Dear Tribal Members,

It has been a tremendous honor serving you over the past eight years. Thank you for electing me.

I have truly enjoyed working for you in the House of Representatives. It is a time in my life I will never forget.

I made my decision not to seek re-election as the Tribal Representative a very difficult one. I struggled with this decision for months.

As you may or may not know I have decided to run for the State Senate. I have been a bystander of sorts in the legislature watching events unfold. After eight years of advocacy I’ve decided to take the next step and run for the Senate. I believe I have made a difference for Native people in Maine. I would like to take that experience and make a difference for the people in my Senate District as well as all of Maine. As a State Senator I will be the most knowledgeable legislator on Indian issues. For those of you who are curious about my District it is District #19, Sagadahoc and one town in Lincoln County (Dresden). It includes the following towns: Richmond, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Topsham, Bath, West Bath, Phippsburg, Arrowsic, Georgetown, Woolwich, and Dresden. They are all in the Merrymeeting Bay area.

I plan to keep a journal and pass it on to those who will learn from my experiences. Again, thank you for this opportunity. I will always be yours in the spirit of unity and power.

Donna M Loring, Penobscot Nation Representative

Maine Indian Basketmakers’ Alliance Director awarded International Prize

On October 15, 2003, Theresa Secord Hoffman, a member of the Penobscot Nation, received a prestigious international prize in Geneva, Switzerland, for her work as director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers’ Alliance. The “Prize for Women’s Creativity in Rural Life,” sponsored by the Women’s World Summit Foundation (WWSF), was presented to Hoffman in a ceremony at the Palais Wilson, headquarters of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights.

Created in 1991, WWSF works primarily to empower rural women and women’s organizations, as well as non-government organizations committed to prevention of child abuse worldwide. The organization also seeks to mobilize citizens and organizations toward building a better global human society by organizing regularly “Circles of Compassion” training workshops.

This is the 10th anniversary of the WWSF prize, and Ms. Hoffman is the first United States citizen to garner the honor. Established in recognition of the roles of women in grass roots development efforts, the prize goes to individuals whose efforts demonstrate exceptional creativity, courage, and perseverance in improving rural life, along with respect for and preservation of the environment, and continuing impact on the community.

This year, the WWSF prize jury is awarding 33 women from 23 countries around the world. Of these, five, including Ms. Hoffman, have been invited to attend the award ceremony in Geneva and to personally present their work. The ambassadors of each winner’s country will attend the event, along with other dignitaries. The keynote speaker and award presenter was to have been Ms. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, but with his tragic death in the August bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad, that role will be filled by the Acting High Commissioner, Bertrand Ramcharan (to be confirmed).

According to WWSF Executive Director Elly Pradervand, “The necessity of empowering rural women remains undisputed and is a central objective in the strategies for poverty alleviation and ending hunger. The very survival of the human species depends on replacing old, tired, competitive Darwinian ‘male’ models by more humane, open, cooperative ‘feminine models. And for that women need to come into leadership at all levels of society.”

Elly Pradervand’s sentiment fits well with Theresa Hoffman’s conviction that cooperative efforts strengthen communities and individuals at the same time. This is evident in WWSF’s summary of Ms. Hoffman’s accomplishments, which begins with this comment: “It behooves the Prize for Women’s Creativity in Rural Life that the first laureate from the United States be an American Indian—of the Penobscot Nation, one of four tribal groups living in Maine.” The commentary goes on to mark out Ms. Hoffman’s leadership role in helping to found the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance (MIBA)—an organization that many predicted would fail given the independent-mindedness of the four tribal groups in Maine, not to mention that of basketmakers. However, thanks to the skills and dedication of the basketmakers and Ms. Hoffman’s vision, persistence, political acumen, and first-hand knowledge of the art form, the venture has blossomed.

Please turn to page 4

Wabanaki News has been an excellent communication instrument and should be continued by your next representative to the Maine State Legislature

Wabanaki News
LD 291 “An Act to Require Teaching Maine Native American History and Culture in Maine’s Schools”

by Donna M. Loring, Representative of the Penobscot Nation

(My greatest accomplishment!)

LD-291 is now Maine law. It was passed by the House June 5, 2001 and passed in the Senate June 7, 2001. It was then signed into law by Governor Angus King on June 14, 2001.

I am extremely proud to have been the sponsor of this bill. It is the high point of my legislative experience to date.

I know it will make a difference in our future.

This bill is the most innovative and comprehensive piece of legislation in reference to the teaching of Native American History in the Country.

No other state has created a policy that requires teaching Native American History in such detail and also provides the means to do it.

