
Two Rivers Circle of Mendota

no. 6

September 2026

Phone number 651-870-7034



Photo by Riley T.

Two Rivers Circle kicks off the new year, 2026-2027

We gathered at Rita Chamberlain's house to set in motion our third year. Rita barbequed and the rest brought the potluck. 22 people and a four-month-old toy poodle attended. Out-of-town attendees included George Marx from Chicago and Tommy Tomahawk and Riley Tiokasin. We interrupted our socializing for a business meeting.

We are now a 501C organization, with the filing paid for from our offering can. The logo and website will be released soon. Our website will include QR codes from PayPal, Venmo, and Zelle. We are looking for someone to be the webmaster. So far, it's been Rita and Zack Taylor putting together our social media face. The 501C allows us to apply for grants. Sharon has already received one from Metro Regional Arts Center to create an Arts class.

Our gathering Gift Cards for Christmas tradition is back. Gift Cards can be mailed to Rita Chamberlain or brought in person to our **Christmas Party on December 6**. We will announce where this party will be in the next newsletter.

Besides agreeing that we hold the Beading and Arts class, several other proposals were affirmed. Janet Van Sloun's Adopt a Family is a year-long project that we will take on; we will be helping Steve Chapman's granddaughter and her four young children, with a sub-committee handling raising and dispersing funds and material donations. We agreed to add Healing Circles and ceremonies to our meetings, bringing a spiritual dimension to our gatherings. These will happen ½ hour before the scheduled drumming, meetings, and gatherings, taking turns with organizing and leading the group. Healing Circles may include smudging, fire and water, the pipe, and prayers for those who need it.

Everyone liked Isaac's Teaching Plant Cooperative where we can grow plants and medicines from seed to ceremony. We already have access to St. Peter's sage harvesting. We would create a map of where plants

can be harvested in the Twin Cities and grow in our backyards and public spaces. One goal of this project is to be better educated about traditional healing plants. Planting trees was part of the discussion, and a future development might be preparing seedlings and having a medicinal plant sale in the spring.

We tabled Samantha's proposal of creating bridge building between our group and other organizations. We needed her to give voice to the vision behind her proposal.

Anyone can submit proposals for activities and projects that you think would work for Two Rivers Circle.

We also agreed to have our potlucks and business meetings every other month, unless the need arises. Our next meeting, the Christmas party, will be purely social, with the next business meeting scheduled for January.

Lots of energy and good feelings in our meeting today, plus great food!



Red Dog meets Mrs. Mouse from Lee Newcomb's RED DOG'S WORLD. Book available via Lee at leenormannewcomb@gmail.com and pat_darling@hotmail.com. \$20, includes shipping.



Elder spotlight of the month

Lee Norman Newcomb, painter/artist and retired, started life on Nov 27, 1939, in St. Paul, MN and grew up on an island of Lake Minnetonka.

Lee's father brought the family to the island in the early 1940s. Their little house was accessible by boat or a rickety bridge built in the 1870s. Lee says they lived primitively. Drinking water from the lake had to be boiled, and they used an outhouse. They finally got electricity in the 1950s. Lee's dad owned a boat launch where he made flat-bottomed boats and rented them to visitors. Lee started working for the family business very young. Except for six months at a mission school in Arizona, Lee attended Minnetonka public schools and graduated in 1959.

He started college at University of Minnesota and received an AA degree. He was about to declare a major in Architecture when Uncle Sam sent him a draft notice. Before going into the army, he and Patricia Ann Gerber were married and stayed that way for 55 years (Patricia passed 15 years ago).

Lee served his country from 1962-68. He soon found himself playing his part in the Cuban Missile Crisis, Oct. 1962. Lee's Vietnam era war was served stateside. While he was away, his home island got a new modern

bridge. Soon the number of docks on the island went from 10 to 250. His father could see the handwriting on the wall and sold the marina operation, which gave them the means to start over elsewhere. Lee realized he wasn't set for life with the family business.

