



# Nashauonk Mittark™

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DRUM BEAT

DEPARTMENTS

ELECTIONS

OUR STORY

COMMUNITY



## Word from the Chairman

*Wuneekeesuq Nutawâmâak*  
(Hello My Tribal Community);

Congratulations to everyone who ran for Tribal Council in the election on February 14th. Of course, special congratulations to Yvonne Avant, Cheryl Frye-Cromwell and Winnie Johnson-Graham, who will continue to serve our tribe, and a special welcome to Carlton Hendricks, Jr., who joins us on council.

I would also like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Martin "Bruzzy" Hendricks for his years of service on the Tribal Council. Bruzzy has been a great friend to me and to the tribe as a whole, and I truly appreciate his hard work over the last eight years.

I would also like to thank the 428 tribal members who turned out to vote. The atmosphere on Election Day – with people from all tribal families out supporting and voting for their chosen candidates – was inspiring to me as we work to move the tribe forward.

Now, let's take this enthusiasm and put it to work! Over 150 tribal members currently serve on committees, but we need more. We currently have openings on the Health Advisory Committee, the Mittark Committee, the Powwow Committee and the Ethics Committee. Please let me know if you have an interest in serving on one of these committees – with your help we can keep our positive momentum going!

Some of the many programs, services and improvements that our departments have made recently include a full audit of our finances, showing areas where we can create a more efficient, transparent system that will correct many problems that our financial team is working to improve. This includes General Funds & Grant Funding reporting, monthly and weekly financial

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Secretary Salazar Visits Mashpee

Just as the crimson sun was about to illuminate the eastern sky, a lone black seal swam slowly across the horizon, as if to welcome the small group assembled on a beach in Mashpee to witness the sunrise on a cold February morning. That group included Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar who, along with several staff members traveled to Mashpee to experience the sunrise with members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and to get a



*Chairman Cromwell and Secretary Salazar watch the sun rise over Nantucket Sound.*

first-hand account of the damage the Cape Wind project would cause.

The visit started at tribal headquarters where Chairman Cedric Cromwell, Chief Vernon "Silent Drum" Lopez, Chuckie Green and others welcomed Secretary Salazar and his team. After a presentation by Chuckie Green, who explained where the group was going and where the proposed project would be situated, the

*(Continued on page 4)*



*Chief Lopez, Secretary Salazar and Chairman Cromwell.*

## Tribe Receives Support From USET

The United Southern and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) recently offered support in two areas of great importance to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. At the February "Impact Week" meetings, USET passed resolutions supporting the tribe on both the Cape Wind project and regional fishery management.

The USET Board of Directors resolved to oppose "the location of the Cape Wind project on Horseshoe Shoal in Nantucket Sound, due to its devastating and destructive impact to the Traditional, Spiritual, Religious and Cultural practices and freedoms of all Wampanoag People as well as the adverse effects this experimental project will have on the surrounding environment in its entirety and totality."

Further, the Board of Directors called upon Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to "respect the Traditional, Cultural, Spiritual and Religious beliefs of the Wampanoag People and preserve the spiritual integrity and sanctity of the eastern horizon, vista and horizon view-shed; and to

deny the permitting of such a devastating and destructive experiment which will adversely affect and destroy the essence of the tranquility, sanctity and spirituality of this Sacred Place for all time." Many thanks to Chuckie Green of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and Bettina Washington of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) for offering the resolution on our behalf.

At the same meeting, USET, which represents twenty five federally-recognized tribes, strongly recommended that "Indian Tribes be represented on the National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Councils in the USET area to ensure Tribal concerns to protect, preserve and enhance fish stocks are addressed."

Our tribe was fully represented on many issues of importance in areas including Culture and Heritage and Housing as well as a seat on the Board of Directors. Traveling to represent us were Ramona Peters, Alice Lopez, Chuckie Green and Treasurer Mark Harding.

