



LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS
7500 ODAWA CIRCLE, HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

TRIBAL COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT NARRATIVE

From: Marcella Reyes

Date: March 31st, 2014

Re: 20th Annual Anishinaabemowin-teg Conference

I departed from my home in Harbor Springs, MI the morning of Wednesday, March 26th, 2014 destined for Sault Ste. Marie, MI to attend the 20th Annual Anishinaabemowin-teg conference. I departed Sault Ste. Marie, MI & returned home on the afternoon of Saturday, March 29th, 2014.

The conference began the morning of Thursday, March 26th, 2014 with a Grand Opening Ceremony in the Dream Maker Theatre. A Grand Entry with presentation of the A-teg Eagle Staff and Elder blessing kicked things off followed by a welcoming speech by Board of Directors Member Martina Osawamick.

Lifetime Awards – Induction and Awarding of plaques to New Lifetime Members included a presentation to our very own, Carla Osawamick for her commitment to teaching Anishinaabemowin. Congratulations to Carla on her achievement and chii miigwech for her tireless dedication to keeping the language alive in our community and its members.

The first of two keynote speakers was the talented and charming Wab Kinew. His presentation was entitled “Looking forward: Directions in digital learning for Anishinaabemowin”. The following are things they have used and encouraged we utilize in our Anishinaabemowin revitalization efforts:

- Create an after school language program, alternative to “Latchkey” child.

- Incorporate teachings into Science, Math, fitness and cultural activities.
- Learn by doing - Pair youth with elders and do interactive things using the language, ie; cooking, playing cards and other games, cleaning, gardening, housework or shopping.
- When working with kids, make it interesting and make it fun. An example given was to hook a bike to an electric blender. Powering the blender requires someone to pedal the bike. Teach words and phrases of encouragement that the kids can shout to one another while taking turns pedaling. Incorporate the language while teaching crafts & use songs.
- Bike lab – Teach words and phrases related to bike repair, ie: tools and actions necessary to fix a bent/flat/broken wheel. Instruct students to bring their bikes and provide capable adults to assist in the repairs. Here they have the opportunity to practice the new words and phrases while fixing and maintaining their bikes. Again, learn by doing.
- Host visiting sessions with fluent speakers (elders) to critique and provide feedback.

How do we maintain our cultural integrity while becoming electronic citizens?

SMT or Statistical Machine Translation (Google translate) is the Holy Grail, it is a fully automatic high quality machine translation. An iTunes app is being developed for this purpose as well as YouTube videos with fluent speakers.

Alarming statistics: From 2006 to 2011 there has been a 22.5% decrease in fluent Ojibwe speakers in Canada. While immersion is useful & important, meeting once a week will not create fluent speakers.

The second Keynote speaker was Shirley Williams, Elder & Lifetime member – “Looking back ~ Language Journey of 20 years and what ATeg has accomplished.” She provided a history of ATeg and shared the struggles, efforts and sacrifices that have been made to get this annual conference going and to keep it going. Take time to greet and visit with one another in the language. Speak the language to the children (Anishinaabe monotawaatanig Abinoojiiyag).

On Friday the first afternoon session I attended was by Anton Treuer ~ “New Strategies and Resources for Growing Your Language”.

Waadookodaading Ojibwe Immersion Center has a 100% pass rate utilizing an integrated curriculum and implementing differentiated instruction. Build in your community the things that will work for you and be rigorous.

Most importantly – Figure out how to use the rules of the United States Government to benefit you and your community in your language revitalization efforts.

