

# Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe Monthly Newsletter January 2021

*Wi Te'Hi Wi (Moon of the Hardship) January - This is the time of the year when supplies were becoming depleted and it was difficult to replace them because of the severe winter storms.*

## Thirty riders make long trek to Mankato for Dakota Exile ceremony

Mankato, MN – Mankato Free Press – Dec. 26, 2020 – While the Dakota 38 +2 Memorial Ride was canceled, a group of 30 Dakota horseback riders spent 12 days making the trek from Nebraska to Mankato for a Saturday morning ceremony at Reconciliation Park. About six participants at a time rode about eight miles and then switched with fresh riders and horses in a relay-style ride. Marseille Allen, of Flint, Michigan, was one of the riders. “I usually do the Wounded Knee ride, but I did (the Dakota 38) ride the last two years and wanted to do this one,” she said. Jim Hallum, of Santee, Nebraska, was one of the organizers of what was called the Dakota Exile Ride. When the decision was made to cancel the traditional ride a few weeks ago, he knew an alternative prayer event needed to be done. “We just wanted to do it. We had to. It was an unexpected ride.” On Dec. 26 of each year, Dakota horseback riders and runners usually gather at Reconciliation Park near the Blue Earth County Library to honor the 38 Dakota executed on the site that day in 1862, following the U.S.-Dakota War. They also remember two chiefs who were kidnapped from Canada three years later, brought back to the United States and then executed.



Riders come down Riverfront Drive Saturday morning during the Dakota Exile Ride. The riders left Santee, Nebraska, on Dec. 14. Photo by Tim Krohn



About 100 people turned out to watch the 30 riders who came to Reconciliation Park Saturday morning as part of the Dakota Exile ride. Photo by Tim Krohn



Steam rolls off horses during a cold Saturday morning at Reconciliation Park in downtown Mankato. Photo by Tim Krohn



Riders who spent nearly two weeks on horseback on a memorial ride to Mankato set up camp in a park in Lake Crystal Wednesday night after riding through a blizzard.

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Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe.

Digital photos or sending other original files is encouraged.

Deadline for submission of material is

5 work days before the 15th of each month

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

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#### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

##### GUIDELINES:

*All information submitted for newsletter must be received 5 (five) working days before the 15 of each month. We cannot guarantee inclusion of any submissions after that date in that month's newsletter. Submissions must be made in typewritten (or computer generated) format. They can be submitted directly to Marcie Walker in hardcopy, on disk or via email at:*

[marcie.walker@fsst.org](mailto:marcie.walker@fsst.org)

*The FSST reserves the right to edit submission for content and clarity when appropriate. Additionally, submissions not of a time sensitive nature may be delayed for next month newsletter*

This year's larger event was called off because of the COVID-19 pandemic. About 100 people gathered at Reconciliation Park to watch as the riders came in after camping overnight at Land of Memories Park. Todd Finney, a Dakota from Medford who has ridden in many past memorial rides, didn't ride in this one but helped the riders during a grueling push through the recent blizzard. He said the Dakota Exile ride is to remember the banishment of Dakota from Minnesota as well as to pray for all people who have been exiled for their religious beliefs or other reasons. "All of us were exiled from Minnesota in 1862. By federal law we were kicked out of the state," he said. Many Dakota were exiled to the Dakotas and Nebraska, including the Santee reservation. Finney said the participants spent much time praying during the ride. "We pray often. It drives our prayers into the ground and then into the sky." He said the Dakota believe in seven directions for prayers — east, west, south, north, earth, the heavens and within. Finney helped out this year's group of riders when they made one of the last legs of the ride from St. James to Lake Crystal during the blizzard on Wednesday. "We've had cold before. It was 30-below three years ago, but never a blizzard like this." He and others drove vehicles and trailers as the riders rode along ditches in bitter cold and whiteout conditions. Finney said they kept a close eye on horses and riders. Although the conditions were grueling, he said the riders and horses are accustomed to severe weather. "Most of these folks are horsemen and live in Santee or Sisseton that really gets blasted with weather like this. These are all young guys." Hallum said the last stretch to Mankato was a challenge. "The blizzard was kind of a struggle." The riders were helped along the way by people providing firewood and food for the riders and horses. While participants in the Dakota 38 + 2 ride often stayed at the homes of hosts along the way, the Dakota Exile group set up teepees every night. "I said we're going to camp out," Hallum said. "But it's hard. It was hard to find good firewood, hard wood that would burn hot and long



**A Dakota staff carrier greets people Saturday at Reconciliation Park and remembers the Dakota who were exiled from Minnesota in the 1860s.**



# Prairie Doc Perspectives - When the Heart Whispers

*By Jill Kruse, D.O.*

One definition of the word murmur is “to express one’s discontent in a subdued manner.” So, it makes sense that a heart murmur is often a soft-spoken signal that something may be going on in the heart. The heart does not always shout to get our attention like it does with a heart attack. Sometimes it quietly whispers to those who will listen that there might be an issue. The murmur itself is not the problem, rather, the murmur is telling us to look for one.

Some murmurs are called innocent or benign. These are murmurs when the heart is normal, but the blood is flowing over the valves rapidly which causes a sound. About forty to forty-five percent of children will have a murmur at some point in their life. No treatment is needed for these murmurs and children will often outgrow them, but up to ten percent of them do persist into adulthood.