## March

- 1 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 1 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 2 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 4 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 6 Elders Council Meeting, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 11 a.m.
- 8 Food Pantry, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 8 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 8 Language Game Night, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 9 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 11 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 14 General Body Meeting, Mashpee High School, 2 p.m.
- 15 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 15 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 16 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 18 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 20 Juvenile Justice Seminar: "Keeping our Kids Safe", Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 22 Food Pantry, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 22 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 22 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 23 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 25 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 27 Mashpee Wampanoag Ball, Willowbend Country Club, 6:30 pm to 12 midnight
- 29 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 29 Language Game Night, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm

## April

- 1 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 2 Elders Council Meeting, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 11 a.m.
- 5 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 5 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 6 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.

- Lee Charles Pearson is proud to announce the acceptance of his son Lester Pearson to Washington State University for the Fall 2010 semester. Lester is also the grandson of Martha Joyce Pearson. Way to go Lester!!
- Lauren Dena Fermino and Aubrey Wilsey are proud to announce the birth of Lauren's first child, Jayden Aubrey Wilsey. Jayden is also the grandson of jessie little doe baird and Scott Fermino. Jayden was born on 12/29 and weighed in at 9lbs. 2oz.
- Congratulations to Deja Andrews for making the honor roll last semester. Deja is a 6th grader at Barnstable Intermediate School. She is the daughter of Troye Sylvia & Morris Andrews Jr., and granddaughter of Gertrude Sylvia.
- The Newsletter Committee would like to thank Paula Peters for her hard work over the past year in getting the Nashauonk Mittark re-started and editing each issue. While we will miss her service, we congratulate her on her appointment to the Election Committee. Good luck Paula!
- Tribal Council is looking for volunteers to serve on several committees. Appointments are available to the Health Advisory Committee, the Mittark Committee, the Powwow Committee and the Ethics Committee. Anyone interested in applying should contact tribal headquarters at 508.477.0208.
- Congratulations to Brailyn Frye, proud new mom to a baby boy, Enapay Tispaquin Frye-Hall. Enapay was born on February 15th, at 18 inches and weighing 5lbs, 6 oz.

*Tribal members who would like to submit items of interest for On The Drum Beat, Our Story or news for Naushauonk Mittark should send their information to SJonas@mwtribe.com. The deadline to submit all edited copy is the second Friday of each month.*

## April (continued)

- 8 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 11 General Body Meeting, Mashpee High School, 2 p.m.
- 12 Food Pantry, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- 12 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 12 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 13 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 15 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 19 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 19 Language Game Night, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 20 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 22 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- 26 Youth Cultural Night, Mashpee Rod and Gun Club, 5:30 p.m.
- 26 Language Class, Mashpee Wampanoag Language Center, 7:00 pm
- 27 Youth Council, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters, 6:30 p.m.
- 29 Beading and Crafts, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Headquarters 6:30 to 8 p.m.

## Editorial Staff

*Leslie Jonas  
Selena Jonas*

## Important News about the US Census - Make Sure You Are Counted!



The US Census is scheduled to be mailed to US citizens on March 15th. It is very important that all tribal members fill out their form – and fill it out correctly – so that all tribal members are counted!

The US Government uses the census to determine the amount of funding our tribe is eligible to receive based on how many people identify themselves as "Mashpee Wampanoag." When tribal members check off Native American under "Race" (#9 and/or #6), they must also spell out "Mashpee Wampanoag," not just "Wampanoag." Only people who identify themselves as "Mashpee Wampanoag" will be counted as members of our tribe. For every person who is not counted as a tribal member, we lose federal grant funding for our health care, education, housing and economic development programs.

There will be specially-trained workers at tribal headquarters available to answer any questions and help tribal members to fill out their form. Should you or any of your family members need help, please visit or call tribal headquarters at 508.477.0208. Let's make sure everyone is counted!

## Wuneekeesug Katnuhtôhtâeenun Good Day Students!

The next set of language classes is set to begin and the Language Committee is really excited about it. We will all be participants in trying some new curriculum as well as mixing in a game night every third week!

