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Reclaiming Culture Feeds into a Healthy Life

**Frank Haney
uses pre-
colonial foods
to inspire
healthy eating
in the Native
American
community.**

*Isabel
Saavedra-Weis
St. Paul
Academy and
Summit School*



Frank Haney(left) and staff prepare indigenous meal for catering event.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SIOUX CHEF

He remembers being a kid, growing up on the Oneida Indian reservation in Wisconsin. He remembers helping open the commodity boxes sent by the government. They were filled with canned meats, canned vegetables, powdered milk, bottles of corn syrup and big blocks of cheese.

Now, nearly a half century later, Frank Haney understands that most of those things were not very healthy. “None of it had much nutritional value,” he said. “But sometimes, that’s all we had to eat.”

It wasn’t always that way. In pre-colonial times, Native Americans ate healthy foods they could hunt and gather, foods that nature and the seasons provided. Before Europeans arrived in North America, indigenous tribes grew, harvested and ate corn, wild rice, squash and beans. For protein, they had wild game such as bison, venison or rabbit. This lifestyle is uncommon now, almost nonexistent in the United States, where most food is bought at a grocery or convenience store.

The Sioux Chef, a Twin Cities-based catering company, is not following the fast-food trend. Instead, it’s going back to the basics, reclaiming the diet of native ancestors. Founded in 2014 by Shaun Sherman, The Sioux Chef goes beyond dining services. It is a business run by Native American people to help the indigenous community improve their health and connect to their history.

Haney has been working with Sherman since 2012 and now works as the executive chef at the catering company.

It’s not just about the food, Haney said. “There’s all kinds of ceremonies, and dances and prayers that go along with planting, growing and harvesting it, as well as preserving, cooking and eating it. So, food is connected to every other aspect of the culture.”

Reclaiming that culture is part of the challenge, since the indigenous community has had its traditions buried in years of systemic oppression. Forced onto reservations, Native Americans were separated from the land that had sustained them, and instead were given boxes filled with anything but nourishment.

What most people consider to be Native American food “is a byproduct of the food that was provided when they were forced to live on reservations,” Haney said. “The commodities consisted of white flour, lard, sugar and salt. These are the ingredients for fry bread.” While some embrace the unhealthy meal as a native food, Haney knows that “before the European influence, we never ate fry bread. None of us.”

This kind of misconception is what The Sioux Chef aims to correct. And by reclaiming a piece of Native American history and culture, The Sioux Chef is also restoring health in the indigenous community. In a study in 2015, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified American Indian adults as having the highest obesity rate in Minnesota. The lack of accessibility and high cost of healthy foods are major obstacles for the native community, but The Sioux Chef makes a point of sourcing all its ingredients locally—fresh, organic and from native-owned sources.

“America is a capitalistic society, so making money is a big deal, and in the process of that, they’ve taken the healthiest foods and made them inaccessible to people of low income,” Haney

said. “And that’s another part of our mission; we want to make sure everyone can get healthy food.”

Partnering with the Minnesota Parks Foundation’s Water Works project, The Sioux Chef will open a restaurant near the Mississippi River in the next year.

“It’s not going to be a real big restaurant, but it will be a presence right on the Mississippi, a place that Lakota people refer to as ‘o’mini’wanmi,’ which translates to ‘the place of many whirlpools.’ It’s been a very sacred place for those people for centuries,” Haney said.

The Sioux Chef is also seeking to open an indigenous food lab to invite educational groups—native or not—and teach them the value and health benefits of using indigenous food.

“We’re not trying to bring back the past, because that’s impossible,” Haney said. “But what we’re trying to do is take the indigenous foods that we know of, and create meals with them. And a really good side effect is that these foods are way healthier than anything you can get in a grocery store or at most restaurants.”

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Upcoming Dinner and Home Hosting Opportunities



Ten ***court administrators and judges*** from ***Zambia*** will visit Reno to learn about the rule of law. They would like to be hosted for dinner on September 10, 11 or 12.

Five ***prison management officials*** from ***Chile*** are visiting to learn about incarceration in the US. They would like to be hosted for dinner September 13 or 14th.

We are looking for a host who can hold the ***opening dinner for 21 teachers*** who will spend six weeks learning about education in the US on Sunday, ***September 16***.

The teachers hail from Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Bangladesh, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Russian Federation, South Africa, Latvia, Cambodia, Argentina, Mozambique, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Costa Rica, Thailand, Tunisia, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Lithuania and Mongolia.

