



Society of American Indian
Government Employees



The Talking Leaf



SAIGE SPRING NEWSLETTER - APRIL/MAY 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



FREDERICKA JOSEPH

Moshc'e G'izo !! (Happy Spring!)

Now that winter is on its way out and spring is arriving, SAIGE is busy planning the Annual National Training Program (NTP). We are excited to have had a successful year with adding new board members and planning a new initiative addressed in this newsletter.

With safety in mind for our attendees and due to travel restrictions, we have chosen to host another virtual training from June 21-23, 2022. This is SAIGE's 20 Year Anniversary so in keeping with this momentous

occasion, and for the training program only, we have selected the following theme: *Celebrating 20 years of Respect, Culture, and Education*. We have confirmed DJ Vanas, Leadership Expert and Motivational speaker, who began working with SAIGE 20 years ago and presented at our first training program in Fort Lauderdale, FL. He will be one of our plenary speakers. Steven Pevar will also be presenting on legal matters happening in Indian Country. As usual, our training tracks include Federal Indian Law & Policy, EEO/Diversity, Professional Development, and Cultural & Natural Resources. Even though we selected a specific theme highlighting our 20 years we realize agencies use our theme for November's Native American Heritage Month. If you select this theme, please use the following: *Celebrating Respect, Culture and Education*.

The Warrior Society and SAIGE Youth Program are busy planning their agendas and lining up their speakers. The Warrior Society will host their training on Thursday, June 23, 2022. Danny Garceau, Director of the Warrior Program,

has been working with his team to provide a day of learning and education. Speakers will present on current issues and changes occurring for our veterans and their families. Everyone is invited to attend. On Wednesday there will be a virtual career fair. Representatives from different agencies will be in attendance so plan to take time to speak with the representatives and to recruit for your agency!

The new initiative SAIGE is planning is to offer a year long training for our junior grade employees. We hope to kick off this initiative at our June event. We are still looking for ideas on topics that would help an employee advance in their career. If you have any suggestions, please send them to me at chair@saige.org.

We look forward to seeing you at our virtual training event. We have a flyer posted on our website at www.saige.org so please download it and send it to your co-workers and your leadership.

Stay Safe.

2022 Veterans' Track during the SAIGE National Training Program

By Edward Blauvelt, SAIGE Board of Directors, Warrior Society Assistant Director



Hesci!

2022 marks the 20th Anniversary of SAIGE forming as an organization. SAIGE proudly supports its Warrior Society Program developed for and by veterans that offers training specific to the needs of veterans by highlighting available federal benefits and providing attending veterans exposure to varied employment options. The Veterans' Program facilitates collaboration and partnership opportunities among veterans, agencies that serve them and veterans' organizations.

This year's NTP will be one of the best as we are looking forward hearing from our Keynote Speaker Mr. Clarence Johnson Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Diversity and Leadership. Mr. Johnson is responsible for the development and coordination of diversity management and equal opportunities policies and programs affecting all DoD civilian employees and military personnel within DoD worldwide. He also provides staff

supervision of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, a 100-member institution, located at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, which is the premiere DoD school in equal opportunity and equal employment opportunity training, education and research. Mr. Johnson serves as principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) on diversity management, equal opportunity and equal employment opportunity matters. Mr. Johnson entered active duty service as a C-141 Starlifter navigator, where he served in global airlift, contingency operations, Military Airlift Command Plans staff, and Air Staff Training (ASTRA). He was a squadron commander three times and a group commander twice. Additionally, he held increasingly responsible positions at the headquarters and installation level. His decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal (with one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Legion of Merit, and the Meritorious Service Medal (with three oak leaf clusters). Mr. Johnson holds a master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University, Missouri, and a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. Mr. Johnson is also a graduate of Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College, Alabama, and the National Security Management Course, National Defense University.

Additionally, we are hosting Mr. Mike Valdez from the Native American Veterans Association (NAVA). NAVA serves men and women who have served active duty and veteran military members and their families. They aid in their transition from a warrior's journey to civilian life through readjustment assistance, strengthening family ties, links to mental health and wellness services, and career and educational training.

Furthermore, Mr. Michael Lally, the Executive Director Air Force Security Assistance Squadron (AFSAT) will offer a presentation of the mission and veteran opportunities within AFSAT across the globe. AFSAT organizes and provides flight, technical, English language, and Professional Military Education to Air Forces from 157 Partner Nations.

The Veterans' Program is open to all SAIGE registrants and any veterans and active-duty military.

