

# THE AROSTOOK INDIAN

Vol. # 3 No. 12

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December 1971

## 1971 REVIEW OF AAI

In looking back at 1971 - there was some real progress made in terms of bringing the goals of the AAI into a reality.

In the area of housing, the AAI met with regional HUD representatives after the State Housing Authority and some local agencies told the AAI that no housing programs were available. After several meetings with HUD people, an agreement was reached where HUD would make available 15 to 20 units to the State Housing Authority to be built in Houlton. The AAI is now working with the Houlton Regional Development Corporation to acquire town approval for this project. It has to be mentioned that the AAI is taking one community at a time in terms of getting housing for the Indians in Aroostook County. It is now acknowledged openly in the town and state that getting this housing project in Houlton was through the initiative of the AAI.

In youth opportunities, the AAI has its tutorial program in operation with the help of Ricker College students.

The AAI met with some students at the University of Maine at Presque Isle hoping to expand the tutorial program in the northern part of the county but due to the lack of interest, that idea was dropped for the time being. The AAI did hire a youth coordinator to expand the youth activities and coordinate all the youth programs. Another positive program is the University of Maine system has waived tuition and University fees, including room and board charges for any qualified Maine Indian who wishes to attend college.

In the area of employment, the AAI has made little progress, although we are in contact with several agencies for the possibility of a training program for Indians, for instance, a training program in the local Post Offices for mail carriers.

In recognition, the AAI has made some inroads on a state and federal level. The AAI has been in contact with several offices in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. who are interested in expanding federal services to the 300,000 Eastern Indians. On the state level the AAI has established a

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good working relationship with the Passamaquoddy Governor John Stevens, who is also Commissioner of Indian Affairs for Maine.

This past year has been most productive for the AAI, it has come a long way in terms of getting some of the AAI goals realized. There is still much work to be done and the AAI has high hopes for the coming year.

Tom Battiste

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CIGANIK, LEVASSEUR  
JOIN AAI STAFF

Mrs. Helen Ciganik of Caribou, Maine and Mrs. Shirley Levasseur of Houlton, Maine have both been assigned to the AAI as Community VISTA Volunteers. Their job will be that of community organizers. The two of them will be visiting the Indian homes on a regular basis throughout the year, trying to help people out and get them in contact with the necessary agencies.

Both Mrs. Ciganik and Mrs. Levasseur are board members of the AAI and the Central Aroostook Action Agency. Mrs. Ciganik is also a board member of the Division of Indian Services of the Roman Catholic Diocese. Both women were able to do some field work for the AAI while they were on their previous jobs.

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ANNUAL CONVENTION OF NCAI

On November 17th, 1971, the 27th annual convention of the National Congress of American Indians convened in Reno, Nevada with the AAI represented by President Terry Polchies and Treasurer Tom Battiste.

The NCAI is a national private association of Indians, with membership limited only to Indians and with membership available not only to individuals but to Indian

tribes as tribes. It is the oldest and largest national organization by Indians and for Indian in the United States.

The main purpose for attending this conference by the AAI was to try to gain support for some kind of recognition from the federal level and to express the possibilities of securing new programs for the AAI.

The conference itself was marked with protests and intense floor debates between delegates from the federal reservations and Indians from urban areas across the United States. It has to be noted here, that there are 300,000 urban and off-reservation Indians in the Eastern United States that are not recognized by the federal government, that are now looking at the federal government to become more actively involved with Indians that have left the reservations. As a result, the Indians who live on-reservation are thinking that if this happens, then some of their existing programs will be cut off. The argument by the urban Indian groups is that they do not want to take away any existing programs from reservations but want some legislation action to provide additional programs for the non-federal Indians. It is estimated that 55% of the total Indian populations in the United States is not recognized by the BIA or any other federal agencies as Indians.

This was the prevailing issue at this particular conference and it was somewhat a disappointment in terms of achieving anything concrete. It was four days into the conference before anything was agreed on and this was to hold another meeting with the different Indian representatives within thirty days after the NCAI conference to try to iron out their differences. It is hoped that one positive result can be attained and that is to achieve one voice for all Indians, both urban and reservation Indian in the United States.

One positive note is that there is some action now being taken in terms of legislation which hopefully will expand the benefits of the federal government to

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(continued from page 2)

the 300,000 Indians who live in the Eastern United States.

Tom Battiste

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EDUCATION SURVEY IN JANUARY

The Maine Department of Education has a special Indian Education Unit headed by Meredith Ring. Meri Ring is very interested in providing services to off-reservation Indians. This, however, may take a while to set up.

As a first step Meri has agreed to pay for a survey on the "adult educational needs" of Aroostook Indians. She plans to hire 2 Aroostook Indian people (one in Houlton and one in Caribou) to take this survey.

A lot of people probably feel that they have been surveyed to death. This is true. Still we hope you will cooperate with the survey takers. It is important that this survey be taken because this is the first real effort by the Department of Education to treat Aroostook Indians as Indians. It is a kind of recognition. Also, some of the information gathered may turn out to be very helpful.

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WASHINGTON TRIP 11/27/71 - 12/4/71

On November 27th, a group representing the AAI, the Passamaquoddies, and the Penobscots left Maine in AAI volunteer, Darrell Knox's VW bus. The delegation included Andrew Aikens, Gov. Eugene Francis, Allen Sockabasin, Bill Simons, Greg Buesing, and Darrell Knox. The united front this delegation presented on all problems, strengthened its bargaining power. John Stevens spent a day with the group.

