

The Four Winds

Newsletter of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA)



Elder Quote

"To be healthy in every way. Body, mind, spirit, Mother Earth. I think that's what we need to go forward in our life for seven generations to come. We're all in the same canoe, and we all need to paddle with the same blade together."

Marie Meade

Please send articles on what is happening in your area. News stories, articles of interest, gatherings, pow wow's, whatever you want to share! Email to membership@aiana.com

Niibin 2016

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty

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AIANEA Membership Dues

Student - \$10.00
Regular - \$25.00
Tribal College - \$100.00
Tribal - \$500.00
Lifetime - \$250.00 1 x payment/or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Please mail payment to:

Pam Crow, AIANEA Treasurer
 101 So. Main Street
 Temple, TX 76501

Steve Durgin, Outgoing President Message

Dear AIANEA Members and Elders,

It was a great honor, privilege and pleasure to serve as the President of the American Indian – Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA) these past two years. I appreciate the support that you gave me during my journey as President. I enjoyed the opportunity to work with you. I also enjoyed seeing and meeting so many of you personally at our training conference with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Atmore, Alabama.



As I reflect on these past two years, I am amazed at all that we continue to accomplish as an employee association. Here are a few things that come to mind:

- We enjoyed great training seminars and a great conference in November 2014. We had extraordinary support from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, AIANEA members, AIANEA elders and many others. It was great for us to have the opportunity to see one another face to face.
- AIANEA continued to support the NRCS Working Effectively with American Indians training seminars. Each year, NRCS has conducted several of these training sessions throughout the country. AIANEA members and elders have served as the primary trainers for these sessions. Many times, I have heard employees say that this is the best NRCS training that they have attended.
- AIANEA members organized and participated in several outreach activities throughout the country. For example, in the Washington DC area, AIANEA members participated in several diversity day forums. Such opportunities have given USDA employees the opportunity to learn about AIANEA and for us to learn from them.
- The AIANEA elders committee has steadfastly worked on several projects. These include an Elder video and a book entitled “Elders in the 21st Century.” Both of these efforts promise to provide ways for the Elders to share their experiences and wisdom with us. As AIANEA members, how blessed we are to have such dedicated elders. Their contribution to AIANEA and NRCS is immeasurable. The opportunity to meet with the elders and learn from their wisdom highlights so many AIANEA trainings, conferences and meetings.
- AIANEA continued to promote scholarships for youth. We awarded three scholarships to students each of the past two years. In addition, Judy Bryant donated substantial funds for the establishment of the Harold Bryant scholarship. This means even more scholarships for students in the future.
- The first AIANEA cookbook became a great success. The cookbook contains stories about AIANEA and includes recipes contributed by members from throughout the country. Many of us keep our copy as a cherished keepsake.
- The National Council and AIANEA committees continued work on several initiatives. These included developing plans for updating communications and continuation of the visioning that began in 2008.

While it is important to look back at where we have been and what we have done, it is also important to continue looking forward. AIANEA has always been a forward-looking employee association. In that regard, the National Council has already begun discussing options for our next National Training session. This year, Athena Pratt will serve as President. Athena has several great ideas for new training opportunities during member teleconferences. Please join with me in supporting Athena. I look forward to her leadership as we continue to grow as an organization.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for your support during my tenure as President. I feel so humbled to have had your support while leading such a great employee organization. I look forward to your continued friendship as we continue on our journey with AIANEA.

Respectfully, Steve

Athena Pratt, Incoming President Message



Greetings and Blessings,

I am excited to serve this year as President of this wonderful organization. I am impressed by the knowledge, wisdom and kindness of past Presidents, Elders, and many of the members I am fortunate to have worked with. I will look to you for guidance and inspiration.

I will also look to the motto of the Association, “Respect, Harmony and Beauty” as a compass to help guide decisions.

At a Career Fair a few weekends ago, the Lt. Governor of Isleta Pueblo addressed a few words to the young people there planning their futures. His words are simple, powerful, and worth sharing (I paraphrase):

“Our families prepare for us before we are born.
They make preparations for us at the end when we die.
Throughout life we need to plan.
This means being organized.
Plan and prepare.
It takes help. Our families and friends help us plan and prepare.
Having a career means helping all of humanity, the economy and the environment. Not just ourselves.
It starts with a goal.
It is almost magical how once you have a goal people come to help you and things happen.
I have a lot of confidence in the generation to come.”

