population by culling sick ones and preventing the spread of disease.

For the Anishinaabe of this region, this topic is culturally significant because wolves are part of Anishinaabe traditional creation stories. Amanda Weinfurt, NASA co-president, stated, “The Anishinaabe and the wolf are connected and live parallel lives. There are great similarities with Anishinaabe people’s mistreatment and not being understood and with the general mistreatment of wolves. Wolves have been driven out of their homeland and that ‘compares to the Anishinaabe because they too got relocated (and) put on reservations.’” Weinfurt continued, “Wolves got pushed out of their territories by the mining and logging industries – it’s man’s effect on the forest.”

### Mascot Reform

The Atlanta Braves have decided not to use the logo known as the “Screaming Indian” or “Screaming Savage” on their batting practice hats after all. Team officials originally planned to reintroduce the logo for pregame activities only, but apparently changed their minds after a large display of public outcry. The logo had not been used by the team since the 1989 season when it was retired. It is often considered one of the most offensive caricatures in sports, so it seemed like a curious choice to bring the logo back at a time when the tide over racially insensitive mascots was finally beginning to turn for the better.

### Inuit Hockey Player Joins Redwings

Jordin Tootoo, the first player of Inuit decent in the National Hockey League, signed a three-year $5.7 million contract with the Detroit Redwings this past off-season. Games were postponed for much of the regular season this year because of a lockout, so Tootoo didn’t make his first appearance with his new team until January 19. Still, his tough, aggressive style of play quickly endeared him to Redwings fans. He is the type of guy you love to have on your team, but hate to play against. In fact, he was included in *Sports Illustrated’s* list of the 10 most hated players. The 30-year-old, right wing had spent all of his previous eight seasons in the NHL with division rival Nashville Predators. In addition to being the first Inuk player, Tootoo is also the first player who grew up in Nunavut, the northernmost and newest territory in Canada, to participate in an NHL game. His brother Terrance also played minor league hockey for the Roanoke Express of the ECHL.