This was the first trip the AAI has made to Washington D.C. to visit the Congressional Delegation and the various

agencies there. For the AAI much of the purpose was to lay groundwork. We met with Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, Congressman Hathaway and Kyros of Maine, Congressman Abouresk of South Dakota, Congressman Steiger of Arizona. We also met with the staff of Senator Muskie and Senator Kennedy.

We visited the National Council for Indian Opportunity in the Vice President's office, Americans for Indian Opportunity (an Indian run lobbying organization), the Indian Health Unit of the Public Health Service, and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. We also went to the Indian Desks of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Housing and Urban Development, Economic Development Administration, and the Office of Education.

Probably our most useful contact was formed at the Bureau of Indian Affairs where we met Sandy McNabb (Micmac) who is now Assistant Commissioner.

Gregory Buesing, Director  
Alcoholism Prevention  
Program

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BOARD TRAINING

On December 12th, 13th, and 14th the Association of Aroostook Indians, Inc. conducted its first Board training session in Houlton, Maine. Board members from Fort Fairfield, Caribou, Ashland, Presque Isle, and Houlton participated at this training session along with qualified resource people. The resource people included Mr. Edward Hinckley, Planner for the Department of Education in Augusta, Maine; Mr. Bill Simons, lawyer at Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc. in Calais, Maine; Mr. Darryl Nicholas, Executive Director of Tribe, Inc. at Bar Harbor, Maine; Mr. Graydon Nicholas, Indian Attorney from New Brunswick; Mr. James Sappier of the Penobscot Tribe in Old Town, Maine; Mr. Tom Tureen, Chief Attorney at Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc. in Calais, Maine; Mr. Eugene Francis, Governor of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point, Perry, Maine; Mr. James Faraqua of the Bureau of

(continued p. 4)

THE INDIAN WE SHOULD REMEMBER

Laughing Louie was a man of nature. Where ever he stopped to rest he would set up his lean-to and there he would stay for awhile, sometimes as long as three weeks or half a year. He loved everybody that crossed his road. And he never forgot little children, he would always have something to give them. He would tell us stories of places he's been and people he met. He would tell us old yarns or the story of his life. In his younger days he was a man of great strength. You could tell by the size of his hands and his feet and height. He was not a man of violence, when he laughed you had to laugh with him.. He would drop in on you unexpectedly, not really using any special road. He could hand carve anything out of wood and make bows and arrows for little children, both Indian and white. It got so they would wait for him, not really knowing the time he would come. He would not ask for anything, and if you gave him a free meal, he would stay and do some work to pay for it. Many people knew him and would tell you what sort of man he was. Once my husband and I went looking for him. We covered a lot of woods before we found his lean-to. He didn't have no dishes. He made us some tea in a tin can that he hung over the fire. The cups were made from tin cans, there was no milk or sugar. He loved his tea black and thats the way we had to drink it. The place he picked was very peaceful, with big trees all around and a little spring running by. He didn't have no gun, just an axe and carving knife, blanket and a small saw in a pack sack, - this is all he travel with.

I know he lived to be over ninety and they claim he went home to die. To me he'll always be a special man. If he drank, I never noticed because I never seen him drunk. I never knew his real name because we all called him Laughing Louie.

Submitted by Mrs. Donald Sanipass of Mapleton, Maine.

INDIAN CHILD'S PRAYER

Dear God, our little baby Jesus  
 Tell me if Santa will come to  
 My home this Christmas.  
 Will he bring me toys, like every other  
 Girls and boys?  
 Would he be afraid when he  
 Knows, that I belong to the Indian race?  
 Will Santa see the tears that flow  
 When to bed at night I go?  
 Will he see my stocking hung?  
 Would he understand my tongue?  
 I wait for him each Christmas  
 Night, not seeing him anywhere in sight.  
 Will he laugh in his jolly ways,  
 When he knows that I too love to play?

Submitted by Marlene Sanipass  
 of Mapleton, Maine.

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(BOARD TRAINING continued from p. 3)

Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.; also  
 Mr. John Jolly of the Bureau of Indian  
 Affairs in Washington, D.C.

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A Belated  
 Merry Christmas  
 and  
 Happy NEW  
 year

ART CONTEST

The Association of Aroostook Indians, Inc. is expanding activities for the youth of Aroostook County, Maine. At this time we would like to announce that an Art Contest is being held for students. There are no age limits or qualifications, so why not give it a try!!!

There will be prizes awarded. These will include art supplies, books on Indian art, and Indian crafts. The purpose of the contest is to illustrate ideas and expressions in any area of Indian life.

These are a few ideas for materials which can be used: lead pencils, colored pencils, crayons, inks, water color paints, oil paints, finger paints, beads, charcoal, felt marking pens, cardboard, construction paper, poster paper, tissue paper, canvas, wood, leather, and birch bark.

The range is wide; as art work can be shown in so many different ways - try experimenting! The deadline for entry is April 9th, 1972. You can submit more than one entry. If you are interested, please fill in the form and get it back to us at our office. Our address is: Association of Aroostook Indians, Inc., P. O. Box 223, Houlton, Maine 04730. We'll be in touch with you for other details. Hope to hear from you.

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APPLICATION FOR ART CONTEST

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL & LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT KIND OF MATERIALS DO YOU THINK YOU WILL USE? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU THINK YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS IN GETTING MATERIALS? \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT, IF

ANY? \_\_\_\_\_