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS



D.J. Vanas, Native Discovery, was the luncheon speaker for the very first SAIGE Training conference in 2004 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. He has joined us several times since then and has agreed to speak to our audience this year, as SAIGE celebrates our 20th Anniversary as an organization. D.J. is a very effective speaker and storyteller as well as a published author, often using humor to deliver his message. He appeared in a PBS documentary and last year was featured in his own PBS Special, *Discovering Your Warrior Spirit*. His latest book, *The Warrior Within*, is being released this August. He is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, and a decorated Air Force captain, and has even been invited to the White House to speak. D.J. believes that his tribal culture holds the keys to better work practices, to leading and living with courage, and to serving others at our very best. *Inspiring the Warrior Spirit: We all want to be brave. We all want to deliver when it matters... and in this session, you'll be inspired to do both. We've endured unprecedented uncertainty and change – and with it comes fearful doubt which can affect our focus, wellness, and the way we serve others.*



Stephen Pevar first brought his insight into Federal Indian Law to SAIGE in 2007, in Tucson, AZ. One of the pillars of SAIGE's Mission is to educate government employees in the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility, and Mr. Pevar has had an extensive career not only as an expert in Indian Law but a longtime professor teaching it in law schools. His very popular and accessible book, *The Rights of Indians and Tribes*, is now in its fifth edition. Originally written as an American Civil Liberties Union handbook, it has become a venerated source of reliable and accurate information for those seeking answers to questions on Federal Indian Law. Stephen recently retired from the ACLU's Racial Justice Program as a Senior Staff attorney after 45 years of service. He has litigated some 200 federal cases involving constitutional rights, including cases in more than ten different Federal District Courts, three different U.S. Courts of Appeals, and one case in the U.S. Supreme Court. He currently teaches at Yale Law School. Stephen has provided valuable awareness to SAIGE NTP participants over the years. He has a way of approaching complex topics that opens a door to better overall understanding as well as addressing any intertwined nuances. He has a heart for SAIGE and believes in its mission. We are grateful for his ongoing support and friendship and welcome him back again this year to our NTP.

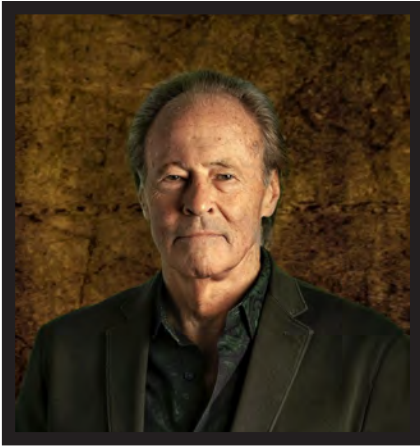


James Vukelich Kaagegaabaw, a descendent of Turtle Mountain, is an international speaker, author & the creator of Ojibwe Word of the Day. His mission is to inspire people to live the good life by sharing ancient wisdom to influence modern solutions through an indigenous perspective. James is recognized as a leading voice on the interconnectedness of language & culture. His keen insights were developed through speaking with and recording elders and native language speakers (many of whom have since passed on) in Canada, Michigan and Minnesota as part of the Ojibwe Language Dictionary Project. For over twenty years, James has moved seamlessly through diverse settings locally and internationally. In addition to keynote speeches for academic, philanthropic, business and community organizations, he facilitates community roundtable groups, and conducts spiritual ceremonies in his local community. He has consulted with school districts, colleges, historical societies and government agencies to develop and teach language and

cultural programs. He has also been featured on numerous podcasts, radio & television programs in an addition to publications.

SAIGE Government Contractor Career Track

Leveraging your Native heritage and federal government experience working for Tribal businesses in the government contracting arena



Greetings, SAIGE Membership!

My name is Don Cōqayohōmuwōk Chapman and am a proud member of the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut.

I know many of you from my work serving as Sr Policy Advisor on Native American

Affairs under Secretary Gary Locke during the 1st Obama Administration or my work as Tribal Liaison at the White House National Ocean Council. I currently serve as Senior Vice President of Federal Operations for Cayuse Government Services (CGS). CGS is wholly owned by the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation in Pendleton, OR. In my current duties, I am the senior executive responsible for \$300m in federal service contracts at the US Department of State. We provide Outside Contiguous United States (OCONUS) subject matter expertise across the globe, operate all IT services for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), and are implementing new state-of-the-industry global Cyber solutions at DS. Although I am no longer a direct government employee, I'm badged, hold a top secret (TS) clearance, and managing a significant portfolio of very specialized government services and operations.