### Okay, Sports Fans

*Anishinaabe News* will start featuring a sports page as part of its newsletter. If you know of an athlete who is of tribal descent or news pertaining to a Native sports team, let us know. It could be an Olympian, a professional player, an extreme sport contender or even a regional or local story...whatever the case, we would love to feature them as part of this new offering in the newsletter. We hope you like this idea, but we need your help in getting it and keeping it going. So...batter up, writers!
lead to a nationwide ban, but federal ruling on the civil rights and there is even potential that a
in September.
mously passed a similar resolution
Board of Education also unani-
the rule. The Washington State
schools five years to comply with
2010, while the Oregon Board of
American students' self
mascots negatively effects Native
American Indian students. The
evidence suggests that using such
mascots causes it denies equal rights to
and imagery in K-12 schools be-
cause it denies equal rights to
American Indian students. The
complaint was filed because new
evidence suggests that using such mascots
adversely affects Native American students’ self-esteem and learning performance. This
may lead the State of Michigan’s
Board of Education to follow the
example of other states, such as Wisconsin and Oregon, that have
already banned the use of Ameri-
can Indian mascots in their states.
Wisconsin initiated such a ban in
2010, while the Oregon Board of
Education voted this past May to
ban all Native American mascots,
nicknames, and logos, allowing
schools five years to comply with
the rule. The Washington State
Board of Education also unani-
mously passed a similar resolution in
September.
These are clearly positive steps, and
there is even potential that a
federal ruling on the civil rights
complaint here in Michigan could
lead to a nationwide ban, but
wouldn’t it be better if some of our
local schools that have blindly
stood behind the idea that they
were some-
how “honoring” Native
Americans chose to make
the change be-
fore being
forced to
through a ban?
Wouldn’t it
be nice if schools actually took it
upon themselves to be the catalyst
for change instead of waiting for
legislation to push them towards it?
This idea isn’t nearly as far-
fetch as it sounds. This exact
thing happened in Cooperstown,
N.Y. earlier this month when stu-
dents voted to change the name of
the school’s mascot. In a town
known more for being the home of
the Baseball Hall of Fame and James
Fennimore Cooper, Cooper-
stown Central School decided
their school would be known
without an offensive nickname. The
fact that the change was driven by
students is probably the most en-
couraging thing because it shows
the social awareness and cultural
sensitivity of this younger gen-
eration, something that is some-
times lacking in those of us from
older generations.
Upon hearing of the name
change by Cooperstown students,
the Oneida Indian Nation offered
to pay for new uniforms once a
new mascot is chosen. “You have
announced a standard that recog-
nizes that mascots which are
known to dehumanize and disre-
spect any race of mankind have no
place in our schools, or our great
country,” wrote Oneida
Nation Representative and
CEO Ray Halbritter in a
letter reprinted in Indian
Country Today. “We un-
derstand that your coura-
geous decision also comes
with a financial conse-
quence and, unfortunately,
potential backlash from those who somehow claim
that ethnic stereotyping is
a victimless crime.”
Daniel Snyder, owner of Wash-
ington D.C.’s professional football
team, doesn’t appear to be follow-
ing the example of Cooperstown’s
student body any time soon. Sny-
der has long resisted pressure to
change his team’s name, despite
the fact that the derogatory term is
the worst racial slur you can direct
at a “boxed book.”
At a time when Latino students
are dropping out at an alarming rate
of over 50%, these classes were em-
powering these students. Latino kids
in the school were graduating at a
much higher rate than national aver-
ages, and many appeared to be ex-
cited about education for the first
time in their lives.
Tom Horne, then the Arizona
Department of Education Superin-
tendent of Public Instruction who
parlayed exposure from this case into
a spot as the state’s Attorney Gen-
eral, did not see it that way. He be-
lieved the teachers in these programs
were teaching anti-American ideals
and proposed a bill that would termi-
nate the program. Despite protests
and rallies by the students and teach-
ers to raise public awareness about
the proposed bill, it was eventually
tsued into law by the
governor of Arizona, Jan
Brewer.
As part of this process,
the school district went
into the classrooms while
classes were in session and
removed books that they
felt were inappropriate for
students. The books were
then boxed up and stored
away, hence the term
“boxed books.” In reality,
the school district was ban-
ing these books from students, but
they some-
how felt by
calling them
boxed it
would soften
the impact or
public resis-
tance to it.
On January 24, the President’s
Committee on Diversity hosted a
follow-up panel discussion with six
NMU students reading from boxed
books. Following the readings, a
panel of four NMU faculty members
discussed the implic-
tions of this historic
civil rights battle and
the empowering
effect education can have
on younger generations.
NMU students read
from a variety of works
that included Sherman
Alexie’s The Lone
Ranger and Tonto
Fistfight in Heaven and
Ana Castillo’s So Far
From God.

This year’s book is “The Immortal Life
of Henrietta Lacks” by Rebecca Skloot.
Join us Monday, April 15 at 7 p.m. in
Jamrich Hall 102 for a conversation
with guests David “Sonny” Lacks and Dr. Ruth Faden.
See the full list of events at
www.nmu.edu/node/284
We will consider requests for anonymity.

The Native American Student Association (NASA) regrets to inform the public that the annual “Learning to Walk Together” traditional powwow will not be held this year. NASA plans to work hard preparing for next year’s event. Thank you for your continued support.
By Gabe Waskiewicz

Photographer Matika Wilbur has set out on a three-year journey to photograph the 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States. This endeavor, titled Project 562, will bring her to all 50 states while she attempts to gather the 21st century image of Native Americans in all their complex diversity.

Her goal is to "unveil the true essence of contemporary Native issues, the beauty of Native culture, the magnitude of tradition, and expose her vitality." Despite her busy travel schedule— to meet the goal of photographing members of all the tribes within three years, Wilbur will have to visit three tribes per week—the gracious, young artist still took the time to do an extended phone interview with me. In it, the 28-year-old member of the Swinomish and Tulalip tribes, explained how she grew up on the reservation amongst a family that was "very involved." "I come from a long line of politicians," Wilbur said. She went on to describe her early experiences as a photographer working in the fashion industry when she still thought she wanted "to be the next Annie Leibovitz."

After spending all day on a photo shoot for a fashion magazine, though, she changed her mind. "We spent all day on a photo shoot for a fashion magazine, though, Wilbur first had to raise $35,428. She estimates the entire project, will cost around $300,000, including $30,000, including production costs. Once the project is complete, it will be published in a book by the University of Washington Press. Matika also intends to use the work in exhibitions, lectures, a website and a curriculum.

