



Elder Voices

Newsletter of the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.

Holiday, 1992

Largest Indian conference of the year Conferees Approve National Indian Aging Agenda

It was one of the nation's largest aging conferences. Indian elders—991 of them, representing 130 tribes—comprised most of the 1,440 Green Bay registrants. Employees of more than 50 federal/state agencies and aging organizations attended, along with 67 title VI programs and more than 200 tribal leaders, legislators, and service providers. At the conference, NICOA enrolled 504 new voting members, nine associates, and 12 organizations.

"America's Indian elders have spoken clearly," said newly-elected board chairperson Pat Woods of Ada, Okla. "NICOA received more than 800 recommendations prior to and during the conference. It is significant that the draft Agenda was approved by unanimous vote on the final day."

"We have our work cut out," she said. "The Agenda is currently being expanded to combine and clarify the recommendations. After some fine tuning by NICOA's board in December, the final version will be published in February, 1993."

The Agenda addresses elder concerns in eight topic areas: Long-Term Care, Indian Health Service, Medicare/Medicaid/Social Security/VA, Title VI Services, Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Other issues.

Copies of the Agenda will be mailed to all NICOA members in February, 1993, according to Ms. Woods.

OAA, IHCA Passed

The Older Americans Act (OAA), which includes numerous provisions for older Indians, was signed into law by the President on September 30, less than a month after the NICOA conference. Under growing pressure from the national aging network, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) removed his controversial earnings test amendment from the bill, permitting its quick passage by Congress.

In separate legislation, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act also became law in September. Three of six NICOA recommendations survived and are included. These are the IHS recognition of geriatric medicine as a recognized field of study; the extension of the 72-hour rule for elders to report contract care to the IHS to 30 days; and tribal or IHS personnel may now, under some circumstances, process Medicare/Medicaid applications.



**The National Indian
Council On Aging, Inc.**

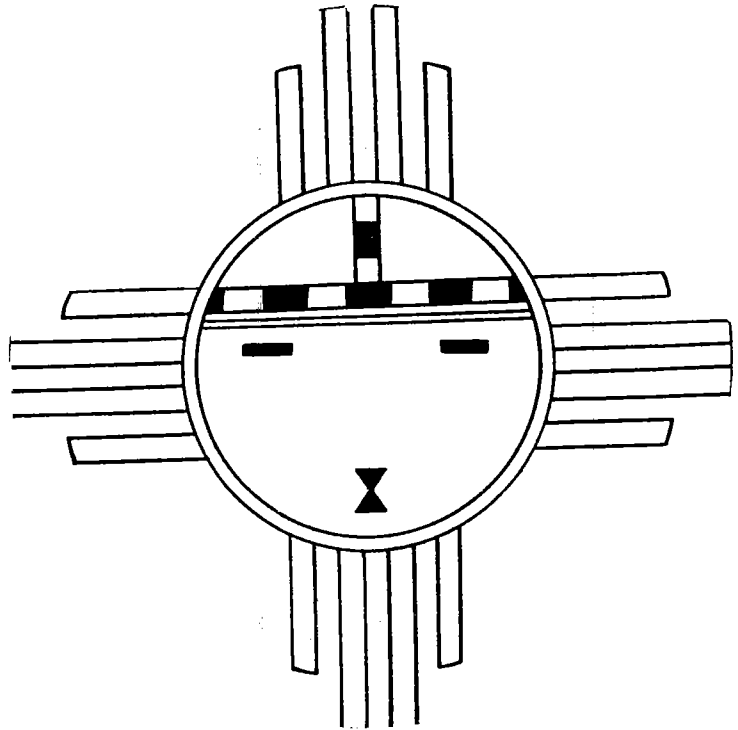
6400 Uptown Blvd., NE
City Centre, Suite 510W
Albuquerque, N.M. 87110
505/888-3302
FAX 505/888-3276

**New board members,
officers elected**

Four new board members—Iva Brant (Central Area), Georgia Gallegos (Anadarko Area), Loretta James (Portland Area), and Wendell McLester (Minneapolis Area), join the NICOA board for 1992-1993.