These teachers will also need dinners four Fridays through the program, preferably in pairs of two, for the same two people, in the same home on the following Fridays: September 21, October 5, 12 and 26th. We are looking for two more hosts for these Friday night dinners.

A delegation of five **Mongolian Library Science** officials are looking for a home hospitality dinner on October 11 or 12.

Community Crossover Inspires Parenting Education Program

Communities are working to better educate mothers-to-be by changing the agenda for baby showers.

Surina Arora The Blake School

Minnesota Department of Health state oral health director Prasida Khanal and her team illustrate how the build up of bacteria in our mouth can cause cavities and tooth decay and dental caries (tooth decay in children).



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEALTHY BABY SHOWERS

State Oral Health Director, Prasida Khanal and her team, along with Oral Health Program, along with oral health educators from Community Dental Clinic-Maplewood, illustrate proper and health brushing techniques to practice with children and how to make brushing fun.

Pink and blue balloons hovered near the ceiling to help celebrate the newest edition to a family. The aroma of catered dishes and the laughter of family members gathered around the mother-to-be filled the room. But a baby shower isn't just a party with food, drinks, gifts and games. It's a celebration of new life and a welcoming of children by the people who will support and help them grow.

Healthy Baby Showers is a health and wellness pilot program that provides women and their families with education about raising a child. The program is organized by Blue Cross Blue Shield for Karen, Native American and Hmong communities around the Twin Cities. They host educational baby showers for families in the communities to help prepare them for parenthood.

These three groups were chosen as the focus of their mission because of several factors, including women with the highest enrollment in Medicaid and the number of health disparities

that needed to be addressed. The organization is run through nonprofits, including the Karen Organization in Minnesota, Hmong American Partnership and Little Earth.

The goals of the program are to provide education, introduce pregnant women to their health plans and to other local and state federal resources, and to connect them to their communities. “It was a good celebration of women and of culture, focused around some really hard topics to talk about when it comes to pregnancy. Abuse, for example,” said Va Yang, community engagement specialist at Blue Cross, who helps organize the baby showers. “Sometimes it’s hard to do that when you are trying to get everyone through the door. It’s easier when you are having smaller conversations and you are really hand-holding those conversations. We are really able to talk about difficult health topics through a welcoming and open lens.”

The showers are specific to each cultural group. Baby showers are hosted for Native Americans in Minneapolis and for Karen and Hmong communities in Ramsey County. Because each culture has different customs, traditions, and views on childbirth, Healthy Baby Showers designs the events to follow their customs. “Our amazing baby shower co-hosts speak the language and identify with our moms and participants, so we are able to provide proper interpretation and be more inclusive when addressing culturally specific questions moms and caretakers might have,” Yang explained.

During a baby shower for the Native American community, for example, mothers arrived along with their spouses, caretakers and community elders. Of the 54 participants, only seven were pregnant. For Native Americans, community elders are important because they want culture to carry through generations. Yang said, “We originally designed it for mothers, because we thought that was the target population and they were the ones that would find this information the most useful and relevant. But what we found out was that mothers are not doing it by themselves. They are doing it as a village, with their entire family combined.”

Along with organizing and managing baby showers, Yang shared that her proudest moment was creating positive views on pregnancy. Speaking from her own experience in the Hmong community, she said, pregnancy can have a negative connotation.

Over the past two years, Healthy Baby Showers has helped create welcoming and comfortable spaces for mothers. “We play an important role in terms of community engagement and advancement because a lot of large organizations don’t know what culture means to people,” Yang said. “We create a space that’s really small and intimate that is surrounded by nurses, public health staff and people who can talk about those kinds of things...that’s the kind of conversation we really want to have.”

“It was a good celebration of women and of culture, focused around some really hard topics to talk about when it comes to pregnancy.” — Va Yang, Community Engagement Specialist

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**Sperm Count Zero:** A strange thing has happened to men over the past few decades: We’ve become increasingly infertile, so much so that within a generation we may lose the ability to reproduce entirely.” (GQ)

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**US Southwest set for water crisis as levels continue to drop at Lake Mead and Lake Powell** By Cheyenne MacDonald, Daily Mail, 9/4/18

Two major lakes in the Colorado River Basin that operate as one huge reservoir to supply millions of people with water are drying up, scientists have warned.