Murmurs that indicate more serious issues are often associated

with valve disorders in the heart. The valves are the areas that open when the chamber of the heart beats and close when the heart is between beats, to allow the chambers to relax and refill with blood. Sometimes a valve does not fully close, or it will balloon backwards and allow blood to backflow across the valve. This back flow causes a murmur. This is called valve prolapse that leads to blood regurgitation or “regurg” which requires medical attention.

A different type of murmur is caused by mitral or aortic valve stenosis. Stenosis is when the valve does not fully open, so the same amount of blood is forcing itself through a narrower opening in the same amount of time as it does in a normal valve. That extra pressure causes the murmur because the heart must work harder to push the blood through the valve. Over time if this is untreated it can lead to damage of the heart muscles.

The most common murmur is aortic sclerosis, which happens when the aortic valve develops

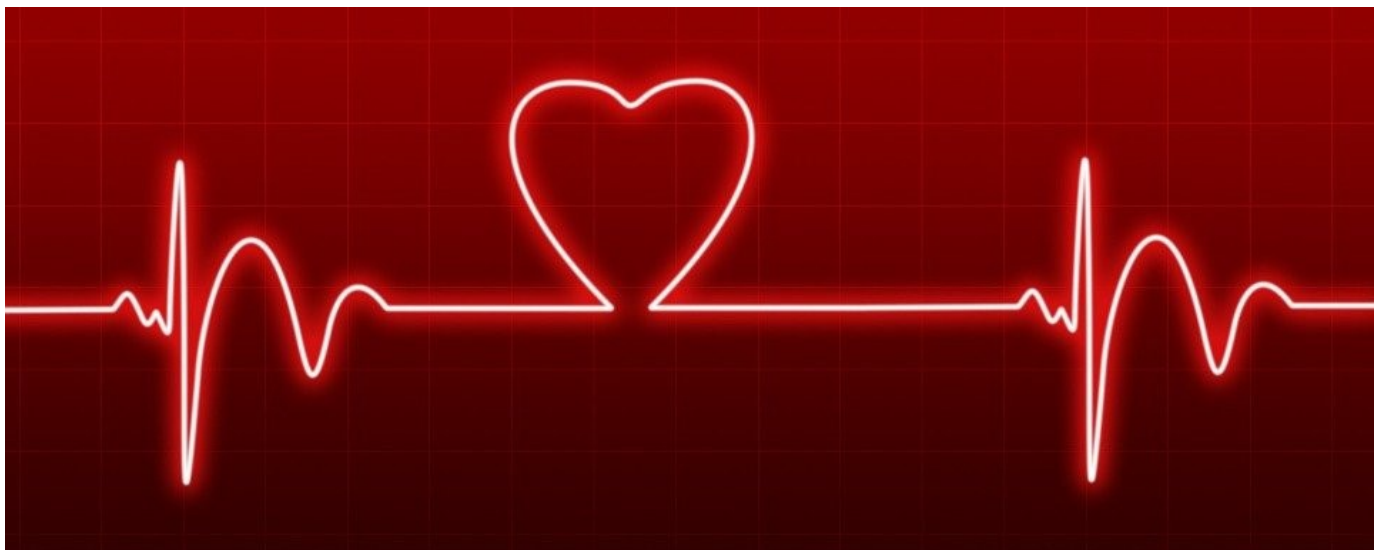
scarring, stiffening, or thickening. This can occur with age or after infections such as rheumatic fever or endocarditis. This is not dangerous by itself, but if it progresses to stenosis, it can be cause for concern.

Often when a doctor hears a murmur, we may want to get a better look with a special ultrasound called an echocardiogram to see if we can find the cause of the noise. Once the cause is found, a follow up plan can be made.

When the heart whispers, we must always listen. By doing so, we may avoid further discontent, forcing the heart to raise its voice over a larger problem.

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Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.





# We're In This Together: Wocekiya Ohna Yuwitaya Unyankapte

Agency Village, SD – Jan. 15, 2021 – Seven tipis stand at SWO Memorial Park, Sisseton, and have since Monday, January 11th. That was day one of a 14-day observance. The lighted tipis are a way of showing love and support for everyone who has been affected by COVID-19. The tipis are symbols of hope, warmth and family.