As a Lifetime Member, ex-Board member, and staunch advocate of SAIGE, I have had the opportunity to work with SAIGE leadership to introduce what I feel is an excellent career path option for SAIGE members. I have been fortunate enough to build a very rewarding long-term career by both serving as a federal employee and as a federal government contractor. At the same time, I have earned revenues for tribes/ANCs, created job opportunities on reservations, and stayed tied closer to tribal cultures while still serving as a badged employee performing federal government work. The opportunity to cross over to government contracting has provided me with an incredibly rewarding career, personal growth, financial stability, enhanced health benefits, and employment continuity serving both the federal government and Indian Country. Please allow me to expand on this possible career path benefit to my SAIGE brothers and sisters.

Over the past 25 years there has been explosive growth in tribal, Alaska Native Corporations (ANC), and Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHO) government contracting business. The Small Business Administration's 8a Tribal/ANC program has accelerated tribally/ANC-owned companies with a very favorable contract award program by awarding billions of dollars in service contracts to tribes, ANCs, and NHOs. Since only 30% of the federal workforce works directly for the federal government, the remaining 70% of the workforce is hired through prime contracting companies to perform. Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs have created many companies performing this essential and inherently government work across DoD, Civilian, and Intel agencies. This condition provides a unique opportunity for the SAIGE membership who are either currently serving in federal positions or who have previously served (including Veterans) in leveraging their unique work experience into career opportunities working for Tribal/ANC/NHO – owned companies.

Here are some of the key drivers to why SAIGE members might want to consider working for Tribal, ANCs, and NHO government contracting companies:

- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs have Native hiring preferences.
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHO 8a companies are required have Native managers.
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs are always in need of employees with direct federal government work experience.
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs provide highly competitive benefits & 401k packages.
- Most Tribal, ANCs, and NHOs government contracting companies perform classified work. Your active clearance is highly valued.
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs provide opportunities to work as both company employees and billable contract employees. Your leadership experience in the federal government is highly valued!
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs have multiple subsidiaries and locations – providing an unlimited number of potential employment options and locations.
- When working for Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs, you are still serving Indian Country while you serve the federal government.
- Tribes, ANCs, and NHOs businesses have Native cultural values.

From my own personal experience as a Native professional who has worked directly for the federal government as well

as for Tribal/ANC government contracting businesses, the career move to contractor has been highly rewarding for me both personally and professionally. I quickly found that my experience and knowledge of federal process and operations was highly valued by Tribes & ANCs. Of note,

- I had the flexibility to work as either a billable employee on a government site performing the work of what had once been a federal GS/ES job – or as a manager of a Tribal/ANC subsidiary overseeing others performing government work on federal contracts.
- Since I have worked in many classified environments, my clearance was valued by my employer and remains Active due to the work I was hired to manage.
- Tribal/ANC holding companies and subsidiaries have Indigenous Cultural Values.
- Tribal/ANC companies offer highly competitive and robust benefits, 401k options, etc.
- I personally found I have more opportunity /flexibility for personal and career growth within a Tribal/ANC business structure.
- In many cases, there are professional positions/ opportunities located on reservations
- Tribal/ANC/HNO owned 8a companies are required by the SBA to have Native leadership - such as president

or general manager positions. Experienced Native executives are highly valued by these employers.

- Many Tribal/ANC/HNOs have an extremely high number of Veteran employees. At the Tribal group I currently work for, over 60% of our contract FTEs (Full time Employees) are US Military Veterans. Many Native Veterans have held clearances or have served overseas. Both experiences are very attractive.
- Many Tribal TEROS have Native Hire and Native Veteran Hire preferences.

SAIGE is now anticipating a SAIGE Government Contractor Career Track as a potential career alternative consideration to all SAIGE members. We want to make our membership aware that there are alternative ways to further one's professional career while also serving both Indian Country and the US Government.

If you are interested in learning more about the possibilities of a career path working for both Indian Country and the federal government, please register and attend our sessions and recruiting sponsors at the SAIGE NTP Program, June 21-23, 2022. More information will be posted on our website and distributed through the SAIGE Listserv in the near future.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAIGE - HOW IT ALL STARTED

"Prior to May 2000, the concept of a national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native federal employees was only a wish mentioned among friends at a local meeting. It was only when several people from the four directions began putting their minds together as one that the idea became a concept, then a movement, and finally a functioning organization." Les Tate

Before the advent of email, American Indian and Alaska Native government employees networked amongst themselves. They formed groups within their own agencies, met in Special Emphasis groups, and subcommittees in local Federal Executive Boards throughout the country. They took advantage of professional conferences to renew acquaintances with their colleagues and formed national networks.