Project 562 is her fourth major project and her most ambitious so far. She photographed Coast Salish elders for the exhibit “We Are One People”; Native people in contemporary settings for the exhibit “We Emerge”; and young Native people expressing their identities in modern ways in “Save the Indian and Kill The Man.” These shows garnered her mounting credibility and she began showing her work in larger institutions, even traveling overseas to display her exhibits. She has exhibited extensively in regional, national, and international venues such as the Royal British Columbia Museum of Fine Arts, the Nantes Museum of Fine Arts in France, the Seattle Art Museum, the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, and the Kittredge Gallery at the University of Puget Sound. She quickly started to become recognized as an ambassador for sorts of all Indian country. Feeling she was only one person with one opinion, Matika decided it was time to abolish the negative stereotypes of the past, stereotypes perpetuated by such things as the photography of Edward Curtis. Curtis also spent a large portion of his life taking photographs of Native Americans during the beginning of the last century, but he believed he was documenting a "vanishing race." His staged photos are often viewed as helping contribute to the image of the "noble savage.” Wilbur’s work will show that Native Americans survived and are still a thriving force in America today by illustrating the wide range of Native American culture occurring across the country.

This past November, Wilbur set out in her RV; fully equipped with a photographic studio, darkroom, and sleeping quarters; and began traveling throughout the Pacific Northwest. When I spoke with her, she was visiting a tribe in California, and had plans to visit Alaska this summer. Before she could begin work on the project, though, Wilbur first had to raise enough money for initial travel expenses. This was done through a website called Kickstarter where she surpassed her goal of $30,000 by raising $35,428. She estimates the entire project will cost around $300,000, including production costs. Once the project is complete, it will be published in a book by the University of Washington Press. Matika also intends to use the work in exhibitions, lectures, a website and a curriculum.

Matika Wilbur

Gayleish Rommelya, Tolowa, Smith

NASA Student Spotlight - Austin Smith

Interview by Amanda Weinert

Nish News: Where are you from?

Austin Smith: Ann Arbor, Mich.

N: What is your tribal affiliation?

S: Non-tribal but Anishinaabe

N: What are you graduating with?

S: Bachelor’s in Social Work, minors in Human Service and Art

N: Why did you choose NMU?

S: It was one of the few schools in Michigan with my major (at the time). Plus, after a visit to the campus it just felt right.

N: How did you become involved with NASA?

S: I wanted to help out with the food taster and powwow after attending them my freshman year.

N: What has been your favorite Native American Studies course at NMU and why?

S: Either Kinomagea or the beadwork course. Kinomagea got me out of my comfort zone and gave me a whole new perspective on nature. Taking beadwork with April was so fun. Not only did I get to have fun in the class but I have been able to take those skills and teach others.

N: What has been your all-time favorite class at NMU and why?

S: Social Work 101. When I took that class with Carol Simpson I knew this was what I wanted to do with my life.

N: What are your plans for spring break?

S: I am either going to Green Bay or working at my internship.

S: Getting involved with NASA helped me learn a lot about my own culture. I have been able to use this knowledge when working at my internship and helping to spread the language. I was able to make some great friends and have a lot of fun while doing fun events.

N: What do you think about your NMU experience?

S: I loved NMU from day one. I had to leave for awhile, but I always knew I would come back. The people are great, the professors are helpful, and the environment is amazing.

N: What should all students try while attending NMU?

S: Try out new student organizations and just get involved. NMU has so many student groups as the University of Michigan so there has to be one out there for everyone!

N: If you could have any pet, what would it be and why?

S: Honestly, if I could have my mini black and tan dachshund living with me that would be perfect! I miss having a dog around.

NASA Members meet with Bay Mills Community College Students

Members of the Native American Student Association along with Native American Studies faculty and staff met with eight students and two staff from Bay Mills Community College (BMCC) for a pizza party on Thursday, February 7 thanks in part to the generosity of the Northern Michigan University athletic department. Students from BMCC were visiting Marquette to tour the NMU campus, meet with faculty and see what the NMU has to offer. Unfortunately, the visitors were unable to stay for the basketball game that followed the party, but several members of NASA attended and cheered on the men’s team despite a 56-64 loss to Grand Valley State University. NASA co-president Amanda Weinert said it was the first basketball game she’s been to here at NMU. We hope that more students from BMCC or other tribal colleges will consider visiting NMU to see if Northern is a natural fit for them.
What is Idle No More?