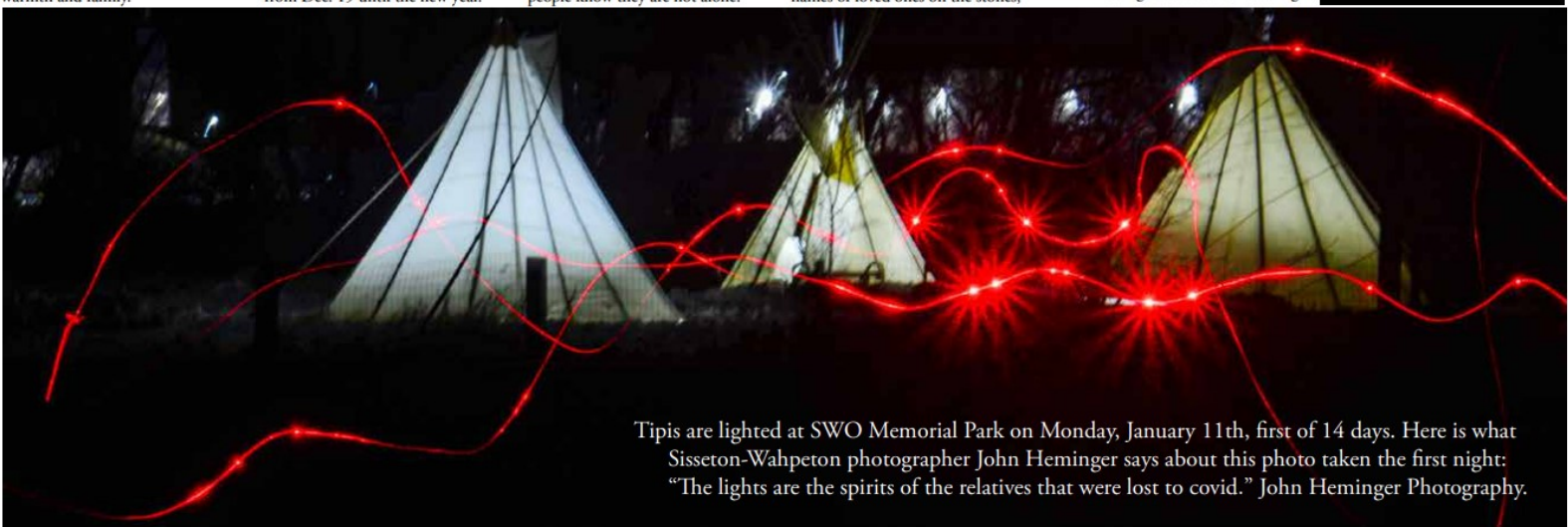
Alana Little Bird, who directs the Piya Canku relapse prevention program on the Lake Traverse Reservation, saw what had been done in her home community and wanted it to happen here. The tribal nations of Montana had planted their flags at the "Lighting of the Teepees: A Symbol of Hope" display, which were lit from Dec. 19 until the new year.

"I couldn't go home, to travel back and be with relatives," Alana said about the lighted tipis in Montana. "One way or another," she said, "we are all grieving a loss." Purpose of the lighted tipis at SWO Memorial Park, she says, "is to give people as much hope and inspiration as possible ... to let people know they are not alone."

"If Rocky Mountain can do this," she said, "we can too." The public is welcome to come and drive-through the park, stop and offer prayers, ties or painted stones. Oyate are invited to write names of loved ones on the stones,

**Lighted Tipis at SWO Memorial Park bringing prayers, hope to families mourning loss of loved ones to COVID-19** which are placed in a circle. Volunteers are present 24 hours a day, but social gatherings are discouraged. Day one featured an opening ceremony which was shared live on social media by KXSW. The original schedule, featuring special days of prayer, was altered slightly due to the winter storm. But the blizzard did not stop the vigil, the lighting of tipis, or the sacred fires.

**Lighted tipis Continued on Page 18**



Tipis are lighted at SWO Memorial Park on Monday, January 11th, first of 14 days. Here is what Sisseton-Wahpeton photographer John Heminger says about this photo taken the first night: "The lights are the spirits of the relatives that were lost to covid." John Heminger Photography.



Beginning to set up the tipis at Memorial Park. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Setting up the tipis. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Volunteers bring wood for the fires which will remain burning for 14 days. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Gathering on the afternoon of day one. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Preparing for the opening ceremony Monday, Jan. 11th. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Lighted tipis on Wednesday, Jan. 13. Photo by Tamara St. John.



**Lighted tipis**  
Continued from Page 1

Here is the schedule for the coming week:

\*Thursday, Jan. 21: Prayers for our leadership and frontline workers.

\*Friday, Jan. 22: Prayers for Ina Maka – everything around us.

Masks and social distancing are required; the park remains closed.

Donations are being accepted and are appreciated: Sisseton-Wahpeton Federal Credit Union, under Piya Canku.

Below are comments over the past week.

**Day One**

**Monday, January 11, 2021**

"What a beautiful night! Feels good to be out here. Day 1 and already I feel a great deal of togetherness. To see everyone's expression was priceless. Thanking creator for how everything is supposed to be. Good mind and spirit."

– Alana Little Bird  
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"The tipis are lit! Drive through SWO Memorial Park. It's beautiful! For 14 days a fire will burn and in the evening; these tipis will be lit to bring hope to our community. Through this time we pray for our community members that have been impacted and those that we

have lost due to Covid. Together are strong, ONE HEART ONE MIND ONE PRAYER. Covid

Chronicles - Our community has been through a lot. You have been through a lot. We had hope that in the New Year we would be back to normal. Progress is a lot slower than many thought. For many prayer is the one thing that we is a common strength we have. This week is the beginning of a prayer event for us here at SWO. We are lighting tipis at Memorial Park to bring hope to our community. Yesterday we worked hard to put up the tipis for the event. I went to bed tired and sore but happy that we could all come together to do this. Pidamayaye, everyone that pitched it, frozen toes n fingers n all."

– Ella Robertson  
**Day Two**

**Tuesday, January 12, 2021**

"Wocekiya ohna yuwitawa unyankapte. Stopped by to pay

tribute at the Piya Canku Covid response tipi congregation. Painted

we lost to covid, continued prayers out to all the families."

symbolizing unity, love and hope during this time. I love that I live in a community with people like Mini Wicozani Yuha Win (Alana Little Bird) who work to make this happen for our relatives who are grieving or are dealing with hardship at this time."

– Tamara St. John

**Day Three**  
**Wednesday,**  
**January 13, 2021**

"Tiwahe, I asked you all in a good way to say some prayers for everyone right now. Send your vibrant love and positive vibes out into the universe. Humbly ask creator to hold our loved ones, family, and friends. Keep our youth, and parents and elders those who are serving our nation, the incarcerated,

– Delight Heminger  
\*\*\*\*\*

"Lighting of Tipis -

the ones with illnesses, those fighting the battle of the virus in our prayers. Creator please hear our

prayers. We're in this together."