Then in 2000 a gestalt of sorts took place. That's when better availability of improved technology and the desire to connect with other native employees came together, with the focused intent of creating a national non-profit organization to advocate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in government. What had sparked was an idea whose time had come.

Les Tate, having recently retired from the Tennessee Valley Authority, with others set up a nation-wide email list whose members spread the word to their own contacts in various agencies. In May of 2000, the first welcome and organizing email launched, encouraging people to discuss what they wanted this organization to be, what they hoped it would accomplish and important issues to address. Before long there were more than 65 Native

American employees of the federal government across the country who were actively participating on the list. Names for it were solicited and voted on and the Society of American Indian Government Employees – SAIGE – was established as the organizational name. After two years of hammering out the mission and the structure of the organization, the first membership drive took place and finally on August 16, 2002, a Board of Directors was elected, and SAIGE was born.

SAIGE Founding Board of Directors:

- Chairperson - Lori Windle
- Vice-Chair - Jesse James
- Secretary - John Nicholas (resigned, replaced by Fredericka Joseph)
- Treasurer - Shana Greenburg Barehand

Board Members At Large:

- Patrick (Pat) Broyles
- Alex Escarcega
- Leland P. (Lee) Grooms
- Duane Matt
- Alan Moomaw
- Violet J. (Vi) Rogers

- Nancy Sockabasin
- Donna N. Stone
- Cheryle Cobell Zwang

During its two-year term this inaugural Board got the organization up on its feet and running. SAIGE convened its first National Training Conference,

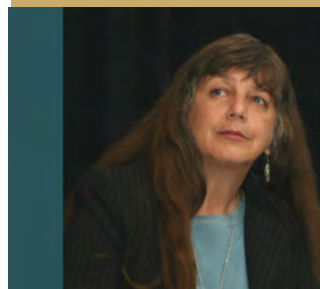
“Four Directions, One Voice,” in October of 2004, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

For more information on the Origins of SAIGE go to <https://saige.org/home/history/>



PHOTO: ATTENDEES AT THE FIRST SAIGE NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE IN FT. LAUDERDALE, FL, OCTOBER 2004

SAIGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIRPERSONS



2002 – 2004
Lori Windle



2004 – 2006
Cheryle Zwang



2006 – 2008
Patrick Broyles



2006 – 2008
Jason Edwards



2008 – 2012
Danny Garceau



2012 – 2014
Susan Johnson



2014 – 2022
Fredericka Joseph

What is smudging and why is it so sacred?

BY NIEVA BROCK, SAIGE BOD

White Sage (Sage) is one of the most important Native American ceremonial plants that is used by many tribes as an incense and as a purifying herb. It is burned or “smudged” as a spiritual cleanser for many ceremonies and is also used for its healing properties. Sage is loaded with antioxidants, has antimicrobial effects, may reduce blood sugar levels, and may support memory and brain health. When burned, Sage quite literally “cleans the air” with its antiseptic properties. There has even been an animal study that provided results where Sage extracts were attributed to fighting cancers such as mouth, colon, liver, cervix, breast, skin, and kidney. Of course, this is not applicable to humans as more research is needed.

Beyond its various health benefits, many Native tribes smudge White Sage as part of their spiritual practice. Smudging is a ceremony that consists of burning plant herbs and resins in either a clay or shelled bowl while prayers are being presented. This results in a smoke cloud formation that is believed to cleanse the air and those within it. (See, Smudging: A Sacred - PowWows.com). Essentially, between mortal life and higher spirits and eliminating any ones. The ceremonies lift away anxieties, and remediates poor but peace and harmony for both environment after cleansing.

Note that smudging is employ simply to is much more to spiritual attribution as a form of cultural a sacred practice. the appropriation Yoga instructors and



not a practice anyone should “get rid of bad vibes.” There it... and smudging without concerns many Native peoples appropriation. Smudging is Native peoples have found of smudging by modern day non-Native peoples offensive.

Ms. Adrienne J. Keene, EdD, Cherokee and Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University said this in an article found at Its Cultural Appropriation for Non-Native People To Burn Sage | Well+Good (wellandgood.com): “That smudge stick represents the deep pain, sacrifice, resistance, and refusal of Native peoples. It represents a continuing legacy of marginalizing and punishing Native spirituality. So, when our religious practices are mocked through these products, or folks are commodifying and making money off our ceremonies, it’s not about who has the ‘right’ to buy or sell [Smudge stick]. It’s about power.” Ms. Keene goes on to say: “What I care about is the removal of context from conversations on cultural appropriation, the erasing of the painful and violent history around suppression of Native spirituality, the ongoing struggles Native students and peoples have in practicing their beliefs, and the non-Native companies and non-Native individuals that are making money off of these histories and traditions without understanding the harm they’re enacting.” We couldn’t have said it better. Help us educate others, help them understand the harm in appropriating Smudging practices, and share the truth about Smudging as a Native practice.

