



Wellbriety!

White Bison's Online Magazine

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Words of Inspiration

**Good Words spoken at the Wellbriety Movement conference
on healing from the drug methamphetamine**

**Denver, Colorado
April 20-23, 2006**



Honoring the Eagle Spirit Drum

I would like to mention our Eagle Spirit Drum, the official Wellbriety Movement Drum. They took on the responsibility to be the first Drum. They help connect the Web that has been given to us by the Creator. They left northern Minnesota and drove all night through two major snowstorms to arrive here for the conference opening. Only in Indian country is a commitment like that honored in that way. The drum is the heartbeat of the earth and of Indian communities. If we have no Drum we have no heartbeat. The Drum puts a heartbeat into the Web. Our goal is to have 100 Native communities in healing by 2010. Each one of the communities making that commitment will be sent a traditional drum. I want to thank the Eagle Spirit Drum for your commitment. I really appreciate what you are doing for the Wellbriety Movement.

Don Coyhis,
Conference Opening, April, 2006



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Taking a Stand Against Meth: Recovery is Possible. The Wellbriety Movement conference on healing from meth in Native American communities took on this hurtful, destructive force that is causing great damage in both Native and non-Native communities across America. Many speakers talked about how to deal with it from different points of view. Wellbriety Movement Council of Elders member Dr. Henrietta Mann called it “the new smallpox epidemic” for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Each day the conference was opened with inspirational words, prayers or songs in one of the Native languages. We were honored to have Council of Elders member Horace Axtell and others from his region sing a song from the Nez Perce Way. We were further honored to have LeRoy Comes Last sing the *Early Morning Song to the Early Morning Dawn Spirit* from the Native American Church. We were privileged to hear Henrietta Mann speak in the Cheyenne language, and Larry Stillday in the Ojibwe language. These inspirational words and songs and prayers made it possible to face the meth problem in a good way.

Don Coyhis

I'd like to welcome everyone to this gathering. We have been told that when we gather together we will never have any success unless we ask the Creator to come to help us. The information about meth that we are here to talk about is not in our minds, otherwise we wouldn't have to gather to figure it out. It's got to come from someplace else.

We have been fortunate for many years to have our Council of Elders. We go through the Elders for everything we have done. In some ways we are all Elders to each other. You think maybe because you are forty you are not an Elder yet, but the thirty-year-olds are watching you. If you are thirty you think you are not an Elder but those twenty-year-olds are watching you. I was watching a little Elder being pushed around in a buggy. Another was walking alongside. That little baby was watching the four-year-old, he wasn't watching his mom. Whatever that four-year-old was doing, that's what the little one would do. We are all Elders to each other. I'm going to ask one of our Elders to come up and call on those powers that we need in order for us to be successful over these next days as we talk about methamphetamine.



Don Coyhis, Founder and President of White Bison, Inc.



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Horace Axtell

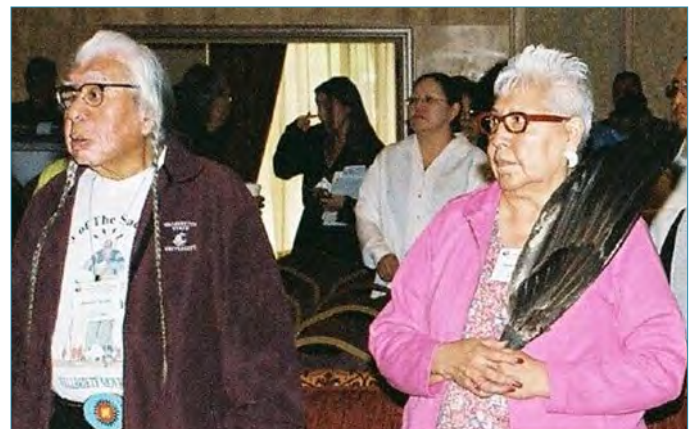
I'm glad to be here again standing before you. Some of the faces I recognize from last year or from the years before. Some of you I've never seen before, but that doesn't make any difference. We all have come for one reason. I come here because we have done a lot of good things together and I always have good memories from what I do with White Bison. We will open this conference with a song from our way of life, the Nez Perce Way to pray. All the songs we sing are prayers. We will sing this song for all the people who ever came this way, to this White Bison, Inc. Way. We feel that all of our ancestors are connected to the earth and all the ones who are gone are also connected. And all the ones who ever came to this gathering are connected, too. We never forget our ancestors. I will sing my song for my own family. And for all of you who have family and relatives in the hospital, we'll include your relative in this song also. And for all the ones who have broken hearts because one of their family has gone to the Happy Land, they are also included in this song.