– Alana Little Bird

**Days Four & Five**  
**Thursday, January 14**  
**and Friday, January 15, 2021**

Blizzard conditions caused cancellation of some planned services but did not shutdown the tipis.

"Day four and five we are hunkered down for the storm, and the fire is going strong."

– Danielle DeCoteau  
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"Hahanna waste-Anpetu Izaptan, January 15th – The show goes on, blizzard or not. My brother donated a load of wood yesterday to the fire. I'm just proud of him and Cody and their hard work. A flurry of activity yesterday to get the tipis secured, Jr. Cloud, Pasa and Eric MacConnell got 'er done. Soon Cody Seaboy came out with materials for a shelter to keep the outside fire protected. It makes my heart feel good to see people give of their time and self to help. The tipis looked beautiful in the storm. Now on to Day #5."

"Day #5 – It's blizzarding out and roads are black ice. Thankful for my cuzin Pasha and Jr. Cloud for watching the fire every day since it's been started. Stop by and they'll share some good hunting n fishing stories."

– Ella Robertson



stones honoring those lost to covid. Ohinni kiksuye kte Deksi Alex "Muchie" Heminger and all those



Tipis are lit on day one, Monday, Jan. 11. Piya Canku photo by Alana Little Bird.



Lighted tipis at SWO Memorial Park the evening of day one. Photo by Tamara St. John.





## Capitol siege by pro-Trump rioters



Supporters of President Donald Trump take over balconies and inauguration scaffolding at the United States Capitol on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 in Washington, DC.

On Wednesday, pro-Trump rioters stormed the United States Capitol, interrupting a joint session of Congress in which representatives were gathered to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the 2020 general election. Throughout the chaos, Trump continued to make baseless claims of election fraud on social media.



# Trump says he won't attend Joe Biden's inauguration

"To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the inauguration on January 20th," he announced on [Twitter](#).

Trump's decision to skip Biden's swearing-in ceremony comes after weeks of his refusal to acknowledge that Biden had defeated him in the Nov. 3 election. Trump finally acknowledged his loss in a video on Thursday, saying that a new administration will take office in January.

After reports Thursday that Vice President Mike Pence was expected to attend the inauguration, Pence spokesman Devin O'Malley [tweeted](#): "You can't attend something you haven't received an invitation to...."

But a spokeswoman for Biden's inaugural committee said Pence is "of course invited to attend the Inaugural."

Pence and his wife "have yet to make a decision regarding their attendance," O'Malley said Friday.

She said the president and vice president traditionally do not receive formal invitations. Attendance is coordinated at a staff level "and that is taking place," the spokeswoman said.

GOP Sen. Sasse would 'consider' supporting Trump impeachment

Republican Sen. Ben Sasse said Friday he was not opposed to removing President Donald Trump from office through impeachment for the president's encouragement of an "insurrectionist mob" that stormed the Capitol Wednesday.

"Donald Trump has acted shamefully. He has been in flagrant dereliction of his duty and he will be remembered for having incited this and for having drawing more division into an already divided people. That is who Donald Trump is. That is what his legacy is going to be," The Nebraska Republican told CBS "This Morning."

"What he did was wicked," said Sasse, who even before this week's violence repeatedly denounced Trump's claims that the election was stolen and his GOP colleague's plan to challenge the results.

Congressional Democrats have said that if Vice President Mike Pence and a majority of Trump's Cabinet did not remove the president from office by invoking the 25th Amendment, they plan to file articles of impeachment.

"The House, if they come together and have a process. I will definitely consider whatever articles they might move because, as I have told you, I believe the president has disregarded his oath of office," Sasse said.

Sasse also called for an investigation into why it took so long to deploy the National Guard in response to the breach of the Capitol and why offers of assistance from other regional law enforcement agencies were not immediately accepted.

Colin Powell: 'I wish he would just do what Nixon did. And that's step down.'  
Former Secretary of State Colin Powell said Friday that President Donald Trump should resign immediately in the wake of Wednesday's riot at the U.S. Capitol.

"I wish he would just do what Nixon did and that's step down," Powell said in an interview on NBC.

Powell said impeachment – a step House Democrats are preparing for as early as next week – is too time consuming.

"Somebody ought to go up there and tell him, 'It's over. Plane's waiting for you. You're out,'" Powell said.

Powell said that would also help "cut the guts out from underneath" the Trump allies who are seeking to overturn the results of the Nov. 3 election, which President-elect Joe Biden won. Trump has falsely claimed the election was rigged and rife with fraud, allegations that have been repeatedly debunked and rejected by courts, election officials and state leaders.

On Wednesday, as Congress was preparing to formally recognize Biden's win, Trump encouraged a group of his supporters to march to the Capitol. They were able to breach security, ransack the building and temporarily halt the Electoral College count. An officer with the U.S. Capitol Police was among those who died in the wake of the attack.

"What he is responsible for is one of the most disgusting things I've ever seen," Powell, a retired four-star general, said of Trump. "He should be totally ashamed of himself, and he should take that shame and turn it into a resignation as quickly as possible."

Powell called those who stormed the Capitol "idiots" and said Trump "encouraged them every step of the way."