The bill is made up of four sections:

1. The passage of this bill by the Maine House or Representatives and Senate will soon be signed into law by Governor Angus S. King, Jr.

2. The bill never conquered until the hearts of our women take another blow.

3. The Thesaurus of Slang identifies the word “squaw” as a synonym for prostitute, harlot, hussy, and floozy.

4. During that floor debate, the word squaw was used as a slanderous as well as an offensive derogatory term to the general public.

5. As we enter a new millennium, I have hope for a better relationship between the native population and the State of Maine. In order for us to achieve this improved relationship, we must end 400 years of hurt and discrimination. We must learn to live together peacefully, by honoring and respecting each other.

This hope was the motivating factor behind legislation that would end the use of a dehumanizing and dehumanizing term in the State of Maine.

The passage of this bill by the Maine House or Representatives and Senate will soon be signed into law by Governor Angus S. King, Jr.

It will remove the word squaw from place names in the state.

This is not an issue of political correctness. It is about basic human decency and respect for one’s fellow citizens. The new law protects an underrepresented group in our state, native women.

Our women—grandmothers, mothers, and daughters—are entitled to protection against basic human rights violations, such as the use of dehumanizing language. The driving force behind this bill is hundreds of native women, who are constantly offended by the use of this slang word.

The Thesaurus of Slang identifies the word “squaw” as a synonym for prostitute, harlot, hussy, and floozy. The dictionary identifies this word as one that is used to offend native females.

After generations of exposure, the word squaw is seen as a neutral word to the general public. But to native females this word continues to be a slanderous attack against them and their culture.

Violent incidents occur more often near the native communities, where the clash between cultures still exists.

When native people name a geographic feature, such as a river or a mountain, the term used will describe a specific location, for the ease of the traveler, or to denote its spiritual significance. The name of the Kennebec River describes the contours of the river. Mount Katahdin was named to signify the spirits of the mountain and its geography.

The term squaw was not originally used for place names, as the word did not exist before the 1600’s. It is not a linguist’s definition of the original native word that is of concern, it is the way the term has been used to define native women in its current context.

Through communication and education, we can rid the state of offensive, derogatory words. Native women have the right to define themselves.

We need to grow and understand that the use of the term squaw shows a lack of compassion to human beings. It is hard for the general population to imagine how hurtful a word can be unless it is directed toward them, their culture, or racial background.

Rep. Gerald Talbot worked diligently in 1974 to remove the "N" word from place names in Maine. He had to convince other representatives how hurtful and hateful this word is to Maine citizens and its visitors.

During that floor debate, the offensiveness of the word squaw was questioned. Several representatives stated that to the native population, it was an offensive term. This is not a new issue to Maine, it is a 400 year old issue that needs to be stopped.

Nationally, Maine now joins three other states which have removed the word squaw from name places. In North Carolina, the U.S. Justice Department was involved in the removal of the word from a school system in March of 1999.

There is no other word used today which hurts native women as much as the word squaw. The term has been used as a slanderous assault in hate crimes; last year, a native woman was being brutally assaulted by two men, who continually yelled, “you dirty squaw” as they repeatedly kicked her.

In 1998, there was a high school fight that eventually turned into a racial incident. Native girls were called squaws; this resulted in death threats being painted on the walls.

This new law sends, with great effectiveness, a goodwill message of understanding to the Native people of this state: Maine will stop sanctioning the use of offensive words, which dehumanize and exploit the native people.

The native people and the native communities of Maine, asked for the passage of this bill to end the perpetuation of dehumanizing language that has been used to define our women.

It is never an aggressive act for a people to exercise their right to self determination. It is an intrinsic right that is woven into the fiber of values that this country was founded on.

The following Cheyenne proverb summarizes the point of this bill concisely, “A nation is never conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground.”

Every time this defamatory term is used, the hearts of our women take another blow.


Maine’s Native Americans Gain Passage of LD 2418

A Salute to Rep. Soctomah’s groundbreaking bill... THANK YOU!

by Representative

Donald Soctomah

As we enter a new millennium, I have hope for a better relationship between the native population and the State of Maine. In order for us to achieve this improved relationship, we must end 400 years of hurt and discrimination. We must learn to live together peacefully, by honoring and respecting each other.

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The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, August 10, 2004.

The General Election will be held Saturday, September 11, 2004.

Polls will open for both at 9:00 AM and close at 8:00 PM.

Voting in both elections will take place in the Conference Room at the Community Building.