After returning home, Lee went to Dunwoody and finished an electrical program. He went to St. Paul college for tree trimming and he learned how to fly and became a pilot but decided it was too expensive to continue. He landed a job at Northern States Power and worked there for 32 years. After retiring, he went to work for Instant Web, a printing company, driving for them for another 15 years.

Patricia and Lee raised two children, a boy and a girl. They, in turn, invited six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren into the family. His family still lives in the area and gets together for the holidays.

Lee loves music and is active in several bands, playing the harmonica, whom he learned from Pat Hayes. He also plays the guitar. He is involved with the social justice committee, food shelf and other various activities at church. Lee has been involved with the Mendota tribe for many years.

Lee has been painting for 5-6 years and has illustrated a children's book titled RED DOG'S WORLD and is working on another book titled PINK PETALS ON THE PATOMIC.. Lee has a booth and sells his work at The Snug in Chanhassen, Mn. Chanhassen Community of Belonging is helping Lee put out the second book.

Lee is fond of antiques, and he hates dealing with technology. ~~~interview by Rita Chamberlain

Community News

Birthdays: October: John Gebhardt: October 5. Kelly Hegna Ekdahl: October 14.

Prayers: Prayers and get well wishes for Mike McNeil and Samantha Walker.

Ceremonies:

Drumming and Singing: October 9 and 23, November 13, Fridays, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
DRUMMING AND SINGING practice at the Community Room of the Sanctuary at West St. Paul, 1746 Oakdale Ave., West St. Paul, MN 55118. We will drum first then share a pot-luck. All are invited! For any questions, leave a detailed voicemail for Joseph (Waziya, Being of the North) Bester at: 612-361-7007 or a text at 612-919-2733 🐦 ❤️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

Inipi: October 17 and November 21.

Inipi (sweat lodge). Starts at 11:00. Contact Joseph Bester at 612-361-7007 or send a text at 612-919-2733 or Duane Leith at n8ivepride08@gmail.com or 651-508-6301,

Full Moon Walk October 25: Friends of Coldwater seek to honor our ancient water and landscape ancestor, so we return each full moon to remember the spirits that feed this sacred place. Full moon walks have been celebrated at Coldwater Springs each month since 2000, that's more than a quarter of a century of paying attention. We do a traditional group howl when the moon peaks out. Gather at 7:00 p.m.

Sunset 6:11 pm (1-hour, 8-minutes earlier than last full moon)

Moonrise 5:36 pm (1-hour, 14-minutes earlier than last month)

10 hours, 29 minutes of daylight (5-hours, 8-minutes **less** daylight since summer solstice)

Moment of the full moon: 11:12 pm

DIRECTIONS: Coldwater Springs (5601 Minnehaha Park Drive in Minneapolis) is between Minnehaha Regional Park & Fort Snelling State Park above the Mississippi River gorge. Enter along the Highway 55 frontage road where you can park at the pay meters.

Gather at the cul-de-sac, which is the Coldwater Park entrance.

Free.

All are welcome.

For more information, please contact SUSUJEFFREY@msn.com

[See Susu's article below](#)

2 Rivers Meetings: October 4 at Rita Chamberlain's, 3328 Roll LN, Eagan. Barbeque and potluck at 1:00, business meeting 2:00-4:00.

Council Meetings: **October 11.**

Website will have an October launch. We are looking for a volunteer webmaster.

New way to Donate: QR code for Paypal, Venmo, and Zelle, available on the website.



Sacred Water Sites Are Warming by Susu Jeffries

Climate Change is an existential threat to life on Earth. Global heating is hazardous, it endangers humans, animals and plants living on our one-and-only home, the Earth. And warming is happening to sacred waters in the Twin Cities.

In 1836, French explorer Jean Nicollet recorded the temperature at Coldwater Spring as 45-degrees Fahrenheit. The (under)groundwater surfacing at Coldwater comes from, depending on who you ask, lake Minnetonka (according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation) or a local semicircle of gravity fed water veins within a half mile of the spring's outflow from the north, west and south, according to hydrology consultant Kelton Barr. So the experts don't agree on where the source(s) of Coldwater's flow begin.