Steve Durgin did a tremendous job the last two years as President and I thank him for his help. A lot has been accomplished and many great ideas are being put into action.

In order to adequately rise to the tasks ahead, AIANEA needs to be aware of what is happening in tribal communities, we need to know what the needs are of NRCS employees and be able to utilize the skills of the AIANEA members.

We need people to plan. We need goals. We need expertise and dedication to make things happen. I am confident that AIANEA has these things and I am confident that we will have a productive year. I am looking forward to getting to know many of you as we work together and I look forward to working with the many of the friends and partners who will come to help us reach our goals. Please feel free to contact me with any of your ideas or to volunteer for a project.

Sincerely,

Athena Pratt

2016 AIANEA National Council

Greetings, AIANEA Members!

Congratulations to our newly-elected 2016 AIANEA National Council members!

The 2016 National Council for the American Indian-Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA) is as follows:

President – Athena Pratt, New Mexico

1st Vice President – Dr. Carol Crouch, Oklahoma

2nd Vice President – Kirt Peterson, Colorado

Secretary – Melissa Sturdivant, Texas

Treasurer – Pam Crow, Texas

Co-Treasurer – William (Bill) Parrish, Pennsylvania

Regional Representatives

East Regional Rep – Cassius Spears, Rhode Island

Midwest Regional Rep – Debe Walchuk, Minnesota

Northern Plains Regional Rep – Cameron Clark, Wyoming

Southeast Regional Rep – David Elliott, Alabama

South Central Regional Rep – VACANT

West Regional Rep – Susan Looper, Nevada

Thank you to all of you who have served on the National Council. Thank you, Steve, for your leadership the past two years. Our Association relies on its members – their service and dedication to be involved. We rely on *YOU*, and we look forward to the directions that our new National Council will forge for our Association! Thank you.

Melissa
AIANEA Secretary

2016 AIANEA Dues Information



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Lifetime - \$250.00 1 x payment/or
payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Please mail payment to:
Pam Crow
Treasurer
101 So. Main Street
Temple, TX 76501

**PENALTY/
FRANKED MAIL &
OFFICIAL
STATIONARY.
YOU MAY NOT:**
Use official
government
envelopes (with or
without applied
postage) or official
letterhead stationery
for personal business.

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!

AIANEA is now on Facebook! AIANEA wanted to take advantage of the most popular social media tools to stay connected. This will give AIANEA the opportunity to stay connected not only with our membership, but with partners, friends, students and associates. AIANEA and Friends can use Facebook to post pictures of our events, share activities with tribes, share our journeys and participate in discussion forums. Please take advantage and stay connected!



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Indian-Alaska-Native-Employees-Association/160121254007738?sk=wall>

AIANEA News

On the April, 2016 conference call the Council decided that each regional representative will be able to extend a complimentary membership for one year to someone of their choice. This is reflected on the new membership form (page 11).

The National Council approved sending a Pendleton blanket and issuing the 2016 President's Choice Award to Anna Perales Whitebird to honor her years of dedication to AIANEA. She retired on March 1. Donations are being accepted to cover the expense. When sending a donation please let Pam know if the money can be used in the AIANEA general fund if more than enough donations are received. Donations can be sent to Pam Crow: 101 South Main Street, Temple, TX 76501



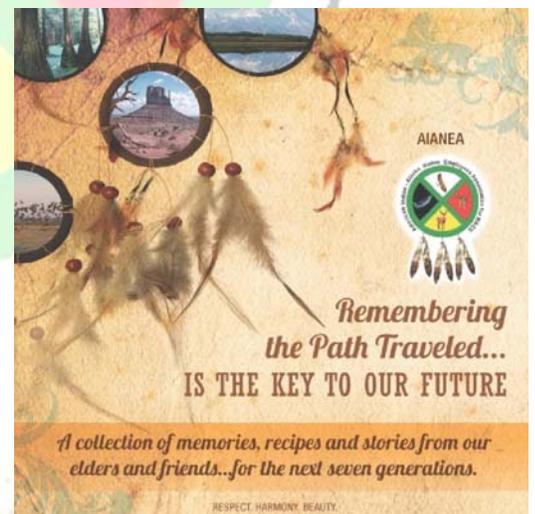
AIANEA Cookbook is now available directly from the publisher's webpage. Our business account is now setup and we can receive payments from the publisher for books that are purchased and this will be in the form of royalty payments to our Association checking account.