A Salute to Rep. Soctomah’s groundbreaking bill... THANK YOU!
Chief Dana has vision for the Penobscot Nation

Strengthening the Penobscot Community is key

Chief Barry Dana is well aware of having 10,000 years of history to live up to as a member and leader of the Penobscot Nation. It is what connects him to that past which makes him the visionary leader the Nation needs now to continue building on its strength as a sovereign tribe in Maine.

Chief Dana believes the best way to strengthen the Penobscot Nation is by strengthening the community. The best way to strengthen the community is to strengthen the family and that is best done by strengthening the individual. This is something he works toward every single day as the Nation’s elected leader.

Chief Dana has also worked with many Tribal members to, among other things, create a nationally recognized Boys and Girls Club; create tribal laws protecting elders; create an Elder Advocate position; restructuring the Home Improvement Program which serviced 30 homes in 2003-2004 alone; create a cultural preservation department which recently received a federal grant; begin major restoration work and dam removal along the Penobscot River; and increase the Tribe’s visibility across Maine, New England and the country.

He knows the future health of the Tribe is linked to economic and social health, and to that end Chief Dana works tirelessly to foster a creative and proactive environment that will allow Tribal members to prosper and live with dignity. He has served on the board of the highly successful Four Directions Community Development Financial Initiative and has supported the development of an Elder Care Facility both of which have created jobs for Tribal members. Construction of the new elder care facility begins later this summer and, when complete, will employ six additional people.

He is the first to say none of this was accomplished on his own. In fact, one of Chief Dana’s greatest assets is his ability to recognize and place his faith in the strengths and abilities in others and his willingness to give them the freedom to succeed. Coupled with that is his refusal to be satisfied with the status quo. He is always looking for what the Tribe can do to benefit each individual and the Nation as a whole.

Chief Dana is a man who makes people want to work harder and who is willing to take chances and the initiative. He will never ask anyone to do more than he is willing to do himself. His creativity and energy has opened many different doors for the
Chief Barry Dana’s historic State of the Tribes Address to the Maine State Legislature on March 11, 2002

Kkwey. Hello

Kkwey. Thank you.

It is an honor and a privilege as Saulgam, the Chief of the Penobscot Nation, to be here on this historical day, addressing the joint session of the 120th leg­is­la­ture.

Woliwoni. Thank you.

Today’s address symbolizes what I truly believe to be a new era in Tribal/State relations. Relationships are based on communication. Today’s forum allows for direct communication. Perhaps our great­est days lay before us.

Niyah nepanawegakeni. I am Penobscot. Niyah nepanawegakeni. I am a human being from the Penobscot River. I am a Penobscot and I am a human who has his roots in history. I am a Penobscot, a person who has his roots in the soil, the water, and the sky. I am a Penobscot, a person who has his roots in the culture, the traditions, the language, and the values of his people.

Before I discuss the current issues fac­ing my tribe, the Penobscot Nation, let me first set the framework by which the Pe­nobscot Nation’s government operates. Only through education can we ever hope to break down stereotypes and put an end to all forms of racism. The Penobscot Na­tion is a Tribe. Tribes here in this country pre-date the creation of the States and the Federal government. In the creation of the U.S. Federal Govt., the founding fa­thers recognized the Tribes as distinct forms of government, with inherent sov­ereign powers to ensure the birth given rights to be self-determined.

The 1980 Settlement Act recognizes these protections of inherent sovereign powers. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, in their review of the 1980 agreement recognized and ratified our traditional sovereign powers and sided the 1st Cir­cuit Courts decision, “that the Maine Tribe still possesses inherent sovereignty to the same extent as other tribes in the United States.” Thus, rather than destroy­ing sovereignty, the settlement act recogn­izing the power to control their inter­ nal affairs and by with­drawing the powers which Maine previously claimed to inter­ fere in such matters, the settlement strengthens the sovereignty of the Maine Tribe.

The very essence of Tribal Sovere­ignty is the ability to be self-govern­ing and to protect the health, safety and wel­fare of our people, within our own terri­tory. We are a distinct people with a unique history. Though it has been a struggle to retain these powers of self-government, that preserves our distinctiveness, we have done so. Despite how people outside our tribe perceive us, we are first and fore­most an Indian Tribe. From thousands of years ago, the bonds of our ancestors still lie on the shores of Maine’s rivers and ocean frontage. We still carry on their dreams, their pride and the traditions of self-determination and these we all hold 22 sacred. We will continue to fight to safe­guard these rights, in honor of our ances­ tors and in order to preserve a future for our children. Failure to do so would mean surrendering the very essence of who we are as an Indian People. We are proud of our place in history and the many contribu­tions we have made to the larger society by assisting in common goals. We are still here.