On December 28, the day of the full moon, Manido Giiizhig (Little Spirit Moon), Indigenous peoples were called to gather at their sacred places in solidarity. Eagle Rock, also known as the Home of the White Wolf and the High Place, has been a sacred place to the Anishinaabe and other peoples for centuries. It is located on 1842 Treaty territory in the Upper Peninsula near the town of Big Bay. The Anishinaabe and their supporters who care for this land and do not wish to see the threshold of the world’s fresh water poisoned, have continued to gather and pray at and near Eagle Rock - amidst its strength and in the face of greed and destruction. We gathered again at Eagle Rock at this important time of solidarity with our brothers and sisters across Canada. We are inspired by the revitalization and strength of Indigenous peoples, and we pray for the healing of our people and the protection of our lands and waters across Turtle Island.

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Recent Events

Precious Knowledge Panel Discussion Members, Back from left to right: Morgan Raether, Michael Flores, Glenda Ward, Amanda Weinert, Martha Lundin, April Limlala, and Lesley Larlin. Front from (to r) Dr. Martin Reinhardt, Judy Panoscher, Lisa Eckert, and Amy Hamilton.

Representatives from the Latino Student Organization, and the Native American Student Association enjoy lunch with Precious Knowledge producer Eren McGinnis.

(Left) Idle No More marker Bucko Teeple (Bay Mills/OWNER Community) stands with his tribal flag outside of federal building in Marquette.

(Right) Grace Chassell (Rosebud Lakota) leads walkers along Lake Superior on their way to downtown Marquette at the INM rally.

(Below) The NSL Board of Trustees, the NSL President, other administrators and guests visit Chez Nous and prepare to have a meal made with only Great Lakes indigenous ingredients. Center for Native American Studies faculty and staff and Hospitality Management faculty prepared the multi-course meal.

Chief Theresa Spence

On January 11, one month in to Chief Spence’s fast, a march and rally was held in Marquette that coincided with a worldwide day of action. Organized by Dr. Martin Reinhardt, approximately 60 students, faculty, and community members from around the region began a march at the Carp River bridge at M’Daabiimang (south Marquette), the site of the oldest known Anishinaabe camp locally (one would never know this from the looks of site today, which contains a waste water treatment plant and bike path). Marchers made their way through Marquette holding signs showing their support and continued to the downtown district, ending with drumming and a peaceful demonstration outside the federal building on Washington Street. According to Reinhardt, this particular path was chosen because, much like the historical campsite is a link to the Anishinaabe people, the federal building represents the U.S. government’s presence in Marquette and the oftentimes strained relationship between the two nations. This day’s events are one of many illustrations of activities that have been organized—and participated in—by people who feel the time has come to speak out against a number of issues people who feel they can remain Idle No More.

An important aspect of the movement is that it has transcended being about only one topic. It may have begun as a response to Canadian legislation, but it has become an inspiration to do positive work for the good of all people. One goal of the movement is to protect the earth for all people so that future generations have access to clean water, air and land. It is a global issue that needs global support. It is part of the continual resistance to a consumerist, non-sustainable way of life that dominates so much of mainstream society today. Idle No More is not an entirely new movement, but the latest chapter in a continued resistance that has been going on for centuries. As the Idle No More founding women stated in a press release, “There have always been individuals and groups who have been working towards these goals—Idle No More seeks to create solidarity and further support these goals, and particularly encourages youth to become engaged in the movement, as the leaders of our future.”

Precious Knowledge

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By Samantha Hasek
The Community Forum on Conservation and Local Sustainability, presented by NMU Earth, Environmental and Geographical Sciences Department (EEGS), was held on February 21 and 22 at NMU’s campus.

The forum focused on answering the question, “What is the local U.P. land ethic?” The idea of a local land ethic was developed from the work of Aldo Leopold, who spent the summers of his youth in the U.P. and wrote many essays about conserving the land and the organisms that live in them. Leopold’s land ethic concluded that land is not only in itself an ecological community, but it is also a part of our own community and thus requires our love and respect.

The forum began Thursday evening with a presentation by Leopold’s biographer, Dr. Curt Meine, who spoke about the big picture of conservation.