It is agreed there is less water and the water temperature is higher. In 1880, 921,000 gallons per day (gpd) were pumped out of Coldwater. Recently the National Park Service claims about 100,000 gpd flows down the Mississippi gorge and the water temperature averages 47-degrees F.

Greg Brick PhD, hydrogeology professor, consultant and spelunker (cave explorer) has some bad news. Brick measured an extreme example of subsurface water warming at Schick's Cave, about 75-feet under downtown Minneapolis, at 66-degrees F. This is a powerful signal of anthropogenic (human -caused) groundwater warming attributed to vertical heat radiating down from sun warmed pavement, basements, tree shade loss, etc. "Subsurface urban heat island" is the scientific name for concentrated humans cooking the earth and it bodes ill for our local trout streams.

Bodies of water are particularly important spiritual sites for the Minnesota Dakota. As explained in *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*, "In the beginning, the water—*Mni*—was pure, part of the land, and therefore part of the people. It was the first medicine given to our people because water keeps everything alive. Water that comes from within the earth is pure and as such is considered *wakan* or sacred."

Coldwater Park was established by Congress as “open green space.” A few years after the park opened in 2012 federally recognized outstate Dakota tribes filled out the paperwork to confirm Coldwater as a Dakota sacred site. All springs are considered “sacred” to the Dakota because *mni waconi* “water is life” or literally, water makes life. Coldwater *Mni Owe Sni* (in Dakota, water spring cold) property is a national park. Like most American national parks Coldwater was a Native American sacred site before “the discovery of America.”

Events that might be of interest:

NATIVE AMERICAN READ-IN 2026

Sunday, Nov. 8th, 1-2:30PM | Online

Information School | **Read-a-Rama**
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

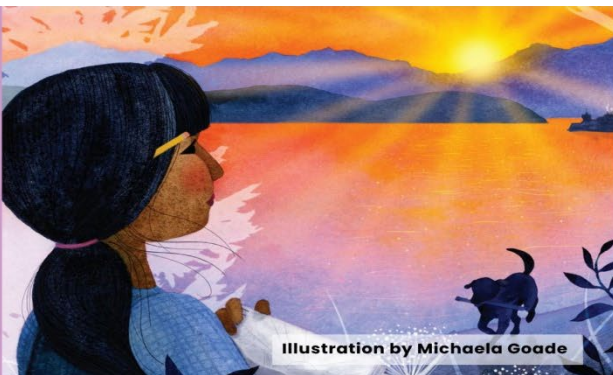


Illustration by Michaela Goade

Please join the next **Native American Read-In** on Sunday **November 8**, 1-2:30PM Pacific Time.

Hosted by the University of Washington Information School, this free, family-centered event celebrates Native American heritage and promotes the importance of literacy and lifelong learning.

Register here: <https://events.uw.edu/event/NativeAmericanReadIn2026/summary>

Indigenous People's Weekend + Native American Food Truck Festival

Friday, October 09, 2026

Saturday, October 10, 2026

Sunday, October 11, 2026

Indigenous People's Weekend is Minnesota's largest Native-led basketball expo featuring something for all ages; skills camp, 3 x 3, 5 x 5, MMIW/R Awareness Game. Art Expo & Vendor Market as well & a handful of more public health activities. This is a special year we are also featuring the Native American Food Truck Festival! BATTLEFIELD REGIONAL PARK, 2076 Upper Afton Rd. St. Paul, MN 55119



WITH ROBERT HENRY SR.

THREE SISTERS SOUP

FREE COOKING CLASS

TUESDAY
OCT 6
6-8 P.M.

THE OWÁMNIYOMNI
ENGAGEMENT SPACE



SCAN TO
RSVP



This is the season for Manoomin, wild rice, gathering. Tommy Tomahawk and Lacey Leith have been out gathering the rice. If anyone has any ricing stories, we would like to include an article in the next newsletter. Pat D