You can go to <http://www.bookemon.com/> and search 'AIANEA' in the search bar. It brings up the two cookbook editions (e.g. paperback and hardcover).

This is a link to the hardcover edition, and it sells directly to the public for \$60.00 - \$7.50 from the sale of each book is returned to the Association in royalties to fund scholarships. http://www.bookemon.com/book_read_flip.php?book_id=439549

Here is the link for the soft cover edition. It is available for purchase for \$35 and \$7.50 is returned to the Association as described above (to a scholarship fund). http://www.bookemon.com/book_read_flip.php?book_id=442656

We are excited that the National Council voted to approve the purchase of the cookbook to give each of our Elders and/or their families a copy of this book.



AIANEA 2015 Business Meeting Committee Report

Excerpts from Committee Reports 2015

Elders Committee – The Elder’s DVD project which was intended to be used as part of the Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) training sessions is in underway.

Elders in the 21st Century book. Tanya extended her appreciation to our Elders: Ted Herrera of Texas, James Sappier of Maine, Roy Doore of Montana, Loretta Metoxen of Wisconsin, Billy Smith of Alabama, Jerry Wolfe of North Carolina, Joe Joaquin of Arizona, Norman Lopez of Colorado, and Marie Meade of Alaska.

Tanya also extended her appreciation for all the work being accomplished by the volunteers working with the Elders in order to conduct the interviews and to write the transcripts for the book. She acknowledged the work contributed by Gina Kerzman, Blythe Koyiyumptewa, Garry Stephens, John McCoy, Gerald Allison, Allen Maez, David Elliott, Nels Liljedahl, Ann Perales, Crystal Leonetti, Charlotte Pyle, Cindy Sultenfuss, Ciro Lo Pinto, Kirt Peterson, Roylene Rides at the Door, and Melissa Sturdivant.

Tanya acknowledged the loss of two of our Elders in recent years, Leland Debe and Louie Dick, and stated that special sections will be included in the book to honor each of them, as well as for Evan Spino who was previously on the Elders Committee, but had to discontinue his service because of other commitments.

Awards Committee - Millie reported that the committee met recently. Millie presented to the National Council at the December meeting a recommendation for award categories and brought a budget before them as well. She indicated that once this is approved, the call for nominations will be distributed to the membership.

Communications Committee. Steve reported that Gina has been working with the committee to revamp the communications outreach, especially for the newsletter and webpage. Gina sent in a report that detailed the committee’s work to develop a business plan that will help guide the committee’s work for the Association.

Elder Sequoyah Fellowship. Melissa reported that Elder Roy Doore was this year’s recipient of the Sequoyah Fellow award at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society’s conference.

Member’s Database Ad Hoc Committee. Steve reiterated all the work that Cameron and Barry have contributed to creating this database. Steve indicated that this continues to be developed and is hoped to be a resource for us in the future.

Cookbook Ad Hoc Committee. Melissa reported that since the publication of the cookbook one year ago, 75 books have been sold.

Melissa reported that this year, she was able to set up a more automated, electronic process versus the manual purchasing system used earlier in the year. Melissa explained that customers can purchase directly from the publisher’s website, and the mark-up is built in to allow for collection of monies for support of the scholarship fund.

San Carlos Apache Tribe, Earth Team Volunteers Celebrate Earth Week

The San Carlos Apache Tribe declared April 18-22 as Earth Week, conducting events in the San Carlos and Bylas communities to promote health and wellness by reducing trash and recycling. The tribal goal is to reduce trash by 50 percent by the year 2020 through recycling to benefit the Tribe, the land and future generations. Tribal departmental staff, community members and NRCS District Conservationist Millie Titla joined efforts to plan and develop activities for the week.