He defined the current “Litanie of Woes”: climate change, biodiversity loss, declining sources of freshwater, etc. Despite these grim circumstances, he went on to share a “Litany of Hope”: ecological restoration, the urban agriculture movement, the development of ecological economics, and other emerging practices. Attendees overflowed the Mead Auditorium and after the presentation some poignant questions were asked. “How can we de-marginalize efforts to become more sustainable?” and “How can we invite diversity into conservation efforts?” were two of the most compelling of these.

Friday morning began with the showing of Green Fire, a film about Aldo Leopold’s idea of land ethic and its spread to current conservation efforts around the world. Then a community discussion on regional sustainabil- ity followed, facilitated by Aralia Johnson, EEGS faculty member and with panellists Karen Bacula, environmental science teacher at Marquette Senior High School; Aimée Cree Dunn, instructor at NMU Center for Native American Studies; John Frye, an NMU under-graduate and co-owner of Dancing Crane Farm; Jessica Koski of the Natural Resources Department, NMU. The audience and panel members agreed that having a strong land ethic is essential for living peacefully with others because we rely on the biological community and because other generations are going to need the earth. Aimée Cree Dunn re-emphasized Leopold’s view, “We need the land for our survival.” A community member suggested education as an important way to get people involved in sustainability, while Karen Bacula shared her that philosophy as an educator is to “push the idea that we are not the only care-takers that the earth takes care of us.”

Panelist Jessica Koski commented on Thursday night’s question of how to involve diverse peoples in conservation, recommending that traditional ecological knowledge should be incor-porated both in practice and in governmental policies dealing with the environ-}

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By Marisa Van Zile
I live in the Lac Vieux Desert Community of Watersmeet, Mich. I am a member of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community in Mole Lake, Wis. I come from a community that has a history of standing against mining and other environ-mental injustices. The Sokaogon Chippe-wa community has always stood by their responsibility for the wild rice beds and water. In the past 30 years they have had to fight what seems like an uphill battle against mining corporations and their supporters. The Sokaogon Chippewa gained support from the surrounding tribes and citizens from all over the nation. When I learned what Idle No More was about, I instantly empa-thized and wanted to help. I first learned about the Idle No More movement from Facebook in early December 2012. I didn’t know much about it at first, but I was impressed by the positivity and organization of the flash mob round dances. I later learned that First Nations and other people were coming together all over Canada to raise awareness for the protection of water, human rights, and land. I shared what I learned with my children and my little cousin. Not so long after that I learned that INM flash mobs were taking place in the U.S. We chose to be-come involved because we are responsi-ble for the water, land, and each other—no matter where that might be. The first INM gathering we attended was in Du-luth, Minn. at the Bentley Tour of Lights. The night before, we let the kids prepare many signs, just in case some-one needed one. The events leading up to attending the INM flash mob were very motivating and exciting for us. Once we got there, we really didn’t know what to expect, so we enjoyed the tour of lights and the ice rink until we figured things out. We finally heard drumming and headed toward one of the entrances. The kids joined in the round dance and broke-in their new signs. I was happy to hear the entrances. The kids joined in the round dance and broke-in their new signs. I was happy to hear the entrances.

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Student Perspective on Idle No More

María Van Zile
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Take steps to contribute to building relationships with international agen-cies such as the UN to raise awareness to the conditions Indigenous people have been subjected to and assert our sovereignty in the international arena.

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first of these paths involves the treaty-making era of Federal Indian policy, which lasted from 1788 to 1871. The U.S. Constitution established that the federal government—not states—was responsible for relationships with tribes. During this period, 26 treaties were signed that established provisions applicable to the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy, which includes the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi nations. All of the tribes in Michigan are part of the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy, and sixteen of these treaties had specific provisions to the tribes in Michigan. The earliest of these treaties, The Treaty at Fort Meigs in 1817, established the University of Michigan, then the College of Detroit, and called for educational rights “for the children of the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi.”

In 1871, the U.S. Congress did away with treaty making with tribes. Within eight years, a federal boarding school program was implemented, with the goal of assimilating Indian children into the dominant American society. These residential boarding schools were located away from Indian communities and thought to be ideal for breaking the ties children had to their families. Schools prohibited the use of Native language and the practicing of tribal traditions because they were thought to be “enemies of progress.”

