

Introduction: Welcome to our urban Indian community.

Lived just down the block at 33rd & Clybourn and went to grade school at St Rose's on 29th & Clybourn. Raised by my parents, grandparents, aunts & uncles – one of Milwaukee's first inter-racial marriages. Grandpa a BRC married Sara Jane Neville an Irish American Woman from Milwaukee. Our household, in the midst of Merrill Park, made us a true urban Indian family long before the relocation program of post WWII – we were a tiny nation unto itself. We were a unique urban Indian family.

Sara Jane is the reason Grandpa stayed in Milwaukee after getting mustered out of the 32nd division – the red arrow division – after WWI at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Because of mustard gas lung damage suffered in the war, grandpa had to find work out of doors. He did so for the rest of his adult life in the old Chicago Northwestern RR Depot handling freight for Railway Express Agency at the end of Wisconsin Avenue. This amazing architectural masterpiece was a victim of bad decision making and the wrecking ball and replaced by an orange abstract sculpture at the end of Wisconsin Avenue. Despite being one of the smartest guys I ever knew, grandpa remained stationed on his second shift job for all but the last two years of his tenure. He was finally given a promotion and some authority for about 24 months. Incidentally, Grandpa was a victim of the US Boarding School Policy. His old Class rooms still exist as part of the VA Center on Tomah, WI.

Despite our urban location, we often hosted reservation friends and relatives from LCO & Bad River when they came to Milwaukee. I went on to Pius XI HS on Milwaukee's West Side and after setting the Wisconsin State 880 yard record attended the U of W and graduated from UW-O with a degree in Mass Communications – Radio/TV/Film. I was entered into the PIUS Sports Hall of Fame this past September.

But enough about me. No matter the location: reservation, rural or urban, many of the needs of Indian People, then and now, remain the same. The issues of Housing, Health, culture, spirituality, education, care of the elderly, job training, family-supporting jobs, economic development and access to capital remain the same. Not good. My positions as Executive Director of the MILWAUKEE INDIAN HEALTH CENTERS on N 27th Streets and 11th Streets, Deputy Director of the AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE & ENGINEERING SOCIETY at the University of Colorado – Boulder and as Executive Director of the AMERICAN INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION of Chicago and as Vice President of INDIAN SUMMER FESTIVAL here in Milwaukee has led me to some baseline research on the needs and concerns of urban Indian people. Interestingly, despite the tumultuous past, most Indian folks are not angry about their lot in life. Most are amazingly optimistic about the future. Most simply want an even playing field and, in all studies, most want to be seen and understood by non-Indians in a positive light rather than a cultural curiosity which has been swept into the dustbin of 1880's American history. Most feel the future lies within their youth. One thing is certain, most urban Indians have not entered mainstream America. (Data from AIEDA)

Nick Hockings of LDF and I conduct many cultural competency (Vs sensitivity) sessions. Some for educators, businesses, government agencies (I'm certified by the State of Illinois as a Trainer of Trainers relating to the INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT) and most importantly, schools on all levels. In comparing notes, Nick shared this story. (Tell Cowboy Story).

Perception, cognitive skills (or lack of them), stereotyping by literature, films, TV, Cable, music industry have led to a nearly uniform perception of the Native people of this land and this state. Wisconsin is home to more Indian people, tribes and tribal nations/reservations than any state East of the Mississippi River. There are nearly 600 Tribes in America. While this census group represents 1.5% of the US population, it represents 50%, one half, of its diversity. Yet, An Indian, Is an Indian, Is An Indian in most circles. In many instances, we're still in the Whoo, Whoo, Whoo stage of public thought & discourse. Chief Illiniweck Anyone?

Each US administration has had a "Policy" on how to deal with the indefinable "Indian Problem". There has never been a "Marshall Plan" to rebuild the Indian Nations of this land And to help make them useful, productive Nations and Citizens who live, work and play in America.

According to my friend Nancy Lurie, Head Anthropologist Emeritus of the Milwaukee Public Museum, virtually all policies affecting Indian America were first instituted here in Wisconsin. When it comes to Indians, Wisconsin has been the litmus test for most of Indian Country.