Theresa Hoffman from page 1

MBA is credited with re­viving an imperiled art—to effec­tively that over the last dec­ade the number of trained tribal basketmakers has grown from 50 to 120. More­over, the average age of MBA members has dropped from 60 to 43 (which means more young people are making baskets). Members offer periodic workshops on the reservations and MBA also sponsors a demanding year-long basketry apprentice program. In addition the organization is also fueling language preservation efforts by encouraging elders who teach basketry to do so in their Native languages—Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot. Ms. Hoffman, with the support of MBA’s board of directors and staff, spearheaded effective marketing efforts that have included opening an elegant gallery/shop, publishing an 86-page guide to basketry and other traditional Native American crafts in Maine, and collaborating with the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor on the annual Native American Festival and the Maine Indian Basketmakers Market at the Hudson Museum on the University of Maine’s Orono campus. Such efforts have given Maine Indian basketmakers a high profile throughout the state and nation. The result is a nearly tenfold increase in the sales value of baskets making basketry a viable livelihood. According to Rebecca Cole-Will, head curator of the Abbe Museum, “Through Theresa’s leadership, MBA has developed into a vitally important organization that continues to cultivate a vibrant and growing Wabanaki crafts community. In addition to the economic benefits of MBA’s work, the strengthen­ing of the crafts tradition has proven critical to preserving the cultural identity of the Wabanaki and to raising the self-esteem of craftspeople.”

According to another Penobscot leader, Donna Loring, who serves as tribal representative to the Maine state legislature, “Two years ago, I initiated legisla­tion, the Maine Indian History Act, requiring all public schools in Maine to in­clude in their curriculum lessons concerning the culture and history of the state’s original inhabitants. That bill passed and Theresa’s work is playing a vital role in its implementation. Her efforts have been, and continue to be, tireless and self­less. They have increased the self­worth of Native people, fostered cross-cultural interaction and understanding, prodded people to think in terms of sustainable development, and made a very tangible difference in the economic livelihoods of many rural Indian families across the state.

A small sampling of the other winners of this year’s Rural Creativity award:

A Betty Makoni from Zimbabwe established empowerment programs for sexually abused girls.

A Byahushuda Jergal of Mongolia set up various programs to counter malnutrition.

A Marta Benavides of El Salvador works for peace, justice, and economic opportunity for indigenous people.

A Haoua Baraize from Niger led a fight for educating girls.

A N'Diw Sene of Senegal mounted an effective challenge to unauthorized tourism development.

A Victoria Adetona established a micro-credit organization for women.

A Wang Fengers of China set up an organ transplant funding network for rural women. (Angelwings improve soil fertility.)

A Khaila Bitt Awan of Pakistan created a local seed bank and also opened a small vocational center in her home.

A Francisco Eugenia of Cuba transformed a garbage dump into an organic garden.

A Aurora Carmona of Columbia launched many projects, including a women’s center, river and forests, women’s community gardens that greatly increase food security.

A Neela Thangavelu of India organized some 140 women’s self-help groups representing over 3000 women and led a successful struggle for rural women. (Angelwings improve soil fertility.)
Moving on after defeat
letter@TimesRecord.Com
11/14/2003

Chief Barry Dana’s sharp re­
response to the 2-1 defeat of the Penobscot-Passamaquoddy ca­
sino question was unfortunate (Nov. 6, “Penobscot chief: There are still two Maines”). But there’s something everyone should realize.

The two leading casino pro­
motors made an amazingly quick exit and weren’t around to help the tribes navigate the political fallout. Lawyer Tom Tureen who spearheaded the campaign and Think About It’s spokeswoman, Erin Lehane, both left for vaca­tions 36 hours after the election, The Associated Press reported.

Not that they didn’t deserve rest from their labors, but they left the tribes to face the after­
math of a highly charge race with no assistance and that seems cold. If they’d stayed around a few more days, they could have eased the disappointment and tempered Chief Dana’s remarks.

Fortunately, most people and
groups catastrophic by the tribal leader’s remarks will be gracious enough to move on. In fact, Gov. John Baldacci hasn’t wasted any time in reaching out.

Wednesday he met with the leaders of four Maine tribes: the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac and Maliseet. He has de­
rected the state Department of Economic and Community De­
velopment and his staff to meet with tribal leaders within the next
30 days to work up an economic development strategy, The Asso­
ciated Press reported. Also, mem­
bers of his staff will attend up­
coming tribal council meetings for that purpose.

Equally good news is the fact that Chief Dana said he now re­
alizes that the casino question was not defeated because Mainers are prejudiced toward the tribes. He understands that it was defeated based on issues raised during the campaign.