He said Vice President Mike Pence and other current government officials can easily take over for the remaining days of Trump's term, which will end of Jan. 20 when Biden is inaugurated.

Powell also expressed shock at the poor planning ahead of Wednesday's events. He said there was not a clear line of command and the delay in deploying the National Guard was inexplicable.

"I don't know what they were waiting for," he said.

– *Deirdre Shesgreen*

Dominion voting systems sues Sidney Powell for more than \$1.3 billion  
Dominion Voting Systems filed a defamation lawsuit against attorney Sidney Powell for her baseless claims that the company, which manufactured electronic voting machines used by some districts in the 2020 election, changed votes for President Donald Trump to votes for President-elect Joe Biden.

Powell's wide-ranging conspiracy theory variously implicated Dominion, deceased Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez, the CIA and Chinese communists in a plot to rig the election against Trump. But her efforts to prove her unfounded assertions in court were repeatedly rejected, sometimes derisively, by federal and state judges.

"Powell's wild accusations are demonstrably false," the lawsuit reads. "Far from being created in Venezuela to rig elections for a now-deceased Venezuelan dictator, Dominion was founded in Toronto for the purpose of creating a fully auditable paper-based vote system that would empower people with disabilities to vote independently on verifiable paper ballots."

The company says the paper ballot safeguards used by its machines would have made the sort of plot alleged by Powell impossible and that her claims are not rooted in any factual basis.

Dominion seeks compensatory damages of \$651,735,000, punitive damages of \$651,735,000 and reimbursement for its legal costs. It also is asking the court to grant "a narrowly tailored permanent injunction requiring the removal of all the Defendants' statements that are determined to be false and defamatory."



Rep. Katherine Clark says impeachment process could start next week

Rep. Katherine Clark, the assistant House speaker, told CNN Friday that if Vice President Mike Pence and a majority of the Cabinet do not agree to remove President Donald Trump from office via the 25th Amendment, the House will move forward with impeachment proceedings as "early as mid-next week."

"We know that we have limited time, but that every day that Donald Trump is president of the United States is a day of grave danger," Clark said. "We can use procedural tools to get articles of impeachment to the floor for a House vote quickly. We have already had Chairman Jerry Nadler, chair of the Judiciary Committee, say that he will use those tools to bring the articles as fast as possible."

Clark said that if Pence does not act, the House would "not have a choice" to impeach Trump, who she said "incited a seditious mob to storm the Capitol. We now have five deaths from that and the harm to our democracy is really unfathomable."

"We have a president who has turned on us. He is a traitor. He has incited violence and perpetuated a lie that he won this election," she said.

When asked if it would be possible to hold a Senate impeachment trial before Trump leaves office on Jan. 20, Clark said, "We can act very quickly when we want to."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., told CBS on Friday that if the House advanced impeachment articles, "I will definitely consider whatever articles they might move" because he believes Trump disregarded his oath of office

Betsy DeVos, more Trump officials resign

Two days after an angry mob of pro-Trump supporters breached the Capitol, several members of President Donald Trump's White House and Administration have resigned.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said in a letter to Trump obtained by USA TODAY the "behavior was unconscionable for our country," and there "is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me."

**More:** [Betsy DeVos, Elaine Chao, Mick Mulvaney, other Trump administration officials resign after Capitol riot](#)

Her resignation followed those of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Trump's former acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney from his role as the U.S. special envoy to Northern Ireland, and Matthew Pottinger, deputy national security adviser, among others.

Trump on Thursday acknowledged President-elect Joe Biden's election victory in the clearest terms yet and called for a smooth transition of power at a time when he faces increasing criticism for his handling of the violence that erupted a day earlier at the U.S. Capitol.

"A new administration will be inaugurated on Jan. 20," Trump said in a video posted on Twitter late Thursday. "My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power. This moment calls for healing and reconciliation."

The change in messaging followed Congressional leaders calling Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th amendment, threatening to draw up articles and move forward with impeachment if not enacted.

Capitol Police officer dies after being injured by pro-Trump mob

Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick died Thursday night from injuries sustained the previous day during clashes with the mob of Trump's supporters.

According to a statement from the Capitol Police, Sicknick was injured "while physically engaging with protesters" and collapsed after returning to his division. He was then taken to the hospital for treatment, where he remained until his death.

Sicknick, who joined the Capitol Police in 2008, was a part of the department's first responder unit. His death is being investigated by the Washington Metropolitan Police Department and federal agencies, according to the statement.

"The entire USCP Department expresses its deepest sympathies to Officer Sicknick's family and friends," the federal law enforcement agency said. "We ask that Officer Sicknick's family, and other USCP officers' and their families' privacy be respected during this time."

Many have accused Trump of inciting Wednesday's violence with his continued baseless claims that the election was "rigged" against him and a fiery speech in which he encouraged the crowd to head toward the Capitol.

## 'They desecrated the center of American government': Michelle Obama

Former first lady Michelle Obama responded to Wednesday's riots at the Capitol in a blistering statement a day later, saying her "heart had fallen harder and faster than I can remember."

In just a few hours, though, my heart had fallen harder and faster than I can remember. Like all of you, I watched as a gang -- organized, violent, and mad they'd lost an election -- laid siege to the United States Capitol," she added. "They set up gallows. They proudly waved the traitorous flag of the Confederacy through the halls. They desecrated the center of American government."