This class will be a great fit for everyone! If you have had no class at all, you will be just fine. If you have had many years of class, you will find new material and learn new things.

The Advanced Class will continue with the Transitive Animate Verb workbook and will meet as a group once per month with the remainder of the workbook as independent study. The schedule is noted below.

**Note:** All classes for all speakers, until further notice, will be held in Mashpee at the Tribal Council Building in the Language Center. All eligible individuals may register at the first class.

**Whole Community Class:** Mondays at 7:00 PM. March 1, 2010 thru June 7, 2010.

**Wampanoag Language Game Night will be held on the following dates:**

- 3/8/2010
- 3/29/2010
- 4/19/2010
- 5/10/2010
- 6/7/2010

### Special Notes:

**May 17th** – No Class, National Native American Holiday

**May 31st** – No Class, Memorial Day. Make-up Class will be held on June 1st.

### Advanced Transitive Animate Class

Monthly Classes, Saturdays from Noon to 3PM. Each class is a potluck so please bring a dish to share. Dates and workbook requirements are as follows:

Class Date	Exercises Completed Thru	Workbook Page
March 27, 2010	Exercise 36	Page 43
April 24, 2010	Exercise 49	Page 60
May 29, 2010	Exercise 53	Page 66

Feel free to email jessie with any questions at [littldoe@comcast.net](mailto:littldoe@comcast.net) or check the website at [www.wlrp.org](http://www.wlrp.org).

## Health News

The Tribal Health Office would like to remind everyone that the Earth Recovery Program support groups are available for tribal members through their office. The Men's Support Group meets every Saturday at the Health Office from 4-5:30 pm. The Women's Support Group meets every Saturday at the Health Office from 1-2:30 pm. For more information, please contact the Health Office at 33 Great Neck Road in Mashpee, 508.477.0209.



## Tribal Court News

I am writing this month to encourage tribal members to obtain a copy of the Tribal Court survey and to fill it out and return it to Marita Scott our Tribal Court Clerk. We are attempting to have the survey reprinted in this issue of the Mittark but space issues may prevent that. If it is not in this issue a copy can be obtained by calling Marita Scott at 508-477-0208.

This survey will be used by the court to make judgments about how the court should function. The Elders Judiciary Committee and I are very interested in making the Tribal Court responsive to the cultural concerns of the Mashpee Tribe. For example, Edward Peters and his daughters recently donated to the Tribal Court a gavel made from an original beam of the meeting house. This gavel will be used in all Tribal Court proceedings. In addition, we are presently attempting to secure a ceremonial necklace of wampum that could be worn during court proceedings.

We are seeking suggestions from the Tribal membership regarding other aspects of the court proceedings that might be used to reflect the cultural heritage of the Tribe. The survey is one vehicle that we are using to attempt to secure this feedback from the tribe. The survey asks, for example, whether the judge should wear a traditional robe during court proceedings. It asks whether the judge should sit on a bench or whether some other seating arrangement be adopted.

It also asks questions about the Peacemakers court and how those proceedings should be conducted. The Survey does not require that you provide your name or address. It is a strictly confidential although a compilation of ALL completed surveys will be published. The Survey results will also be used to demonstrate to our funding sources that the Court is making every reasonable effort to be responsive to membership concerns. Thus far we have nineteen responses and we would like to improve upon that and get as much feedback from tribal membership as we can prior to drawing any conclusions about how to proceed. Thank you for your participation.

— Henry J. Sockbeson, Chief Judge of the Mashpee Wampanoag Supreme Court.



## Tribal Voters Return Three Incumbents to Council, Welcome Carlton Hendricks, Jr.



Cheryl Frye-Cromwell



Yvonne Avant



Carlton Hendricks, Jr.



Edwina "Winnie" Johnson Graham

Three of four incumbent councilors were re-elected to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council on February 14th in the tribe's annual election. Cheryl Frye-Cromwell, Yvonne Avant, Carlton Hendricks, Jr. and Winnie Johnson Graham were elected to four year terms.

