

Generations lost

Lac Vieux tribe hosts walk for boarding school victims

By ZACHARY MARANO
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WATERSMEET — The Lac Vieux Desert tribe hosted a “Bring Our Children Home” remembrance and healing walk for victims of Native American boarding schools in Watersmeet on Sept. 30.

The walk started at the Boys and Girls Club and went a mile south to the intersection of U.S. 2 and 45 and back.

The walk raised awareness about Native American children who were separated from their families in the 19th and through the mid-20th centuries and placed in boarding schools where they weren’t allowed to speak their languages or practice their own customs and traditions. The purpose of the schools was to deterritorialize indigenous people and forcibly assimilate them into American society.

The event was organized by Linda Raye Cobe, a member of the Lac Vieux Desert tribe. Cobe estimated more than 60 people participated in the walk, including many boarding school survivors.

“Our tribe should be doing this. Every tribe should be doing this. We should be shouting this from the rooftops, especially now that we have actual representation in Deb Haaland in there (as secretary of the interior), because she’s doing the Truth and Reconciliation Initiative to find out how many boarding schools there were, how many children were sent there and — this is especially important — the impact that it still has on reservations today,” Cobe said.

Cobe herself is a boarding school victim who was sent down to the Holy Childhood Catholic Church and School in Harbor Springs when she was in the first grade. She said that her parents



Zachary Marano/Daily Globe

MEMBERS OF the Lac Vieux Desert tribe and others take part in a walk on Sept. 30 to remember Native American children who were taken away from the reservation in the 19th through the mid 20th century and placed in boarding schools.

didn’t have any choice in the matter because the government threatened to withhold their rations if they didn’t send their kids.

By the time she was in second grade, Cobe was adopted by a white family. She said that she grew up knowing that she was a Native American, but not knowing anything about what being Native American actually meant.

Cobe reconnected with her original family in the Lac Vieux

Desert as an adult, but she still feels oddly removed from her own community in some ways.

“Because I had been gone so long, I’m still learning some of the cousins I never met before. Each time I come back, they always welcome me. And when they say, ‘Bring our children home,’ I think part of that is the child in us adults. Bring us back home, as we’re relearning our culture and how important that is. Our communities really need

to heal, and this is how we go about it,” Cobe said.

Cobe said that a sense of shame and self-loathing about her identity was indoctrinated into her at the boarding school. She said that in the last two decades, she understood where her shame comes from and has worked to restore her self-esteem through counselling.

Many boarding school victims resort to self-medicating through alcohol to cope with post-trau-

matic stress, Cobe said.

Cobe wrote about her experiences in her autobiography, “Red, White and Blues.” She said that many readers were shocked by the contents of her chapter on the boarding school because they had no knowledge that this even happened.

One member of the public who participated in the walk was

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Go Go Marty’s!

Marty’s Goldenaires Drum and Bugle Corps delights audiences

By P.J. GLISSON
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It’s hard to say what people missed most during 2020, when much of the year shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Was it faces without masks, a world without ZOOM, or the freedom to go anywhere and do anything?

Judging from this year’s public events, it might be tempting to conclude that many folks throughout the region would add the return of Marty’s Goldenaires Drum and Bugle Corps to their list of recovered joys.

“Everywhere we went this year, people were just enthusiastic to be able to be at a live performance,” said Corps Director Dan Pitrone in an interview last month with the Globe.

He was speaking after his guys — who compose a parade and concert corps based in Bessemer — had

wrapped up three days of performances during the Labor Day weekend.

“That was what I call the trifecta,” said Pitrone of his musicians providing concerts at Ironwood’s First Friday, Hurley’s Festival Italiano, and Ontonagon’s Labor Day parade.

The First Friday event was part of the inaugural Emberlight Festival, with Marty’s performing in Ironwood’s new downtown square.

“That venue was surprisingly good,” said Pitrone, who said he hadn’t known what to expect. He added that some drummers used the stage, while other musicians stood below and remaining members gathered on the grass.

“I don’t know if I’ve seen a better visual of Marty’s,” he added. “Everybody thought it was great.”

Regarding Festival Italiano, Pitrone said, “Hurley

had a really nice crowd.”

At that event, members of the audience began swaying as soon as they saw the Corps began to play while entering the town.

“Hello, we are Marty’s Goldenaires,” shouted Pitrone as the performance began, followed by regular shrieks and whistles.

In Ontonagon, a brief rainfall during the Labor Day Festival did not stop small children from squealing, “Here they come!” as members of Marty’s made their way through the parade.

In general, any Marty’s performance includes a lot of clapping, waving of caps, arm dancing, and salutary calls of “Yeah!”

Performances typically start and end with the National Anthem or other patriotic tunes such as “This Land is Our Land.” In between is a mix of gen-

res, including songs such as “Beer Barrel Polka,” “Hey Jude” and the ever-popular “Wipeout.”

“We try to appeal to a wide range of ages,” said Pitrone, who takes time to shake hands with the crowd even during concerts. In turn, some members of the audience — sweeping their arms and calling out like cheerleaders — go so far as to help him rev up the crowd.

The director said this year’s overall season was not as full as it has been in past years, but it still included Fourth of July parades in Bessemer, Wakefield and Marenisco, as well as a fireworks concert in Ramsay and a Tree of Honor ceremony in Bessemer.

The Corps even traveled to perform at festivals in Hayward, Wis., and Two Harbors, Minn.

Members also played for

American Legion Post 11 and for residents at Gogebic Medical Care Facility, both in Wakefield.

They also performed at Marty’s Town Picnic, which is their own annual fundraising picnic in Bessemer.

“We always end it on Labor Day,” said Pitrone of the Ontonagon festival.

He confirmed that they did not play in public at all during the year of 2020. During the height of the pandemic, he said they tried videoconferencing.

“We really gave it the whole college try, but it really didn’t work,” he said, citing technical problems with trying to coordinate music.

Members did, however, engage that year in a socially-distanced concert at Massie Field that was filmed by Tommy Ross, owner and director of Shoe on the Road.

“We just did it to raise people’s spirits,” said Pitrone, who added that a posting of the video on youtube has drawn 20,000 hits.

Because members of Marty’s Goldenaires are a popular part of many local parades, some people may regard them as a marching band, but Pitrone said that is not accurate.

“We are probably the

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