Leroy Comes Last and Daughters

LeRoy Comes Last

Once again my Divine Maker, my Divine Beings, once again at this time I am your grandchild. I come from the Lakota Nation, from the Hunkpapa band. My great grandmas were born from that. That's how I understand myself to be and this is how I introduce myself to you. I have traveled down here with two of my daughters, and I've traveled with some people from the Fort Peck area and I'm glad to see each and every one of these people. We have families back home. We have communities back home and we come down here to get knowledge. We come down here to get spiritual help. We come down here to get prayers so that we can take them home so our communities can heal from this substance we call meth. And we ask for blessings that we can take something good home to our families. We come so we can take something good home to the people who suffer from this substance abuse, so somehow, some way, our loved ones can start to heal and our communities can start to heal. We ask for pity for our communities. We ask for pity for our families. We ask for pity for ourselves at this time for it is hard for us to see our loved ones being destroyed by this use of what they call the drug meth. I ask for help that way. At this time I ask for blessings for each and every one of us. Ah ho.



Horace Axtell and Dr. Henrietta Mann, Wellbriety Movement Council of Elders



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Henrietta Mann

What a wonderful day to see all of you! I do not know if you know how special each and every one of you is. And how sacred you are. As sacred as this day. As sacred as this journey that we all make together. As sacred as all of life is. I want you to continue to honor that and to remind our children that they too are sacred and that they need to maintain that sacredness and that purity of body, heart, mind, and spirit.

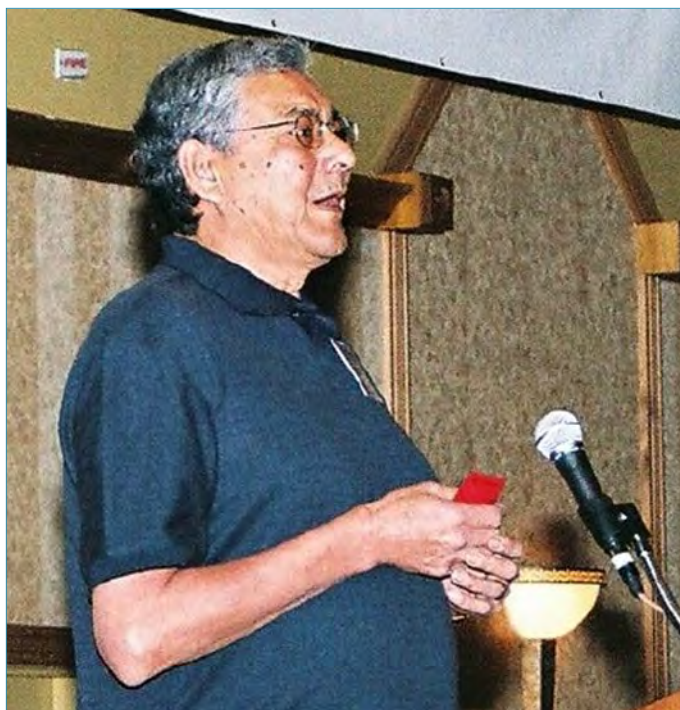
The theme of this conference is long overdue. Only White Bison would be the first to do this, dedicated to our struggle against meth at this time in our lives. To me, it is as devastating as the smallpox epidemics were to our grandparents. It's the new smallpox epidemic that we have to fight against. I want to thank you for all that you do to maintain the sanctity of life and ask Grandfather Sacred above and Grandmother Sacred below to bless you, not just while you are here today but for all the rest of the days of your life, your long life, good life, and I'll ask that in my own language as a Cheyenne Woman.

