

# Whidbey Native Connections Newsletter

November 02, 2024

## WEDNESDAY, November 13, 6:30 PM: NEXT NCI MEETING on Zoom

We are excited to welcome **Carly Mathews** to join us for a conversation at our next meeting. Carly is the Corresponding Secretary for the Snohomish Tribe of Indians. After President Biden gave his historic apology to all Indigenous Tribes and people of this country, many Indigenous people spoke up and asked that the federal government engage in the next step of making amends and creating meaningful actions to address the grievous wrongs of the Indian Boarding Schools. We received an eloquent email from Carly, who wrote as an individual, not necessarily in her capacity as a member of the Snohomish Tribal Council. We asked her if she would share these words with us on the next NCI meeting, and be available for conversation. We are honored that she has agreed to do so.

Watch for our email on November 11 that will include a link to the zoom meeting.

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### NEWS

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## PRESIDENT BIDEN'S APOLOGY

Most of you have heard that the president of the U.S. apologized a week ago for the 150 years' federal policy to force Native Children to attend boarding schools with the intent to assimilate them and to eradicate Native cultures. His apology is only the first step for our country to engage in meaningful reparative actions.

As the Friends Peace Teams program "Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples" put it in their recent email, *Moving from Acknowledgement to Apology to Amends*, "We commend the president for taking the first two steps that are required when great harms have been committed: acknowledge the harms and apologize. What remains is the last necessary step: make amends. Amends can be great and small, and all of us can contribute."

Listen to Biden's apology and read more in the following links. This news is a developing story, and many Indigenous people are just starting to respond. Stay tuned to their voices!

[Native News Online](#) A reliable source for news from Indigenous perspectives

[NBC News](#): hear the whole apology here, as well as interviews with survivors of the Boarding Schools.

Local Tribal Leaders react to Biden's apology, in [Seattle Times](#)

## INTRODUCTION TO REVEREND ZACKRIE VINCZEN OF THE UUCWI

The UUCWI (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island) has just contracted with a new minister to work part-time with the congregation. We interviewed Reverend Zackrie Vinczen to learn more about him and to introduce him to the NCI. His background in social justice issues, his compassion, and his relationships with Suquamish Tribal neighbors where he lives will be a wonderful addition to our work in our Native Connection Initiative. [Click here](#) for a summary of the interview with Rev Zackrie.

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## EVENTS

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## SNO-ISLE LIBRARY ONLINE EVENTS to Honor Indigenous Heritage Month

As part of Native American Heritage Month, Sno-Isle library will hold several events. Register with the library links below to get the free online link for each event.

**Thursday, November 7, 4:00 PM.** [Register here](#)

### **A Navajo Investigator's Search for the Unexplained: In Conversation with Stanley Milford, Jr.**

Navajo Ranger Stanley Milford, Jr. chats about the chilling and clear-eyed memoir [The Paranormal Ranger](#). "As a Native American with parents of both Navajo and Cherokee descent, Stanley Milford, Jr. grew up in a world where the supernatural was both expected and taboo, where shapeshifters roamed, witchcraft was a thing to be feared, and children were taught not to whistle at night. In his youth, Milford never went looking for the paranormal, but it always seemed to find him. When he joined the fabled Navajo Rangers—a law enforcement branch of the Navajo Nation who are equal parts police officers, archeological conservationists, and historians—the paranormal became part of his job. Alongside addressing the mundane duties of overseeing the massive 27,000-square-mile reservation, Milford was assigned to utterly bizarre and shockingly frequent cases involving mysterious livestock mutilations, skinwalker and Bigfoot sightings, UFOs, and malicious hauntings."

**Wednesday, November 20, 4:00 PM, [Register here](#).**

### **Native Rights and Culture in Fiction—A Conversation with Mona Susan Power.**

Mona Susan Power is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Her novel, [A Council of Dolls](#), was longlisted for the National Book Award and the Carol Shields Prize for Fiction. “This conversation highlights how her work explores Native Rights and Native American culture, in particular using an important symbol that anchors comfort and companionship in Native life: dolls. ... From the mid-century metropolis of Chicago to the windswept ancestral lands of the Dakota people, to the bleak and brutal Indian boarding schools, *A Council of Dolls* is the story of three women, told in part through the stories of the dolls they carried.”