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*The following articles are included, not because of subject, but to demonstrate how important archives can be,*

**A new front in immigration battle**

President Donald Trump has plainly stated his intention to shrink the number of immigrants who call the United States home, but his quest has gone far beyond where most Americans would go.

What started with a stated desire to rid the country of dangerous criminals quickly spread to all undocumented immigrants. Then came the proposed limits on already-low legal migration quotas. There was his ongoing call to eliminate family migration, or as Trump prefers, “chain migration.” Soon after came another frightening tactic: going after some naturalized citizens, attempting to strip them of their citizenship for sometimes decades-old offenses.

Now comes the latest outrage: According to a story in the Washington Post, Hispanic Americans with U.S. birth certificates, mostly born in border towns, have become targets. Some have had their passports revoked upon attempting to re-enter the U.S. after leaving the country. Others have attempted to renew existing passports only to be denied, their Americanness suddenly called into question. Some have even found themselves in deportation proceedings — all because the government has expressed doubts about the authenticity of their birth certificates. Not proven, just alleged. On that thin reed, the federal government has upended the lives of Americans who suddenly find themselves scouring baby books, hospital records, family Bibles, school records, hiring attorneys — all in the frantic attempt to prove the facts of their birth.

What if the government suddenly challenged your birth certificate? How would you prove it? What if the hospital no longer exists? Maybe the attending doctor has died. Perhaps your mother opted for a midwife, as hundreds of thousands of women do each year. Why, you might ask yourself, shouldn't the burden of proof fall on the government to produce more than doubts or allegations?

One would think that immigration officials would be busy enough tracking Dreamers, rounding up farmworkers, hunting down those convicted of actual felonies. Are they so devoid of targets, so flush with resources that they now can afford to come after Americans who simply are seeking to renew their passports? How can a mere allegation suddenly trap an American citizen in a foreign land, rendered stateless by the absence of a valid passport?

If due process is to mean anything in this country, it surely must ensure that those who possess an American birth certificate can live their lives without the fear that at some random moment they might need to prove their citizenship.

And the “proof ” required by the State Department is another matter. Among the documents they suggest as secondary proof are baptismal certificates and family Bibles. How unfortunate for

those whose parents might not have been churchgoers, or even religious. Why would a secular government accept a religious article as proof of U.S. birth? Also on the list are U.S. Census records, which, of course, the federal government could easily access on its own, rather than forcing law-abiding citizens to do so at their own time and expense.

This is not the first time birth certificates have become an issue. In the 1990s the government investigated some midwives in Texas and found they indeed were helping to produce fake birth certificates. Those individuals were prosecuted, as they should have been. A subsequent court settlement with the ACLU in 2009 came with the assurance that the feds would no longer deny passports to Latinos simply because they'd been born in a Texas border town, delivered by a midwife.

If the Trump administration has fresh evidence of legal infractions, it should pursue them and take the perpetrators to court. Hounding law-abiding citizens with unproven allegations and forcing the burden of proof on them smacks of a different agenda entirely.

### **A new front in immigration battle**



### **Gold Point ‘squatters’ may get to buy what they thought they owned**

After more than 30 years of trespassing, Walt Kremin might finally have a Nevada ghost town to call his own.

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### **High-Tech Careers Abound in California’s Water Industry**

By Martin Kropelnicki, San Jose Inside, 9/5/18

When you think of high tech in Silicon Valley, your mind immediately goes to the latest app or newest device. What you probably don’t think of is the “water” industry. You turn on your tap and there it is ... clean, fresh water, a fundamental building block we often take for granted.

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### **Sick River: Can These California Tribes Beat Heroin and History?**

By Jose A. Del Real, New York Times, 9/4/18

WEITCHPEC, Calif. — For thousands of years, the Klamath River has been a source of nourishment for the Northern California tribes that live on its banks. Its fish fed dozens of Indian villages along its winding path, and its waters cleansed their spirits, as promised in their creation stories.

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### **Colorado River Flows Drop By 15 Percent Over Last 100 Years**

By Luke Runyon, KUNC, 9/4/18

Warming temperatures are sapping the Colorado River, the water source for more than 40 million people in the southwest. A new study finds over the last 100 years the river’s flow has

decreased by more than 15 percent.