The complete results are as follows:

Candidate	# of Votes
Cheryl Frye-Cromwell	193
Yvonne Avant	191
Carlton Hendricks, Jr.	184
Edwina "Winnie" Johnson Graham	178
Martin "Bruzzy" Hendricks	174
Laverne Jackson	157
Stephanie Tobey-Roderick	70
Angela Shwom	67
Michelle Hughes Fernandes	64
Charles "Bobby" Foster	61

Cheryl Frye-Cromwell, the top vote getter in the election commented, "I am so thankful to the tribal members who came out to vote today. This is an affirmation of all the positive work the tribal council has been doing and I look forward to continuing that work."

There were 428 ballots cast in the election, with each voter able to choose up to four candidates. There were 215 write in votes and 158 blanks.

*(Secretary Salazar Visits Mashpee, continued from page 1)*

Secretary was anxious to get to the beach to see the sunrise for himself.

Secretary Salazar listened intently as Chief Lopez described Mashpee as it used to be, before multi-million dollar homes crowded the beach. He described life during the Great Depression, when the water and the land provided all that the Mashpee people needed, not just through fishing and hunting, but also through the strength that this sacred place gave and still gives to our spirits.

Chairman Cromwell expressed his gratitude for the visit, stating, "We deeply appreciate Secretary Salazar's willingness to address the serious issues presented by the proposed location for the Cape Wind project. In particular, we are gratified that the Secretary took significant personal time to visit Mashpee today and learn first-hand about the religious cultural and historical significance of the proposed site to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

"We have repeatedly raised serious concerns over the proposed project for more than 6 years. For the first time, we believe that our concerns are being heard, and we look forward to continuing the process of consultation until an acceptable outcome has been achieved. This process is long overdue, and we thank Secretary Salazar and President Obama for their commitment to the rights of Native Americans.

"The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has deep historical ties to this land dating back more than 12,000 years. Both state and federal officials have determined that the land is a traditional cultural property with cultural and religious significance to the Tribe. As a sovereign nation, we are afforded the right under Federal law to have our voice heard on decisions affecting our ancestral land. It is our expectation that as this process continues, our voice will be heard."

Tribal officials are in constant contact with the Department of the Interior to make sure that the US Government fully understands the tribe's position and concerns as they move toward a final decision on the Cape Wind project.

Anyone who is interested in sharing a story in the “Our Story” column that is significant to Mashpee Wampanoag history or our heritage, recent or long past, should contact the newsletter committee by calling the tribal office at 508-477-0208 and leaving a message, or by sending an email to [sjonas@mwtribe.com](mailto:sjonas@mwtribe.com).

## The Way We Were *As told by Rhonda Mills*

Growing up in Mashpee gave me such pride and love for my people. But, by no means was it easy!

My dad, Karl Mills, taught me so much about inner pride and the kind of stubbornness that helped us survive the rough times.

We were poor, but so rich in principles, character and culture.

When times were rough I remember my dad always fishing and hunting. My fondest memory was when I was about 6 years old standing on an egg crate and he had just come in from scalloping and was teaching me how to open them. My eyes were staring in amazement when he came in with bushels of scallops, the seaweed spilling out of the baskets and crabs crawling all about. “Oh,” I thought, “how yucky!”

I watched him as he shucked them and popped them in his mouth. I never understood how he could eat those slimy things until that day I popped one in my mouth. That was it! My dad was now sorry he taught me that skill. I got fired up! There’s nothing like a raw bay scallop! He then taught us how to quahog with our feet and that was the best experience in life — especially the mud fights with our cousins, laughing so hard we couldn’t stand up in the water! He truly was the best fisherman in town in my eyes!

My mom, Delores Dias/Tobey Mills, taught me so much about love, forgiveness and kindness. We lived way up in the woods away from the center of Mashpee. It was always such a treat when she decided to visit all my relatives, especially my cousins on Route 130 and Quashnet Road, and that is where I was taught more from my ancestors.