At the Green Bay NICOA board meeting on Sept. 2, officers were elected. NICOA's '92-93 board and officers are:

Pat Woods (Muskogee Area) (Chair)
405/436-2603
James S. Hena (Albuquerque Area)
505/881-1992
Tammy Sixkiller (Phoenix Area)
(Sec.) 602/263-1017
Wendell McLester (Minneapolis Area) (Treasurer) 414/869-2273
Madeline Colliflower (Billings Area)
406/673-3428
Loretta James (Portland Area)
206/659-0213
Janet Guthrie (Juneau Area)
907/886-7191
Georgia Gallegos (Anadarko Area)
405/247-2448
Kenneth Cody, Sr. (Navajo Area)
505/786-7251
Woodrow Groves (Sacramento Area)
916/967-0456
Marie Rogers (Aberdeen Area)
605/342-1706
Iva Brant (Central Area)
716/532-9459
Sam Stool (Title VI Directors Assn.)
918/456-0671



February completion

**The National Indian Aging Agenda:
What now?**

The National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future has undergone a second draft, according to NICOA executive director Dave Baldrige. Working with NICOA, a Senate staffer and his associate have completed another, more refined version of the Agenda.

The Agenda has already doubled in size. The new draft is being reviewed by a small group of legal and single-issue experts. Following their input, NICOA's board of directors will prioritize the recommendations in December.

At that time, with further expert assistance, specific Action Plans will be put into place for the highest-priority Agenda recommendations. The process should allow for February, 1993, printing and distribution.

NICOA will probably introduce the Agenda to Congress by means of a special Senate/House staff briefing, according to Baldrige. Plans for the next national White House Aging Conference have not been announced by the Clinton administration, and are unlikely to be considered in the near future, according to aging network representatives.

A message from the executive director

● By-laws and the conference

NICOA's staff recently watched a video of our conference. The business meeting was especially interesting for me, as I missed that Tuesday morning session at Green Bay. I was upstairs at the time, working with a small team to complete the first Agenda draft in time for the afternoon session.

The meeting was controversial, especially because most new and newly-updated members hadn't been informed of the proposed changes 30 days in advance. NICOA *did* mail that notice in July, per the by-laws, to every current NICOA member. But our membership list had dwindled to fewer than 100 elders. One-year memberships don't create a strong membership base when conferences are two years apart.

Perhaps we should have mailed to former members and former conference attendees as well. It's easy to understand the frustration of voting members who haven't had an opportunity to examine issues on the floor.

But I also agree with NICOA's board chairperson, Pat Woods, who pointed out that communication is a two-way street. If you don't renew your dues,, you can't expect to remain on an organization's mailing list. And most of the Green Bay conferees hadn't renewed.

At any rate, the changes suggested (and approved) at Green Bay are designed to make NICOA membership as easy, inexpensive, and hassle-free as possible. What you'll now receive is a two-year membership for the price of one. The new deal includes those of you who recently joined NICOA, both at the conference and in the months leading up to it.

Your membership card may show a 1993 expiration date. But as it expires, we'll mail a new card at no charge, extending your membership to 1994. You'll now receive our mailings, newsletters, and yes, proposed by-law changes, prior to the '94 conference.

Other by-law changes place the decision for the next conference site with NICOA's board rather than by conference vote of the membership.

Conference production—especially the choice of site—is a big-dollar commitment—one that can dramatically affect the financial stability of a small non-profit organization like NICOA. With combined NICOA/Oneida Tribe expenses for Green Bay totalling more than \$70,000, this is the kind of decision that should be made by a board of directors only after considerable deliberation.

The remaining by-law changes are designed to prevent confusion, immediately following elections, about which board member—outgoing or incoming—represents a region during the remainder of the conference. Newly-elected board members will not begin their terms until the first board meeting following the election. That meeting is usually scheduled on the first day following the conference.

Obviously, additional by-law changes should be considered at the next conference. For example, the board election process, which is currently tied to conference attendance rather than a broad-scale regional vote. The board has appointed a committee to recommend new voting procedures. You'll be advised of their recommendations 30 days prior to the conference . . . if you've notified us of address changes . . . and if you're a member.

Best Regards,



Dave Baldrige

P.S. All current members will receive a copy of NICOA's by-laws when they are printed in spring, 1993.

1992 By-Law Changes National Indian Council on Aging

The following by-law changes were approved by NICOA's voting membership at Green Bay, Wisconsin, on Sept. 2, 1992. (See reverse side for explanation).

Amend Article 1, Section 1 (A), line 10, to replace the word "annual" with "biennial". Amended wording would read, *upon payment of current dues as prescribed by the Board of Directors.*

Amend Article 1, Section 1 C), line four, to replace the word "annual" with "biennial". Amended wording would read, *payment of current dues as prescribed by the Board of Directors.*

Change Article 1, Section 5 (a), to read as follows: *A member not in default in payment of current dues may at any time file a resignation in writing with the Secretary, and the resignation shall become effective as of the date it was filed.*

Amend Article 1, Section 5 b), line six, to replace the word "annual" with "biennial".