THE WARRIOR WITHIN

A transformational guide to getting yourself right in order to accomplish the work you were meant to do, from speaker D.J. Vanas, former U.S. Air Force officer, and member of the Ottawa tribe.



Drawing inspiration from Native American philosophy and tradition, **The Warrior Within** outlines a new model for personal power in the face of overwhelming chaos.

Vanas shows how to apply these principles to transform how you show up both for yourself and for those around you. More than an empowerment manual, **The Warrior Within** is a call to accomplish the world-changing work you were meant for by tapping into the power of the warrior spirit.

The Warrior Within is being released on August 2nd by Penguin Random House Books.

penguinrandomhouse.com/books/696069/the-warrior-within-by-dj-vanas/

D.J. Vanas Website: <https://natediscovery.com/>
The Warrior Within: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/696069/the-warrior-within-by-dj-vanas/>



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Appearance of this advertisement does not imply DoD endorsement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2022 Feds in Motion Challenge



The Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA) is gearing up for the 2022 Feds in Motion Challenge this May with 36 days and 36 miles to celebrate 36 years of Feds Helping Feds at FEEA. The FEEA invites SAIGE members to join their virtual challenge beginning May 1! <https://feea.org/support/feds-in-motion-challenge/>

Upcoming National Coalition for Equity in Public Service (NCEPS) Partners Conferences:

- Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) - Virtual NTP May 10-12, 2022 - <https://fapac.org/event-4562186>
- Federally Employed Women (FEW) - Virtual NTP July 18 – 22, 2022- <https://www.few.org/national-training-program/>
- Blacks In Government (BIG) - August 15-18, 2022, Cleveland, OH - <https://bignet.org/regional/2022NTI/home.html>

Department of Interior (DOI) Consulting with Tribal Nations course schedule

- May 10-12, 2022 – Virtual, NM
- June 14-16, 2022 – Eastern Time Zone, Virtual, DC
- August 2-4, 2022 – Albuquerque, NM
- September 27-29, 2022 – Albuquerque, NM

Summary and Objectives: This interactive course provides participants with an overview of Consulting with Tribal Nations through instructor-led lectures, discussions, and case studies. The culminating activity is a mock consultation where participants play various roles. The training will enable participants to acquire the basic knowledge of the tribal consultation process, cultural awareness and the importance of engaging with Tribal nations on matters that affect them. This course was created to support the DOI Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes and the directive for training on Tribal consultation. Cost \$770.00 – you may register even if you are not a DOI employee.

Contact DOIU Learning Centers: Albuquerque, NM (ALC/NITPC):

Jennifer Martinez - jennifer_martinez@ios.doi.gov

April Gonzalez - april_d_gonzalez@ios.doi.gov

Washington, DC (WLC):

Eric Sanders - eric_sanders@ios.doi.gov

Mary Jo Catalano - mary_catalano@ios.doi.gov



Talking Leaf Newsletter

TALKING LEAF NEWSLETTER is issued three times a year - Winter, Spring and Fall. Want to contribute? SAIGE welcomes your stories, suggestions, and ideas. Please contact Georgia Madrid at newsletter@saige.org for information and newsletter guidelines.

About SAIGE

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State and local government employees. Formed in 2002, SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges and opportunities of American Indian Tribal Nations and the government workforce, and to foster a professional network among AI/AN government employees.

JOIN THE SAIGE NETWORK

info@saige.org

www.saige.org



SAIGE Board of Directors

OFFICER POSITIONS

Chair: Fredericka Joseph (Kaw Nation)

Vice Chair: Jay Spaan (Cherokee Nation)

Secretary: Roberta Lewis (Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma)

Treasurer: Sue Morris (Comanche Nation of Oklahoma)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Ed Blauvelt (Muskogee/Mohawk Descent)

Nieva Brock (Higuayagua Taino)

Tilford Brown (Diné)

Carl Etsitty (Diné (Navajo Nation))

Danny Garceau (Anishinaabe)

Luke Jones (Chickahomeny and Pamunkey Indians of Virginia)

Duane Matt (Confederated Salish Kootenai and Pend D 'Oreille)

Brant Mitchell (Odawa/Ojibwe)

Georgie Reynolds

Lori Windle (White Earth Chippewa)

<https://saige.org/home/board-members/>



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Government Employees*