Larry Stillday

I was given this tobacco and requested to do this very special and sacred thing, to offer prayer for all of us participating in this journey of healing. For one moment I allowed myself to get low, to enter my humanness, and I started shaking, I started to get scared. I was in my weakness. When I walked in here, our ancestors, the drum, spoke to me and immediately brought me up out of my humanness and put me into that plane which has helped me in my own recovery. I really appreciate the drum, the welcoming voices of our ancestors. It doesn't matter what tribe you are from or from what Nation and what race. This drum spoke out to all our hearts and we all responded. So I gave up my weakness, my humanness, and stepped up to the place where the Creator has brought me. Now I stand here before you and look out at all that Indian wisdom. Man, that makes me proud!

That wisdom out there comes in various different forms and shapes. Some of the wisdom is just beginning to get tapped into. Some of the wisdom has found its place with our Elders. The wisdom came into their spirit, sat down in that place of honor and we have a whole, wide spectrum of wisdom. Some is just beginning. And some of us are struggling along the way.

All of us had that excitement and anticipation of coming here. I did. And I felt that excitement, that joy, during the last two days. This morning when I got up and looked at the sun coming out from the east it reminded me that this time with each other is ending. I felt a sadness. It's a good sadness. It's not a hurting sadness. I realized I'm grieving. I'm grieving the end of this great celebration that was given to me as a gift. I have to acknowledge that sad feeling. I see my journey back to the east, and as I journey back to the east I began to see myself putting on those "coats" that I have to wear in my village at home. I look and see at the end of the coat rack is a big overcoat, a great heavy thing. But now I don't have to grab that heavy coat. I have my brothers and sisters who will go back in all directions of this Web that we have. This Wellbriety Web. I know they are all praying as well, joining me in a prayer even though



Larry Stillday, Red Lake Nation



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they are not physically there with me—but they are joining me. And that’s what’s really powerful.

This is a place where I get rejuvenated. Where I get validated. It doesn’t have to be spoken in words. You just feel it. I get embraced when I come here. This time I embrace all my brothers and sisters from all directions.

One of the coats that I usually wear is a pity coat. I say to myself, *Oh, I’m the only one doing this...why doesn’t anyone understand what I am doing...? Poor me...* So I’m not goin to put on that coat for my way home. I’ll take it back to Wal Mart. (laughter)



I thank all of you and all the speakers for their powerful words. I take them as pointers. And my Elders, I greatly respect you. I finally came to realize what respect of Elders means. Back then when I was smart, back then in my teens and twenties I was the only one who was smart. One of my Elders told me, *Don’t laugh at the elders, don’t make fun of them because they are already where you are going.* I finally understood what that meant. Oh, the love that I have for these Elders—that is our textbook of life.

I ask that we have a safe journey when we go back to our own homelands, to our brothers and sisters, to our relatives. Migweetch. ✚

The One You Feed

Once there was a grandfather who was out one day with his grandson, teaching his grandson about life. He said to his grandson, "A fight is going on within me." And he said, "It’s a terrible fight and it’s between two wolves. One of those wolves is fear and envy and regret and greed and arrogance and self-pity, guilt, resentment, lies, inferiority, superiority, and a big ego. The other," he said, "is joy and happiness, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, generosity, truth, compassion, and hope." He said, "The same fight is going on inside you and every other person who walks on the planet."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then he asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win, grandfather?"

His grandfather took a moment and looked at him, and he said, "The one you feed..."

The Story of the Two Wolves,
Retold by Candace Shelton during the conference