Amend Article 1, Section 5 c), line four, to replace the word "annual" with "biennial".

Amend Article 1, Section 6, line three, to replace the word "annual" with "regularly-scheduled."

Amend Article 1, Section 7, to read as follows: *Current membership dues shall be established by the Board of Directors.*

[NOTE: The following change is proposed to specify a biennial (2-year) NICOA conference rather than an annual conference and to authorize the Board to determine conference place and time.]

Amend Article 1, Section 2, as follows: *There shall be a biennial meeting of the organization , the place and time to be determined by the Board of Directors.*

Amend Article IV, Section 2, add: e) The newly elected Board Member shall assume duties at the first regularly-scheduled Board of Directors meeting.



Anchorage is next stop

NICOA expands staff

SSI Outreach continues on reservations

NICOA's SSI Outreach project continues its second year of operation with an Anchorage, Alaska, training session for title VI directors and other Indian service providers. Designed to increase enrollment of Indian elders in SSI and other federal entitlement programs, the project has produced a high success rate according to NICOA Project Director Laura Graham.

"In our first year, we targeted eight pueblos and reservations, where we increased elders' enrollment in entitlements by 37 percent. In Year Two, we targeted six states--Oregon, Washington, North/South Dakota, Oklahoma, and now Alaska--because of their large native populations. Ninety service providers, representing 34 tribes, attended the training sessions. Of these, only six tribes chose to undertake the outreach, collecting data for 267 elders.

"So far, we're increasing enrollment by 52 percent! There appears to be an urgent need for this kind of outreach, but the title VI directors often report that they don't have enough funding or staff to undertake new projects like this."

Because of the unique status of tribal residents and the barriers faced by Indian elders, a "localized" program approach was designed. NICOA decided to train local residents--the Indian service providers who know their elders best.

At selected reservations around the country, a national expert on advocacy--Ayn Crawley of Legal Counsel for the Elderly--presents intensive two-day sessions for local Indian service providers. Through role playing in a sample case, trainees learn how to advocate for elders, including the SSI appeals process.

These individuals then conduct the outreach to their tribal elders, with technical assistance from NICOA.

NICOA's growth continues with the recent hiring of Joyce Knows His Gun as Programs Specialist. Ms. Knows His Gun recently acted as coordinator for the organization's successful conference in Green Bay, Wisc. A Northern Cheyenne, she holds an M.E. in educational administration.

"This position is extremely important to us," says executive director Dave Baldrige. We'll now have an office manager to improve our efficiency. We'll have a specialist to pursue additional sources of funding, and we'll gain the strength of Joyce's contacts in Indian Country.



. . . a Big Mac, small fries, a voting membership, and a large coke . . . no, hold the fries, make that an associate membership with extra onions and . . ."

Urban elders: The forgotten population

America's non-reservation Indian population--depending on whose statistics are used--ranges from 48 to 52 percent. That means 100,000 or so of our elders remain mostly unacknowledged and unserved by the national aging network.

No one seems to know who these elders are, where they live, what services they are or aren't receiving, and what barriers prevent them from receiving more. One of the few available statistics tells us that fewer than one percent of title III (urban senior center) services go to Indian elders.

So NICOA, in 1993, will try to open a small door to urban elders with a four-city outreach (see next article). Conducted by Indian graduate students, the program will attempt to bring some cultural focus and outreach to America's urban Indian elders.

**National Indian
Council on Aging, Inc.
6400 Uptown Blvd., NE
City Centre 510 W.
Albuquerque, NM 87110**

'93 directions for NICOA

Urban outreach, radio PSA's, agenda development

NICOA projects for 1993 include a new urban SSI outreach initiative in four cities, a series of radio public service announcements targeted to Indian communities, and renewed emphasis on implementing the National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future.

These programs, according to board chairman Pat Woods, "build on NICOA's existing strengths and provide services where we think they're most needed. We try to target our efforts to provide the most help for the most elders possible."

The Urban SSI Outreach will take place in Phoenix, Albuquerque, Tulsa, and Billings. In those cities, Indian graduate students, working through IHS hospitals and urban Indian centers, will conduct the outreach as part of their thesis projects.

In more than forty communities served by Indian radio stations, a series of national NICOA public service announcements (PSA's) will soon bring attention to Indian elders and the importance of caring for them. The media campaign is being designed by Indians, delivered by Indians, and is targeted exclusively to Indian communities.

A third NICOA initiative for 1993 involves the promotion of its National Indian Aging Agenda for the Future. NICOA will meet with national Indian and aging organizations to generate a broader base of support for specific Agenda recommendations.

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