I would love visiting my great-grandmother Etta Tobey who always greeted us with the biggest hugs and, there was so much love in those hugs, I really felt special. And, she had the best pear tree around!

Going to my grandma Nina’s was another treat. She was always laughing and full of life and loved all her grandkids equally.

Uncle Norman, with his awesome garden, in the eyes of this little girl, was a giant man who worked so hard, and boy could he tell us some scary stories!

*“I know all of us kids learned so much from their good ways and that’s why we love Mashpee and our culture.”*

Aunt Elaine and Aunt Joyce would always bring us to Mashpee pond after mud fights at the bay.

Another great memory was herringing down Mashpee River when the herring was so plentiful. Mom and Dad taught us to squeeze the side of the herring and if an orange color came out it was a good roe. My brothers Derek and Rodney would cut the roe out right there and put them into a big jar. Off we would go to have the treat of fried herring roe, and boy they popped everywhere when being cooked.



Aunt Del who always greeted us with love and had the best tasting food, she was so hospitable.

Auntie Adeline had all my cousins playing in the back yard on a swing hanging from a tree going so high I felt like my heart was going to fall out of my chest. And there was the time they pushed me so high up when I came back my pants fell down and everyone was laughing so hard rolling on the ground.

Aunt Minnie was always having candy dishes around her house for us kids. Stretcher (Edna Peters) was always telling us about Granny Squanitt and the rolling head.

My grandmother Emma was so classy to me and Grandfather Ferdinand

was always entertaining us with spoons on his knees.

I can’t forget Mrs. Johnsons who sold the best penny candy in the world and Uncle Elwood’s store. I could go on and on, but I won’t, the point is this: each of the people that touched our lives were all different in many ways. I know all of us kids learned so much from their good ways and that’s why we love Mashpee and our culture.

Just wish we could go back to the good old days, “The way we were.”

*(Word from the Chairman, continued from page 1)*

reporting, department budgets and balance sheet statements, and implementation of new accounting software.

The Natural Resources department is working on the Popponneset Bay Restoration Project as well as Water Quality Monitoring, and the Refuge Partnership.

The Housing Department continues to offer important assistance to tribal members in the areas of eviction prevention, foreclosure prevention, legal assistance, rental and ownership financing, rehab and weatherization, financial literacy, credit counseling, landlord negotiation, home ownership education and energy efficiency education. In addition, the Housing Department is working on issues including land into trust, 40B permitting, and other development projects.

The Health Department offers health-related assistance to tribal members with Mass Health, emergency preparedness, the Earth Recovery Project, contract health services, vaccination and preventive health programs, and counseling services. The Health Department is proud to serve over one thousand tribal members.

And, for the first time in our tribe’s history, we hosted the United States Secretary of the Interior. I thank the many people who made that visit a success, especially Chief Lopez. The Secretary was visibly moved by the Chief’s portrayal of our tribe’s history. I have continued to echo the Chief’s moving words in discussions with the Department of the Interior, and I thank the Chief for his support and guidance.

As you can see there is so much happening for our tribe, and so much to be proud of. I look forward to even more tribal members joining in and participating in our progress.

*Katapatunumuw;  
Qaqeemasq (Running Bear)*

## Looking For Basketball Players

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Boys will defend their tournament championship on March 20th and 21st in Connecticut. One team of 5th and 6th graders and one team of 7th and 8th graders will compete. Any boys interested in playing should call the tribal office at 508.477.0208 or Yvonne Avant at 774.238.8388. Space is limited to ten boys per team.



Practices are being held every Saturday from 12-1 pm at the Mashpee Boys and Girls Club. The teams will head down to Connecticut the morning of Saturday March 20th, spend the night in Connecticut, and return to Mashpee on Sunday the 21st. The tribe will pay for all fees, food and lodging. Good luck boys!