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## **More Native women than men are running for governors, state legislators**

by [Mark Trahant](#)

### **There are 10 Native candidates for Congress, a dozen running for statewide offices, and 78 for state legislatures**

Two years ago Denise Juneau was making history. She was running for Montana's only seat in Congress. It was a hundred years since Jeannette Rankin had won that same seat, the first woman ever elected to the Congress. So a century later Juneau, Mandan Hidatsa and Arikara, would be the ideal first Native woman to serve. Indeed, she was following her plan perfectly, raising \$3 million, crisscrossing the huge state, and mobilizing voters.

Still, she lost.

"I don't feel bad about losing," she told me. (Juneau is now Superintendent of Schools for the city of Seattle.) "I'm disappointed we lost, but I don't feel bad about it because we did everything we were supposed to. We just lost. That's actually a really good space for me."

Then she turned philosophical.

"Every time another Native woman steps up to run for any office, whether that be the state legislature, city council, U.S. Congress, it sort of paves the way. There's sort of a pipeline, which is really awesome right now, that there's never been a path for Native women to just really step up. I believe right now, we're in a time and space where we see that happening," Juneau said. "There will be a first at some point."

That "first at some point" is coming fast. There are now more Native women running for office than men, [52 candidates out of 100 running across the nation](#). More Native women than men are candidates for office ranging from governor to seats in state legislatures.

The only exception: Congress. There are three Native women and five Native men campaigning for seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. How does this compare to the rest of the country? [Nationally it's a record year](#) for women seeking office: There are currently 251 women seeking one of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 26 women seeking one of 35 Senate seats.

Across the country, across the wide channel that we call "politics," this is an extraordinary year. There are more Native Americans running for a variety of offices than at any point in history. So there will be another "first" in 2018. Many firsts, actually.

One expression of that has been the media interest this year in the Native American candidates. [The New York Times](#), [National Public Radio](#), and [NBC News](#), all asking the same question? "How does this compare to previous years?"



That's a tough one. The numbers change a lot from the beginning of the campaign season until Labor Day. Good candidates lose primaries. Others drop out for a variety of reasons. So it's difficult to compare this year's cycle to last year's cycle. Except from Labor Day until November. This is when the general election is set and we can accurately compare this election a previous one. (And forget going back too far. No one collected this data before I started doing it.)

So let's compare. Two years ago at this point, including Juneau, there were five candidates for Congress, a total of three Democrats and two Republicans. There were four candidates for statewide offices in two states, North Dakota and South Dakota.

And this year? There are 10 candidates for Congress. A dozen running for statewide offices, including three for governor and another five for lieutenant governor. There are 78 Native Americans running for state legislatures across the country. (One of these days I want to include a list of Native Americans on county commissions, school boards, and city officials, too. Hashtag, #ToDoList.)

One of the dangers of publishing lists -- as I have been doing for several elections now -- is that there is always someone else.

*Yvette Herrell is running to represent New Mexico's second congressional seat. She is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. (Campaign photo)*

Last week a new name was added to my tally, Yvette Herrell, who is running to represent the second congressional district in New Mexico as a Republican. The Cherokee Nation let me know that Herrell is a citizen. (That also shows that my list itself is an understatement. Herrell was serving in the New Mexico legislature and was even serving on the Indian affairs committee. Yet she wasn't on my list of elected legislators.) The seat is now held by a Republican, Rep. Steve Pearce who's running for governor.

So New Mexico could send two, not one, Native American women to the Congress.

Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo, is the Democratic nominee in the state's first congressional district. She is in the sweet spot, the party nominee in a district where Democrats start with an advantage.

And, speaking of running down hill, there is an interesting development in Kansas.

Sharice Davids, Ho Chunk, has already won her primary and is a candidate in a district now represented by a Republican. Last week the Republican Congressional Committee said it was making tough decisions about this year's election spending about which candidates get financial support. "Kansas Rep. Kevin Yoder, an imperiled suburban congressman whom Democrats are spending heavily to defeat, has recently complained to allies that the national committee hasn't done enough to help him in his reelection bid, according to four people familiar with the conversations," Politico reported.

Good news for Davids. But it is still a seat that Democrats have not won in a long time. But at some point that will change. As Davids said: "I keep saying how surprised I am that we're in 2018, and we're still having all these firsts."

She would be (like Haaland and Herrell) the first Native woman ever elected to Congress. And she would add another new voice, she would be the first lesbian to represent Kansas.

Then this election has so many firsts, such as three Native candidates for governor. There have been a few candidates over the years that have sought that office, such as Larry EchoHawk in 1994 and Byron Mallott four years ago, but not two. Let alone three.