"Once authorities finally gained control of the situation, these rioters and gang members were led out of the building not in handcuffs, but free to carry on with their days," Obama said. "The day was a fulfillment of the wishes of an infantile and unpatriotic president who can't handle the truth of his own failures. And the wreckage lays at the feet of a party and media apparatus that gleefully cheered him on, knowing full well the possibility of consequences like these."

Obama then noted how the rioters were treated differently than protesters responding to the death of George Floyd last summer.

"There's one question I just can't shake: What if these rioters had looked like the folks who go to Ebenezer Baptist Church every Sunday? What would have been different? I think we all know the answer," she said. "This summer's Black Lives Matter protests were an overwhelmingly peaceful movement -- our nation's largest demonstrations ever, bringing together people of every race and class and encouraging millions to re-examine their own assumptions and behavior."

"And yet, in city after city, day after day, we saw peaceful protestors met with brute force. We saw cracked skulls and mass arrests, law enforcement pepper spraying its way through a peaceful demonstration for a presidential photo op," she added, referencing the unrest in Lafayette Park over the summer.

"And for those who call others unpatriotic for simply taking a knee in silent protest, for those who wonder why we need to be reminded that Black Lives Matter at all, yesterday made it painfully clear that certain Americans are, in fact, allowed to denigrate the flag and symbols of our nation," Obama added. "They've just got to look the right way. What do all those folks have to say now?"



"Thankfully, even in the darkness, there are glimmers of hope," she said. "It's something I imagine Reverend Warnock has preached about before -- and I'm still heartened beyond belief that he's headed to Washington. I'm glad his fellow Georgian, Jon Ossoff, is, too, and that together they'll help give control of Congress back to the only party that's shown that it can put our democracy above its own short-term political fortunes. I pray that every American, especially those who disagree with them, will give our new Congress, President-Elect Biden, and Vice-President-Elect Harris the chance to lead us in a better direction."



## Covid-19 in South Dakota.

Positive cases per: 100,000 people

American Indian -16,907

Black / African American-12,355

Hispanic / Latino-10,338

White-10,045

Asian-9,943

Deaths per 100,000 people

American Indian-281

White-172

Asian-120

Hispanic / Latino-51

Black / African American-41\*

**THIS PANDEMIC IS DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTING OUR COMMUNITY. PLEASE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19.**

**WEAR A MASK,  
WASH YOUR HANDS &  
WATCH YOUR DISTANCE.**

[HTTPS://COVIDTRACKING.COM/DATA/STATE/SOUTH-DAKOTA](https://COVIDTRACKING.COM/DATA/STATE/SOUTH-DAKOTA)



## Prairie Doc Perspectives -

# A Diagnosis of Cancer

*By Jill Kruse, D.O.*

When I teach medical students, I always remind them that we will see people on the very best days of their lives and the very worst days of their lives. As a result, we will see every range of emotion in our patients and feel every range of emotion ourselves. This is especially true when giving someone a diagnosis of cancer.

Telling someone they have cancer is a daunting mission. Often, the patient suspects something serious when they are asked to come into the clinic to review results in person instead of getting a letter or phone call.

I always make a point to ensure my patients are accompanied by a family member or friend. Having another person in the room to support them is important, because often the person diagnosed with cancer does not always hear or remember much after the "C word" is spoken. The word can land a visceral reaction. And, while most of us know someone who has been affected by cancer, it is difficult to imagine what it feels like to have those words directed at you, until it happens.

After a diagnosis of cancer is given, the next steps can happen quickly. There may be referrals to a specialist. Sometimes follow up

exams and tests are done as soon as they can be scheduled, even on the day of the diagnosis. Having someone else in the room to help keep track of the information and offer support is helpful.

When the diagnosis of cancer is first spoken, there is usually one of the five emotions of grief that Elizabeth Kubler-Ross described. Most often, I see denial and anger. Later there is bargaining and



depression, but on occasion there is acceptance. I have told people they have cancer only to see them smile, nod their head, and tell me that they already knew, and I confirmed their suspicions. Each person has an individual journey, and they will cycle through all these emotions, often more than once.

My hope as a primary care physician, is to never let my patients be alone in this journey. After a diagnosis of cancer, I refer my patients to specialists, but I am not done caring for the person. I let the oncologists take over in the



fight against this disease. But I, and most primary care physicians, will always be there as a trusted advisor and friend who can help coordinate care and answer questions.

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Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.







# Domestic violence is not a Native American tradition.

Does your partner ever...

- Call you names or criticize you?
- Isolate you from family or friends?
- Threaten to hurt you or your children?
- Push, slap, kick or strangle you?
- Refuse to give you money for food, gas or medicine?



**STRONGHEARTS**  
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# First vaccines administered



Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Health Clinic Director of Nursing Laura Gehling gives Dr. Courtney Keith a COVID-19 vaccination at the clinic last week. The clinic gave its first shots to health care workers.

## COVID cases slow in Moody County

Dozens of local health care workers have received vaccinations against COVID-19 as both the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe and Avera Health started giving the shots last week.

The tribe's clinic received its first shipment Dec. 21, two days ahead of schedule and started inoculating workers the next day, said Cynthia Jacobs, chief executive officer. The tribe has the first dose of vaccines for all 64 of its health care workers, and most employees have indicated they will get the shots.

"I didn't sense a whole lot of vaccine hesitancy," she said. "We're staging it so we're giving 10, 10, 10. Our first 10 went very smoothly."