NRCS District Conservationist, Ms. Titla from the San Carlos Field Office, assisted with the river clean up and recycling collection events, setting up a booth to sign up tribal and community members as Earth Team Volunteers. Ryan Tiger Stiffarm, UNITY, Inc. Earth Ambassador assisted. Forty community members cleaned up an area near a ceremonial sweat lodge at the San Carlos River April 19, collecting and recycling large appliances, plastic and glass bottles and trash. On April 21st, in Bylas, Arizona, 53 tribal members, including seven students and the Bylas Academy principal, signed up to work at the Navajo Point farm field at the Gila River.

In conjunction with Earth Week Activities, the Tribe celebrated a Recycling Collection Day on Earth Day with informational booths, live music, lunch and a contest sponsored by the Tribal Chairman for the collection of plastic, paper or glass. Seventy-eight community members signed up as Earth Team Volunteers and collected tires, large appliances, paper, plastic and glass bottles, old electronics and furniture.

Ms. Titla and the volunteers collected a total of 142 tires, 40 large appliances, 10 tons of e-waste and scraps, 575 bags of plastic bottles, 247 bags of cardboard, 959 bags of glass bottles, and 10 tons of trash.

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The Apache Gold Casino provided lunch to the volunteers. A special thanks to the San Carlos Apache Forest Resources Program, Fire Program, Public Health Nursing, San Carlos and Bylas Recreation Halls, the Office of the Chairman & Vice Chairman, the Tribal Council, San Carlos & Bylas CHR, San Carlos Wellness Prevention, Maternal Health/WIC, Diabetes Prevention Program, SCAT EPA, Bylas Wellness Prevention, UNITY Inc., Globe/Gila County Landfill, Randall Enterprise, Fast Cash Recycling of Miami, The Ni'gosdza'n Project, Aravaipa, UNITY Inc. Earth Ambassador, Earth Team Volunteers and SCAT Community Members.

This is an excellent example of community members coming together to clean up and recycle for the benefit of the river and the Tribe.



NRCS Earth Team volunteer, Ryan Tiger Stiffarm



NRCS District Conservationist, Millie Titla

Maryland Diversity Day Event

Teresa Kampmeyer, District Conservationist at the Salisbury office in Maryland, organized a fun and informative booth for the Beltsville, MD Diversity Day on May 5, 2016. She set up the Dream Big banners from the National Distribution Center and served "Three Sisters Stew" for participants to taste. Attendees enjoyed learning about the three sisters and they enjoyed the soup! Teresa handed out the recipe for the stew and provided other information about native culture at the table.



AIANEA National Council would like to compile a catalog of ideas for NRCS offices to use at outreach events, Civil Rights presentations and Diversity Day programs. Do you have an idea to share? Please send to membership@aianea.com

“THREE SISTERS” STEW

The “Three Sisters” Story are the three main agricultural crops of various Native American groups in North America: winter squash, maize (corn), and climbing beans. In a technique known as companion planting, the three crops are planted close together on flat topped mounds of soil built for each cluster of crops. The 3 crops benefit from each other. The maize provides a structure for the beans to climb, eliminating the need for poles. The beans provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants use, and the squash spreads along the ground, blocking the sunlight, helping to prevent establishment of weeds. Squash also acts as a living mulch, retaining moisture in the soil, and the prickly hairs of the vine deter pests. Maize and beans provide a balanced diet. The 3 sisters planting method is featured on the reverse of the 2009 US Sacagawea Native American dollar coin.

Ingredients and directions

1 small sugar pumpkin or 1 large butternut squash (about 2 lbs.)

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2-4 cloves of garlic, minced

1 med green pepper or red bell pepper cut into short narrow strips

14-16 oz. can fire roasted diced tomatoes, with liquid

2-3 cups corn kernels

1 small bag frozen pinto beans or baby lima beans

1 cup vegetable stock (I used two)

1 4oz can chopped mild green chilies

2 teaspoons chili powder

1 teaspoon dried oregano

Salt and pepper

¼ cup fresh cilantro or parsley

Preheat oven to 375. Remove stem from pumpkin or squash and cut in half lengthwise. Bake pumpkin or squash in foil in oven 40-50 min until you can pierce through with a knife. When cool to handle, scrape out the seeds, slice and peel, then cut into large diced pieces. Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the onion and sauté over medium low heat until translucent. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until the onion is golden. Add the pumpkin or squash and all the remaining ingredients except the last 2, and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, covered until all the vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If time allows, let the stew stand for 1 – 2 hours before severing, then heat through as needed. Just before serving, stir in the cilantro. The stew should be thick and very moist but not soupy. Add additional stock or water if needed. Serve in bowls. Makes 8-10 servings.