The most well-known federal boarding school (also known as industrial schools) in Michigan was located in Mt. Pleasant. It closed in 1934 after Paul Johnson, a master’s student at the University of Michigan, filed a lawsuit against the university for violating the Treaty at Fort Meigs by acquiring the property in Mt. Pleasant Regional Center on the land they received.

In 1972, the next step took place when Paul Johnson, a master’s student at the University of Michigan, filed a lawsuit against the university for violating the Treaty at Fort Meigs by acquiring the property in Mt. Pleasant Regional Center on the land they received. In 1995, Governor John Engler stated he would veto the new higher education budget if it included funding for the waiver. Senator John Schwartz (R-Battle Creek), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, was instructed by his party to block the waiver by removing it as a line item in the state’s higher education budget and adding it into the base funding of each state college and university.

Also in 1995, Representative Tim Walberg proposed amendments that would have allowed for satisfactory academic progress and enrollment in a flexible degree program. The amendments gained through the lawsuit led to support from legislators, most notably from Jackie Vaughan, a state representative from Michigan who took special interest in the case. He sponsored the bill that became The Waiver of Tuition for North American Indians Act (1976 Public Act 174). Passed by the Michigan Legislature in 1976, it was signed into law by Governor William Milliken.

In 2015, Governor Rick Snyder signed into law an amendment to the state Constitution that prohibits preferential treatment in public education on the basis of race or gender. This argument fails to recognize the precedents set by treaties, which are the supreme law of the land, and the Comstock Agreement. These are Michigan’s obligations for the education of Native American people that should never be taken away.

The 2010 decisions also resulted in changes in the requirements for receiving the waiver. Only students from federally recognized United States tribes will remain eligible. Previously, students who met the other qualifications were able to use the waiver. The changes still allowed schools to make decisions about things such as requiring satisfactory academic progress and enrollment in a degree-granting program.

NMU has blazed a trail for other colleges to follow by eliminating the federal financial aid requirements. Hopefully more can be done in the future for American Indian students.

A Shout Out for the Indigenous Intellectual Warriors

By April Lindala

Perhaps it is a ripple effect of the four women who started the Idle No More movement and the momentum that followed once Chief Spence started her fast (I refuse to call it a hunger strike as Indigenous people themselves have been fasting from the half of the people for centuries). Because of the Idle No More tidal wave that has overcome Indian country since last October and more globally, I think we understand the lonely sacrifice it is to work to be a Native scholar. And it is then I think of Chief Spence, fasting for 44 days with only water and fish broth. She received criticism from the national media and political parties (big deal) and she received criticism from other chiefs and Native people (now that hurts).

It may appear selfish—this path of education. There are unknown sacrifices. Unless you have gone through it you cannot know what it took to learn those books and achieve those degrees and yes, financial sacrifice. Many Native students I speak with say that they want an education so they can go back to help their communities. With the numerous sacrifices on the part of the communities and the gift to the communities they come from—how is that selfish?

Here are some other things I have heard along the way and how I try to respond to students. “What do we know about Indian country since last October and more globally, I think we understand the lonely sacrifice it is to work to be a Native scholar. And it is then I think of Chief Spence, fasting for 44 days with only water and fish broth. She received criticism from the national media and political parties (big deal) and she received criticism from other chiefs and Native people (now that hurts).”). If you can read daily inspirational quotes on your smartphone, why not extend that inspiration to a chapter, an essay or a book? It’s those books that are not in the canon.

Additionally, to further that argument, most have not been introduced (on purpose) to Native authors, scholars, artists, educators...there are more and more out there. This is not your fault. That move beyond the oppression of the dominant society takes time. The push back also comes from those who do not understand the lonely sacrifice it is to work to be a Native scholar. And it is then I think of Chief Spence, fasting for 44 days with only water and fish broth. She received criticism from the national media and political parties (big deal) and she received criticism from other chiefs and Native people (now that hurts).” I refuse to call it a hunger strike as Indigenous people themselves have been fasting from the half of the people for centuries). Because of the Idle No More tidal wave that has overcome Indian country since last October and more globally, I think we understand the lonely sacrifice it is to work to be a Native scholar. And it is then I think of Chief Spence, fasting for 44 days with only water and fish broth. She received criticism from the national media and political parties (big deal) and she received criticism from other chiefs and Native people (now that hurts).”