EchoHawk, Pawnee, ran in Idaho. Where Paulette Jordan, Coeur d'Alene, is now the Democratic Party nominee. Think of that: In a state where the Native population is about 1 percent there are two Native Americans as party nominees for the top office. Jordan continues to get national attention, [the latest from Elle magazine](#). "What's so rare, that people have never seen in this country, is an indigenous woman run and lead," she said. "It's never happened in the history of this country, that a woman would run and lead on the executive level like this, a senior executive level, a CEO of state. And so we're breaking boundaries now as we speak."

Jordan is, of course, the first Native woman to seek that office. But she is not alone. Andria Tupola won the Republican Party nomination in Hawaii. Like Jordan, Tupola, served in the legislature, and her message also transcends partisan politics. She told the Hawaii Free Press that she wants to change minds. "So many voices are missing, the state is making decisions that the community is not happy about." Her advice: "Don't focus on the legislature, or the party or the unions, focus on the community. Raise the bar, step up the game." And the kicker in the piece by Susan Halas. "It was an unexpected 'Feel the Bern' moment from the other side of the aisle."

That paragraph says a lot about this particular election.

The third Native American candidate for governor is Kevin Stitt, Cherokee, whose career has been in business. He has not said much about tribal issues but has participated in a forum with the tribes. He was endorsed last week by President Donald J. Trump. He tweeted: "Kevin Stitt ran a great winning campaign against a very tough opponent in Oklahoma," Trump tweeted. "Kevin is a very successful businessman who will be a fantastic Governor. He is strong on Crime & Borders, the 2nd Amendment, & loves our Military & Vets. He has my complete and total Endorsement!"

There is a 100 percent increase in party nominees for Congress; a 300 percent increase in statewide candidates; and a seven percent increase in candidates for state legislatures.

It's also interesting to see the party breakdown this time around: Four Democrats are running for Congress; four Republicans; one Green Party candidate; and one candidate representing the Independence Party of Minnesota.

There are three races with Native Americans competing with other Native Americans on the November ballot: Minnesota with a Republican and a Democrat competing for lieutenant governor; Alaska where there is a three-way race for lieutenant governor; and Oklahoma's second congressional district. There was even a G.O.P. primary with two tribal citizens on the ballot in the New Mexico second congressional district.

One more number. Two years ago only one Native American was elected to the Arizona state senate. This year that number could be three, incumbent Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai, former Rep. Victoria Steele, and current Rep. Sally Ann Gonzales. That would be a three-fold increase -- and a caucus where policy could be sorted out and championed as a group.

That's real power. But there is another lesson. Gonzales was first elected to the Arizona legislature in 1996. She was a caucus of one. Now there is a caucus in the House, the Senate, and Native voices are included in Arizona's broader political discourse.

As Juneau says: "There is a pipeline of people, a pipeline of Native women now that is being built, not just for stepping up and raising your hand, and running for this seat, but also Native women working on campaigns and Native women being involved at central committees, democratic central committees, and Native women finding their place in mainstream politics." That is the power, she said, because it lays the groundwork for others to follow.

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**Who's Afraid of a White Minority?** : The battle over how to project the future population of the United States has profound political implications." Demographics is destiny. (NYT)

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**<https://www.upworthy.com/a-dad-took-his-2-year-olds-most-memorable-words-and-illustrated-them-beautifully?c=upw1>**

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*"There are books of the same chemical composition as dynamite. The only difference is that a piece of dynamite explodes once, whereas a book explodes a thousand times." – Yevgeny Zamyatin*

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### **Nevada vows to fight DOE plan to store plutonium near Las Vegas**

State leaders are vowing to fight a proposal by the U.S. Department of Energy to store up to a ton of weapons-grade plutonium at the Nevada National Security Site, 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

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**And just because it is Friday: Indonesian Aquawoman:** Indonesia is a southeast Asian nation made up of some 18,000 volcanic islands between Asia and Australia. It has the world's fourth largest population, but the most admired woman of all is Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti, [a cigarette smoking grandmother who just loves blowing up boats](#). Not just any boats – illegal wood and iron fishing boats; the fiber ones are removed from the water first. She is determined to preserve Indonesian resources for locals. Since entering government in 2014, Minister Susi has sent almost 500 illegal vessels to sleep with the fishes. (WaPo)