Planter's Moon- adapted from the book, *Full Moons- Indian Legends of the Seasons*, by Lillian Budd 1968

The Mandan lived on the Great Plains in what is now the State of North Dakota. They lived in log lodges and raised crops in addition to hunting buffalo. The Mandan believed that no evil spirit could have power over seeds planted at the time of the Full Planter's Moon. Many farmers to this day do their planting when the spring moon is full.

The full moon rose slowly in the spring sky, outlining the sparse tree growth on the plains where the Mandan lived showing *Wa ki con'za*, a Leader, and his son that the first leaves were near to the size of the gray squirrel's foot.

The father pointed to the east. "There, *Cha sa ton'ga*, Little Man, you see the Planter's Moon. From the beginning men have learned that seeds placed in the ground at the time of this full moon always grow. It is said that at the time of the full Planter's Moon the soil is safe from the power of any and every Evil Spirit. Yes, men have learned that it is the best time of year..."

"To plant Tobacco, " Chasatonga said knowingly. "And potato..."

"Potato, yes. And Tobacco. Both precious gifts." The father laid his hand on his son's shoulder. "Tobacco to sprinkle on the campfire when we want to speak to the Great Spirit. Its smoke and incense then rise through the air until in the high heavens they reach the Great Spirit and tell Him of our needs. Tobacco with its powerful magic serves as a messenger of Peace among the peoples of the earth when, in the peace pipe, it is passed from one to another."

"I know, I know, Father! Let me tell? First, before a man smokes the pipe he will point it to the west, then to the north, then east, then to the south, then to the heavens and then to the earth beneath his feet. Three puffs will tell of the burying of the hatchet of any anger and will bring the smoker into peace with those about him."

"Well learned, my son. But precious though Tobacco and Potato are, even more precious are these." He held out his hand to display the seeds of Corn, Squash and Bean. "These are gifts from the Great Spirit, brought to us by the earth messengers. The messenger who brings the seed of corn is the Goddess of the Corn. We sometimes call her The-Old-Woman-Who-

Never-Dies. Her helpers are the mice and moles and they work the ground for her. Deer and blackbirds keep watch over the crops. Water birds are her messengers, when she send the swans, the ducks, the geese, we know it is time to prepare the ground for the planting of Squash and Bean and Corn."

"These are known as the Three Sisters: Bean with purple flowers shining in her hair. Squash with pink flowers on her forehead. Corn with golden tresses flowing over her green covered white shoulders. Our father have told us they should never be separated. These dry seeds come from last year's crops. They are the children of Corn, Bean and Squash. They look to be lifeless, but they are only asleep. That is why we call them the sleeping papooses of the Three Sisters."

"The Great Spirit's messengers taught us how to lay these sleeping papooses on the breast of Mother Earth so she can nourish them. Into little hills the seed of Corn shall be laid. On the south of each hill Squash is to be planted, so that as her vines grow they will wind about on the base of the hill and the fruit of Squash will lie on the hill, protected by leaves. Bean too is to be planted in the same hill, where, as she grows, she can climb up the pole provided by the stalk of Corn. By keeping the sisters together it is simpler to weed the field than if the seeds were separate and planted here and there."

Father smiled.

"Always remember, son, that these papooses

are a sacred trust. As you become a man treat all seeds with reverence. And at Planter's Moon when the women lay the seeds on Mother Earth's breast, fast and then dance in thankfulness. For the dry kernels have in them the Spirit of Growth which will keep hunger away forever."