Going back to my Grandfather. He, a Veteran of WWI who fought in the Battle of Chateaux Thierry, my uncle Ed, a Navy Sea Bee, fought in the Philippine Pacific Theater in WWII and my Uncle Tom a Korean Era Vet, stopped in for a Shorty Pabst on a hot summer day for some father & son conversation. They were refused service and asked to leave ASAP – Vet status or not. They felt betrayed by the very people they swore allegiance to protect. Their story is not unique. Consequently, many Native folks remain cautious when dealing with government officials on Federal, State and Local levels. When Grandpa mustered out of the service he was not an official citizen of the US. He and all Indians were made citizens in 1924 whether they wanted it or not. Native Americans have been citizens for just 85 years despite being the original stewards of these lands.

These culturally inept concepts remain with us today. When I & my fellow Milwaukee area Bad River Tribes people attempted to secure the abandoned US Coast Guard Station on Milwaukee's Lincoln Memorial Drive and to convert it into a permanent site for the fulfillment of Act 31, we were told by the then Chair of the Milwaukee County Parks Committee, that we didn't deserve consideration, because we were too small to be a minority! We did ultimately deliver the politics, but funding became an issue which I'll describe at another time. To say the least, it was a real passion play.

As an active supporter of the Chippewa spear fishing controversy at a variety of boat landings, from 85-92, a constant theme from anti treaty protesters was, "I'm damned sick and tired of paying for your welfare programs". Payment due under treaty terms has become known as Welfare – Entitlement Programs. Treaty Rights are virtually unknown by non-Indian Wisconsinites because they are not taught or taught effectively in our public schools.

Around this time two things happened which have been positive and negative. The Wisconsin legislature enacted State Act # 31 which requires all Wisconsin Public School Children to have Wisconsin Indian history & culture taught to them three times before HS Graduation. Like many mandates, Act 31 is not compulsory, has no enforcement teeth and is woefully underfunded.

Around the same time, Indian gaming came to the fore. The perception of the “Gaming Rich Indians” began to take hold and influence public policy and debates in the halls of Washington, Madison and Milwaukee.

Nearly thirteen years ago, Barbara Jersey, a Citizen of the Menominee Indian Nation of Wisconsin, a stock market securities analyst for Thomson-Reuters Chicago Office & and coordinator of the MENOMINEE COMMUNITY CENTER OF CHICAGO and myself began a radio program here in Milwaukee on WYMS FM. A format change forced us to leave this town and originate our program from Chicago on WLUW 88.7 FM. We have become producers for NATIVE VOICE ONE; THE NATIVE AMERICAN RADIO SERVICE and for AMERICAN INDIAN RADIO ON SATELLITE. Our award-winning program is heard on stations throughout the US, and airs on the internet 19 hours weekly. We enjoy listenership from Indians and non-Indians in the US, Canada, Sweden, Brazil, Germany, the UK and more. While we are not an issue show, we do make occasional editorials. This is one of them (Read Editorial)

We would hope for the following.

Act 31 become mandatory, have enforcement and be funded properly. KAB; Bad Knowledge leads to Bad Attitude which leads to Bad Behavior.

The state and Wisconsin Indian nations take urban Indian seriously as bona fide Citizens of their respective Tribes. (Allen NCAI experience) (Joe Shirley & urban language retention)

Tribes should be encouraged to become more involved in non-Tribal politics. As a Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee- first on the Civil Service commission and the on the Board of Zoning Appeals - I had the opportunity to cast my vote on behalf of the Forest County Potawatomi so they could operate their proposed business on this very spot. A number of appointments, including mine, were made as a direct result of forming an urban Native American PAC which worked on behalf of the mayor. Additionally, MCCC, & City of Chicago now recognizing Native Americans as a minority when it comes to validation as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE).

Wisconsin & Tribes begin the process of the development of a true model – a “Marshall Plan” - for Wisconsin Indian Nations and eventually for use in rebuilding Indian America.

Some very important tools currently exist which can be used by state representatives and by the Tribes.

Dr. Patty Loew's Books

Recent GLIFWIC software & guides.

Way of the Warrior – PBS

Key Contributor to a 3 & ½ day curriculum developed by LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO on the INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT OF 1978.

Copy of Myth of Indian Gaming

Gift of a prayer for attending.

HONOR Sacred Sites materials

HONORING NATIONS BOOK RE: MCCC