Avera Flandreau received its shipment on Dec. 23 and inoculated 22 people that day and 22 on Christmas Eve, finishing up the doses it received on Monday. Administrator Scott Hargens said the vials had more doses in them than planned so they received enough vaccine for about 100 people.

Each vial of the Moderna vaccine typically contains 10 doses but some had 11 or 12 in them, he said. In addition to Avera health care workers and long-term care workers at Riverview Healthcare Center, the hospital has been able to reach out to additional people who work in assisted living and to local law enforcement. When this batch is gone, Avera will get a second dose to administer to those same people in 28 days.

Hargens has not been told when residents in the community might start receiving the vaccinations. "We are following the South Dakota Department of Health priority checklist of who gets it," he said.

At the FSST clinic, staff didn't want to vaccinate all employees at once in case there were reactions that would keep people home from work and lead to a worker shortage, Jacobs said. But so far, that hasn't been the case. Hargens said no one at Avera reacted substantially as well.

Overall, the county as of Monday had 66 people who have been vaccinated, including some who work outside of the county and would have been given the shot at their medical jobs, according to the state.

Receiving the vaccine is voluntary, and more than 85 percent of employees are initially interested at the tribal clinic, Jacobs said. Once health care workers are vaccinated, she expects the next groups will be essential workers and those who are ages 65 and older and vulnerable with an underlying medical condition. Indian Health Services have asked the tribe for the number of people in those categories.

"When we will receive it, we don't know. But they have taken our numbers," she said.

The vaccination arrives in Flandreau at the same time that the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in the county is decreasing.

State Department of Health numbers as of Monday show that seven additional people tested positive for the virus in Moody County compared with the same time last week. That is only a fraction of the number of people who were getting the disease within the last two months when dozens tested positive each week.

Twenty-three people tested this past week, also a much smaller number than tested previously each week.

State data shows there have been 527 total positive cases in the county, and 36 remain active, with 477 recovered. In addition, 1,578 tests have been negative, 34 people have been hospitalized and 14 people have died in the county.



# City council to tour tribe's pot facility



City council members this week began touring the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe's marijuana growing facility as part of a way to learn about future local plans.

The opportunity will help the council be educated and informed as the tribe gets ready to grow plants, Mayor Dan Sutton told council members at the Jan. 4 meeting.

In November, South Dakota voters approved both medical and recreational use of marijuana, going from a prohibition state to full use. While marijuana is scheduled to become legal July 1, it is not legal under federal law.

States must decide their own laws for the legalization of marijuana use, a topic that is expected to be debated by this year's Legislature. The amendment allowing the sale and use of marijuana also faces a legal challenge.

With the ability for the legal sale and use of marijuana, tribes can sell products off of reservation lands. That also means that customers can buy products on tribal land and take them with them.

The change means the tribe is preparing to be a leader in the industry, Sutton said. It also means potential business growth in Flandreau.

"They also are talking about bringing in additional hotel chains," Sutton said. "If they create lounges and those types of things, they're going to need places for people to stay. Additional restaurants also are part of the plans, including food chains, he said.

Tribal leadership did not reply to a request asking for information about specific plans for marijuana growing and local sales.

"Everything is preliminary," said Seth Pearman, the tribe's lawyer.

In 2015, the tribe started growing marijuana with the intent of selling it beginning the following year, after a tribal vote to legalize the use, which the tribe interpreted to be legal under federal law.

The plans would have meant the tribe would have been the first in the nation to open a marijuana lounge. But after legal uncertainties arose, the tribe ended up destroying millions of dollars worth of plants in November 2015.

# Logistical and emotional burdens on S.D. funeral directors

Funeral directors across South Dakota are taking additional preventative measures to stay safe from the COVID-19 virus, including using protective equipment such as masks, gloves, footies and plastic sheeting while handling bodies.



Megan Raposa,  
South Dakota News Watch

Funeral director Mitch Steinhoff's alarm goes off at 4 a.m. most days so he can get in a few hours of work before the phones start ringing at 8 a.m. One call can change the whole day in the funeral business, and for Steinhoff, owner of Eidsness Funeral Home in Brookings, the phone rings more often in recent months as more South Dakotans die amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"We ended up serving 25 families in some capacity in November," he said. "Typically, we would serve seven or eight."

Many funeral home directors across the state say they have seen double or triple the usual number of deaths in the past few months as the COVID-19 pandemic has dragged on. Materials such as personal protective equipment, caskets, body bags and gloves are in short supply, and wait times are increasing for cremation services.

Some funeral directors are working 12 to 16 hours a day to keep up with demand for their services. As of Dec. 30, 2020, about 1,450 people had died due to COVID-19 in the state.

Meanwhile, they're working with families who aren't able to grieve as they normally would before the pandemic. Families may not have had time to visit loved ones before they died, may have been exposed to the coronavirus themselves or may have to wait until the virus is under control to hold a more traditional funeral service or remembrance ceremony.

The roughly 340 licensed funeral directors and embalmers in South Dakota are playing a small but essential role in the response to the pandemic. Like many others, they have faced a new normal that has been challenging and at times, heartbreaking and lonely.

In Redfield, for example, the local nursing home and its residents were hit hard by COVID-19, resulting in several elderly deaths.

"It's been just horrendous," said Kelly Hyke, owner of Hyke Funeral Home in Redfield. "I think we are the forgotten people of covid."

In South Dakota, nursing homes and long-term care facilities have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, and a majority of the 1,450 deaths reported have been people over the age of 80, according to data from the state health department.