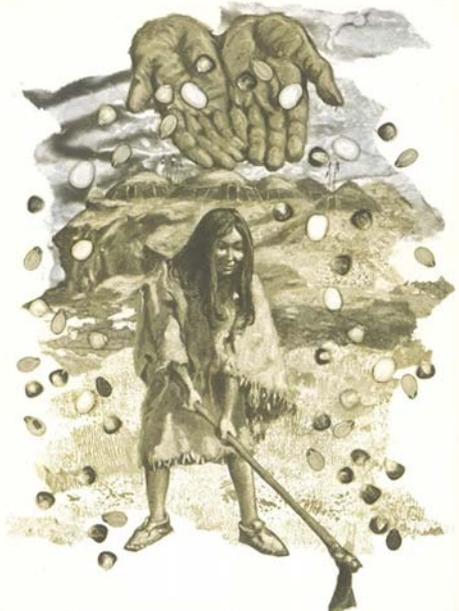


Illustration by George Armstrong

Introducing AIANEA President Athena Pratt

Hello, AIANEA friends and members. As you know, it can be hard to keep up with changes and there have been a few for me in the past year. I started this year as AIANEA President with support from Steve Durgin who has generously provided me with encouragement and advice as I stepped into the role. I was supposed to start in 2015, but did not think I could do much as President with the demands of my previous job as District Conservationist. This year I have been fortunate to be in contact with so many knowledgeable and supportive AIANEA members that I don't feel as intimidated as I did a few months ago about this role. Last August I moved from Hollister, California to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am a Resource Conservationist on the Programs Team at the New Mexico State office. Working on the programs staff has provided me with opportunities for growth, which can be stressful when there is a lot to learn and adapt to. However, we are meant to stretch our bodies and minds and being able to network with AIANEA members has made the transition to my new job much easier. My big goal this year is to help more members tap into the AIANEA network. I want to help more members feel involved, appreciated and that they are making worthwhile contributions with their time and expertise. This year has been tough for many people who are going through health issues for themselves or family members. I want the AIANEA network to be a source of moral support for members. I know that finding the time to do more on the job is hard and this limits participation in AIANEA activities. With small improvements and a positive attitude I will work with the National Council members to get more members involved and this starts with setting some goals and targets.



This year the National Council will re-design and update the AIANEA website.

The By-Laws will be revised.

National training will be planned for 2017 and a plan for annual training in future years will be developed.

News will be provided in a timely manner with monthly e-news and at least two newsletters issued this year.

VTC and webinars will be planned with other employee organizations with topics on conservation and individual development.

The Elders Committee will be provided resources for the DVD and Book projects.

Scholarships will be expanded with a plan to start offering internships for students at local field offices.

The National Council will pursue funding opportunities, such as, agreements with NRCS and other grants.

Regional Representatives will increase the visibility of the organization by giving presentations, setting up information tables and sharing information at Civil rights events, employee meetings and partner events.

It's an ambitious list and the year is flying by. We will all do the best we can and take it one step at a time.

Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

www.aianea.com

Please make checks payable to AIANEA and mail your membership form and dues to:

Pam Crow, AIANEA Treasurer
101 So. Main Street
Temple, TX 76501

Date: _____

Click if ok to share Contact info with
AIANEA members

Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Office Address: _____ New Address?

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____

e-mail: _____

Tribal Affiliation (optional) _____

Type of membership. (Membership is for one calendar year **January 1 to December 31**)
My membership is for the year 20____.

Regular-\$25.00 Check here if this is a renewal membership

Student -\$10.00 full-time high school or college students

Donated Membership - \$25— please select:

This donation is for AIANEA to offer to an individual

This donation is for this individual: Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Lifetime - \$250.00 or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Enclosed is payment # 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

Tribal College-\$100.00

Tribal - \$500.00

The 2016 AIANEA National Council

Athena Pratt – President

Dr. Carol Crouch - 1st Vice President

Kirt Peterson- 2nd Vice President

VACANT - So. Central Region Rep.

David Elliott - Southeast Region Rep.

Susan Looper - West Region Rep.

Debe Walchuk - Midwest Region Rep.

Cassius Spears - East Region Rep.

Cameron Clark - Northern Plains Region Rep.

Melissa Sturdivant - Secretary

Pam Crow - Treasurer

Bill Parrish - Co-Treasurer