In the long year long discussion of the casino question on these Opinion­
ion pages, some contributors la­
mANTED that it was difficult to vote “No” without having an alterna­tive to offer Maine’s Native Americans. We commend Gov. Baldacci and the tribal leaders for setting out toward that goal so quickly.

We may have lost the battle but we have not lost the war
donna M. Loring

As the Penobscot Nation’s Repre­
sentative to the State Legislature I would be remiss in my duties if I did not re­
respond to your editorial “Moving On Af­

The photo chosen for use by the Times Record was the same Associated Press Photo the Portland press selec­tively chose and clearly misrepresented the tenor of the meeting. The Bath Courier Daily News photo by Kevin Bennett at the same event on Thursday November 13th would have been more accurate. It showed Chief Dana seriously speaking to the news media. Governor Baldacci touted the meeting as one to strategize for economic development for the tribes. The truth is the Chiefs and Tribal Re­
presentatives agreed to attend this meet­
ing not because of wind mills or any other economic project but because the Governor of the State, who represents the people of the State, requested a meet­
ing. We simply agreed to attend out of respect for the people of Maine. We went to listen to what he had to say and no promises were made from either side.

Furthermore I strongly disagree
with your commentary about Chief Dana’s “Sharp response to the 2-1 de­
feat of the Passamaquoddy and Penob­
socot Casino question.” You called the statement he issued after the November 6, 2003 Referendum vote “disappointing”,”inflammatory” and “insulting.”

For you to say that Tom Tureen or Erin Lehane would have had any influence over him in this regard is patetic, ludicrous, and marginalizes Native people.

The Penobscot will move on from this learning experience as we have for the past five hundred years. We have made many friends during this journey and we will look to them for help in the future. We will survive as a people and as a culture.

In conclusion, I restate; your view of Chief Dana’s “sharp response” is completely and totally opposite from mine and as the Representative of the Penobscot Nation it is with great pride and honor that I call Chief Barry Dana, Sagamia.
Taking a Stand: March on the State House for Water Protection

"Tribal members and supporters gather at the steps of the statehouse to deliver the court ordered tribal paperwork to the paper companies. The Tribal Governors of the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the chief of the Penobscot Nation lead the march to Augusta to deliver the court ordered papers. After a two year battle in the Maine courts and a rejected hearing in the Federal courts the Tribes had to deliver paperwork concerning environmental issues, so the paper companies can review them. This was a very sad day in State and Tribal relations. The people of Maine sided with the tribes on the issue of clean water, as supporters followed the tribe to the statehouse steps. This was a long walk, 40 miles, starting at the 1724 Norridgewock village site, an area of another disaster...."

Rep. Soctomah

From the birchbark canoe, the Passamaquoddy people traveled the coast of Maine and New Brunswick Canada, harvesting just enough food for the families and leaving the rest for nature to consume. On a successful hunting trip the canoeist uses the moose calling horn to sign his return. Here on Grand Manan Island the invisible line between the United States and Canada has divided the traditional lands of the Passamaquoddy tribe.

MARCH FOR TRIBAL
STRENGTH
AND
WATER PROTECTION

Rep. Loring speaks out

Rep. Soctomah with his sister
Madonna after the March

A message from Penobscot Nation Governor Barry Dana on Water Protection and Sovereignty

May 23rd, Norridgewock, Maine on the shores of the Kennebec River, we gathered at 5 a.m. to begin our March to Augusta. This was a civil rights style march to bring public awareness to our struggles to have the State of Maine recognize our sovereign status. This peaceful march helped us educate the people of the State as to who we are and our status as a tribe. Fifty people, both Indian and non-Indian completed the march covering 39 miles. News media reporters joined us, interviewed us and helped spread the message. We concluded the walk at the Augusta Civic Center.

The next morning we met at the Civic Center but this circle included 150 people. We all walked the remaining three miles from the Civic Center to the steps of the Capitol. On the steps we delivered our speeches to the audience, which again included the media. Our message was clear, that the State, its courts and paper industry has violated the 1980 Settlement Act by invading internal tribal matters by requesting to inspect tribal documents. On those steps we were joined by members of the Coalition to Support Tribal Sovereignty, the Chair of the Maine Indian Tribal State Commission, the President of the United Southern and Eastern Tribes, the co-founder of the Maine Peoples Alliance, all who gave eloquent speeches in support of our efforts.

This event brought much needed attention to our struggles. All along the 42 mile route we received many horns and thumbs up in support. People across the State are drawing the conclusion that the fight for sovereignty as well as the efforts for a casino are all about desire to be self-reliant, self-governed and independent.