## Mashpee Wampanoag Ball - Get Your Tickets!

Ball tickets will be available for purchase in advance at the Tribal Office during regular business hours as well as Puritan's of Cape Cod at Mashpee Commons....**tickets will not be sold at the door as in years past.**

Ticket prices: \$15 for elders; \$20 for all others

The ball will be held at Willowbend Country Club. Doors open at 6:30 pm; Ceremony will begin at 7 p.m.; Hors d'oeuvres served from 7-9 p.m.; Dance music from 9 p.m. to midnight

### Sponsorships Available:

Gold "Table" Sponsorship - \$600 (limited to 6)  
 Silver Sponsorship - \$150  
 Bronze Sponsorship - \$75

All proceeds to benefit Medicine Man Guy  
 "Soaring Eagle" Cash



## Inter-Tribal Social at Camp Burgess

The Inter-tribal Social held at Camp Burgess on February 6th was a huge success. Over one hundred Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal members danced, drummed, sang and enjoyed a fantastic potluck with members of 10 other tribes. Many thanks to Wakeby Lake, Eastern Suns, Mystic River, and the Red Hawk Singers for attending.



## Ramona Peters Chosen for Prestigious Fellowship

First Peoples Fund has announced that Ramona Peters will be among this year's recipients of the Jennifer Easton Community Spirit Award. This flagship program of the Fund honors artists who embody Collective Spirit®, that which manifests self-awareness and a sense of responsibility, to sustain the cultural fabric of a community. "It is that which moves each one of us to stand up and make a difference, to pass on the ancestral knowledge or simply extend a hand of generosity", says Lori Pourier (*Oglala Lakota*) President.

First Peoples Fund honors and celebrates native artists who exemplify indigenous values of generosity, wisdom, respect, integrity, strength, fortitude and humility. This year's honorees are:

- **Trudie Lamb**, *Schaghticoke* – Connecticut, Traditional Storytelling
- **Therese St. Cyr**, *Oglala Lakota* –Nebraska, Beading, Regalia, Dancing
- **Wade Fernandez**, *Menominee* – Wisconsin, Performance Artist, Musician, Songwriting
- **Richard Smith**, *Wyandot* – Oklahoma City, Clay, Storytelling, Wyandot songs for children
- **Ramona Peters**, *Mashpee Wampanoag* – Massachusetts, Ceramics

This prestigious annual fellowship award, established in 1999, recognizes four exceptional American Indian artists with a no strings attached gift of \$5,000. Recognized as culture bearers within their communities, artists are nominated by members of their own tribes. The honorees are selected by an independent panel of American Indian cultural leaders. This year's panel of reviewers include: Ron Looking Elk Martinez, (*Taos/Isletta Pueblos*) of Americans for Indian Opportunity; Vicky Benson, (*Lakota*), of the McKnight Foundation; Ed Bourgois, (*Seneca*), of the Alaska Native Heritage Center; and Tina Kuckkahn, (*Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewas*), of the Longhouse Education and Cultural Center.

This year's recipients will be honored in the Fall of 2010 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The honoring consists of a theatrical production and reception. Four of First Peoples Fund's Board of Directors are based in Minneapolis.

Gaby Strong said of the Community Spirit Awards: "*The Community Spirit Award honors those tribal artists who are recognized as keepers of traditional wisdom and culture, who share their knowledge and artistic skills with others, and mentor those who are coming behind them. It is an honor for those of us in Minnesota to host the next awards ceremony, and to welcome the presence of the First People's Fund to our homelands.*"

Founded in 1995, First Peoples Fund's purpose is to honor and support the creative community-centered First Peoples artists, and nurture the collective spirit that allows them to sustain their people. First Peoples Fund's grantmaking initiatives include: the annual Community Spirit Awards, Artists-in-Business Leadership, and Cultural Capital Fellowship programs.

The Fund is supported in part by Ford Foundation's Freedom of Expression: Media, Arts and Culture, LINC, National Endowment for the Arts, the Sumasil Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation and individual donors.





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