### **TOWARD TRUTH AND HEALING: HOW CHURCHES FACE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THEIR INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS**

**Sunday, November 10, 5-6:30pm PT**

**[REGISTER HERE: https://friendspeaceteams.org/accountability-boarding-schools-2024/](https://friendspeaceteams.org/accountability-boarding-schools-2024/)**

“Many Christian church denominations operated Indian boarding schools during the 19th and early 20th centuries, in collaboration with the federal government’s policy of forced assimilation. Now they are re-examining the roles they played, the harms that were done to Native American families and nations, and the ongoing impacts in Native communities today. Representatives of Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Quaker faith communities will share how they are conducting research and approaching questions of accountability, apology, reparations, and healing.”

#### **Did Unitarians operate Indian Boarding Schools?**

For Unitarians (and other interested humans) who may have been unaware, the American Unitarian Association made 3 attempts at establishing boarding schools. One failed before getting off the ground, another was tied into a Unitarian Indian Agent and the third was the Montana Industrial School for Indians, also known as *The Bond Mission School*. You can read more about it in *The Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*, Volume XLI (2017-2018). The specific article begins on p. 38 and is written by Dana Capasso Stivers. (We haven’t been able to find a link to this journal.)

A few more resources:

- <https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/racial-justice/dod/acting-locally/bonds-mission-montana>
- In 2021, the webmaster for JUUstice WA, the state action network for UUs, wrote of her [research into UU Boarding Schools](#).
- The Unitarians and the Utes. [Article in the UU World, 2010](#) The UUA President in 2009, William G Sinkford, offered an apology to the Ute Tribes.
- [Truth, Repair and Reconciliation](#): What We've Learned (2009).

**The Quakers** operated more than 30 day and boarding schools on Indigenous Peoples' lands beginning in 1796. [Decolonizing Quakers](#) has been forthcoming with confronting the truth of the Quaker history of Boarding schools. Friends Peace Teams regularly offers events that highlight the truth of the Indian Boarding Schools (see above) and teach the real history of our country in an experiential format. See [Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationships with Native Peoples](#).

### **FINDING COMMON GROUND: New Documentary Premier Nov 5 on TVW**

The University of Washington Puget Sound Institute and TVW are proud to have partnered with more than 20 diverse organizations, including multiple tribes, to produce the film Finding Common Ground: Collaborative Leadership in Washington State. The new documentary, airing this Tuesday, November 5th on TVW, explores the inspiring history of collaborative governance of salmon and other natural resources in our state and region. [Find out more here.](#)

### **STILL HERE: PORTRAITS OF THE CHEMAKUM – Exhibit Extended to End of the Year**

We are pleased to announce that [the exhibit](#) by the League of Extraordinary Observers (LEO) of these life-size portraits of the Chemakum People will be in Port Townsend on display at Fort Worden Commons **through the end of the year.**

Read about the [Chemakum People and their history](#), by the people themselves.

### **HIBULB FILM FESTIVAL – November 16, 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM**

The Hibulb Cultural Center, on the Tulalip Reservation, will present the 12<sup>th</sup> annual film festival. The theme this year is *Cultural Resilience*. They will be showing a variety of films and be joined by a select panel of filmmakers. Contact the [Hibulb Center](#) for more information.

**NATIVE CINEMA SHOWCASE – November 22-29 – All films on demand**

<https://americanindian.si.edu/native-cinema-showcase-2024/>

The National Museum of the American Indian’s Native Cinema Showcase is an annual celebration of the best in Native film. In honor of the museum’s twentieth anniversary in Washington, DC, the theme of looking back and moving forward will be highlighted in films that explore the challenges still confronting Indigenous peoples on disparate fronts, including sports, missing and murdered Indigenous women, intergenerational trauma, and re-matriation of the land with buffalo.

**ATTEND A SCREENING OF THE FILM FISH WAR THIS MONTH**

When the State of Washington made it *illegal* for tribes to fish for salmon in their *usual and accustomed places*, it was a declaration of war. **FISH WAR** follows the PNW [tribes](#)’ fight to *exercise their treaty-reserved fishing rights*. 2024 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boldt Decision, and this documentary tells the story. Several organizations are holding in-person screenings and panelist discussions of this documentary for Native Heritage Month.

[Friends of the San Juans](#) have a screening on 11/9, [UW](#) on 11/13, and [Orcas Center](#) 11/7.

**Late breaking, limited time opportunity:** The Friday Harbor Documentary Film Festival is screening *Fish War* online and numerous other great films. For a \$15 online pass, you can watch all the films from now through Sunday, 11/3, at 11 PM. [Here is the link.](#)

**MORE FILMS FOR WORLD INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MONTH!!**

New films premier on Mondays at 10 PM; same day screening. [More info here.](#)

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**RECORDINGS OF EVENTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED,  
AND FOLLOW-UPS**  
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**PRESENTATION on Indian Boarding Schools – Recording available**

JUJustice Washington, as a member of the *Interfaith Network for Indigenous Communities*, presented a webinar on **Understanding the Impacts of the United States Indian Boarding Schools** on October 11.