Funeral directors have been taking additional precautions in transporting and embalming bodies since the start of the pandemic, regardless of the cause of death.

"I treat every body now like it may be infected," said Wade Wilson, a funeral director at Behrens-Wilson Funeral Home in Rapid City.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following personal protective equipment for funeral directors during embalming: N95 masks, disposable gown, face shield and two pairs of gloves.

In the past, human remains may sometimes be moved by someone wearing only protective gloves, but with the airborne transmission of COVID-19, the times when the body is moved are most dangerous. When a body is moved, there is a chance that air is expelled through the mouth or nose, according to Jack Mitchell, spokesman and board member for the National Funeral Directors Association.

Overall, however, the risk of contracting COVID-19 postmortem is very low, Mitchell said.

The risk to funeral directors is higher, though, when the deceased person must be removed from a nursing home where an outbreak has taken place and the protocol now is to wear a gown and other personal protective equipment before going inside.

For some funeral home workers, the extra precautions and protective equipment have forced a renewed commitment to safety and hygiene. "If I'm taking anything good out of it, it's helped us refresh on things we've maybe gotten complacent with over the years," said Justin Nelson, funeral director at Mason Funeral Home in Winner.

The impact of the pandemic on funeral homes has varied depending on a few factors, including the size of the funeral home. Larger funeral homes are more capable of handling an increase in cases, both because they have more storage for remains and because they have more staff to help.

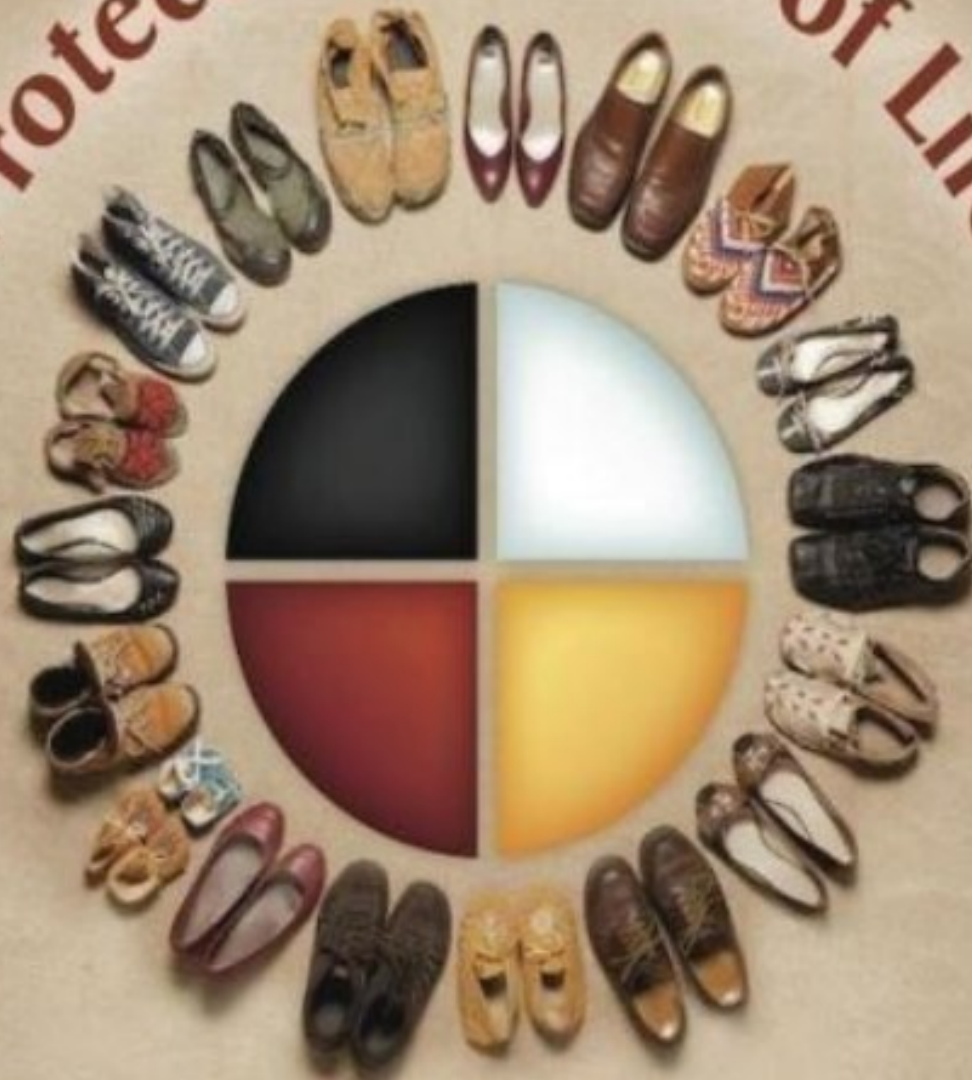
In Sioux Falls, George Boom Funeral Home has been busier than usual but not overwhelmed, said manager Phil Schmitz.

The funeral home opened a new facility in east-central Sioux Falls in 2017, and with that came about three times more space than its previous location.

In Brookings, Steinhoff took a proactive approach as soon as he saw what the coronavirus was doing to overwhelm funeral facilities in New York City in the year.



# Protect the Circle of Life



**Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Health Center has the COVID-19 vaccine and invites any person that is 75 years of age or older who is:**

- 1. A current registered patient or**
- 2. Is eligible for services at our facility, to call for an appointment. If you are interested, please contact our COVID-19 team at 605-997-2642.**