Now available on a [YouTube recording](#) if you missed it! Scroll to minute 2:30 to begin the webinar. Featuring Theresa Sheldon (Tulalip), Jewell James (Lummi), Fred Lane (Lummi) and Edward Washines (Yakama).

Please check out the [National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#) for a wealth of information on the Truth and Healing process.

## **RECORDING of Rena Priest speaking at the UUCWI Sunday service on October 27**

NCI arranged for Lummi poet Rena Priest to speak at the Sunday service of the UUCWI on October 27. Her presentation was titled, *Dancing to the Ticking of the Doomsday Clock*. [Click here to watch the RECORDING](#) of the UUCWI October 27<sup>th</sup> service including Rena Priest's presentation and following Q&A.

Rena Priest is an enrolled member of the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) Nation. She served as the 6th Washington State Poet Laureate (2021-2023) and is the editor of the anthology *I Sing the Salmon Home: poems from Washington State*. Her most recent book, *Northwest Know-How: Beaches*, includes poems, retellings of legends, and fun descriptions of 29 of the most beloved beaches in the Pacific Northwest. She currently serves as a judge for the 2024 National Book Award in Poetry. Learn more at [renapriest.com](http://renapriest.com)

## **NETSE MOT: ONE PEOPLE/ONE MIND: [Recording of the gathering](#)**

at the Paramount Theatre on October 22, 2024. Put on by the Children of the Setting Sun Productions (Lummi Nation). Includes 3 hours of Indigenous song, poetry, dancing, and community building.

## **MICHAEL FERRI'S BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Following Michael Ferri's presentation to NCI in September sharing his personal experience hosting descendants of the Kake people who killed Colonel Ebey in 1857 in retaliation for the killing of 27 of their tribal members in 1856, several people requested the sources Michael used for his research; [click here](#) for a link to his bibliography. For a recording of Michael's presentation [click here](#). The recording includes the Q&A and discussion that followed the presentation. To view just the story of the Kake delegation's visit in 2014, begin at minute 29:35.

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### **TAKE ACTION**

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## **STOP ELWHA LEGACY FOREST TIMBER SALES and *The Last Stand***

**A special call out from Fred Lane (Lummi Nation) and Elizabeth Dunne (Earth Law Center): Tell DNR to Cancel the upcoming timber sales in the Elwha Watershed and Permanently Protect Elwha Legacy Forests!**

This logging would destroy nearly half of the remaining Elwha legacy forests. On this 10th Anniversary of the historic Elwha dam removal, we have the opportunity to protect this iconic watershed for the forests, salmon, orcas, and all of us. We

must act now! Even though the comment deadline was October 16th, we are still collecting comments and signatures for the ongoing Elwha timber sales process.

Comment here at [Action Network](#)

### **NATIVE AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE UPDATES:**

[The Friends Committee on National Legislation](#) (FCNL) advocates for legislation that will protect tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. You can sign up for monthly updates. This group makes it easy to take appropriate action. They include many links to articles, such as this:

[Native Boarding School Report Tells the Truth but Doesn't go Far Enough](#)

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### **INDIGENOUS NEWS SOURCES:**

If you'd like to stay current on the news from Indigenous people and their communities, here are some excellent sources:

[Native News Online](#)

[Indian Country Today](#)

[High Country News, Indigenous Affairs](#)

[Seattle Crosscut, Indigenous Affairs](#)

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*The UUCWI and WIFM convene on the traditional lands of the sduhubs (Snohomish People), the Lower Skagit People, Swinomish, and Samish. Many other people of Coast Salish Nations utilized the coast and nearby waters, and we acknowledge the significant ways the Indigenous People are still here, continuing to steward this island that is known to some tribes in Lushootseed as Ts'a-kol-che, in ways physical, spiritual, political, and social.*

*We honor the elders of the past, present, and future, with profound gratitude*

### **Whidbey Native Connections Initiative**

is a justice initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island, (UUCWI) and is supported by UU infrastructure, visionary foundations, and regional and national social-justice sister organizations, such as JUUsticeWA.

We are also supported by  
Whidbey Island Friends Meeting (WIFM)  
in ways too numerous to count.

Contact us at [nciwhidbey@gmail.com](mailto:nciwhidbey@gmail.com)