

sent 5.30.21

FS NEWS: REMEMBRANCE edition

Hello thoughtful readers,

I'm writing in a somber mood this weekend because there are so many sobering things to think about. This is a good thing. There are many important things that we must remember...about our own lives, of course, and then about the lives that make sure that we HAVE our own lives...the people - including the ancestors - and the non-people (plants, animals, earth, water, etc) that literally keep us alive. Once we start to reflect, it's easy to realize that have much to be grateful for.

We can be grateful for our memory, even though memories can be hard to think about.

"Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future."
- Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor

MEMORIAL DAY

The history of the US, and its military, is extremely complicated. Regardless of the military institutions, many went to war and never returned home. Memorial Day is for them. Those who died serving our country believed they were doing the right and best thing. Many believed they were giving their life so that we could remain safe and secure. As readers here may have already guessed, I have strong feelings about war, but I am a compassionate person and I honor courageous soldiers, warriors, defenders, etc, for their commitment and their sacrifice.

THE GREENWOOD DISTRICT

The massacre in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, OK 100 years ago is described as one of the worst incidents of racial violence in US history. On May 31st (and into June 1st) mobs of heartless, outlaw White residents, many of them deputized and given weapons by city officials, attacked Black residents and businesses, killing and injuring hundreds and leaving 35 city blocks in charred ruins. The area had been known for its affluence and was known as "Black Wall St." I do not have powerful words to reflect on this horrendous situation, I only have deep feelings of sadness about its occurrence. I'm grateful that the day is nationally remembered. I was amazed to see that three survivors are still alive! They are powerful, admirable, strong souls who have endured more challenges than I will ever know.

REMEMBER THE TREATIES

The Water Protectors have been hard at work all winter, resisting a tar sands pipeline being driving through protected land. They are planning a major action to try to stop it. The Treaty People Gathering website says "As Enbridge (a Canadian company) builds Line 3 through Anishinaabe treaty land and the Mississippi Headwaters, we continue to stand strong in our resistance. On June 5-8, we will gather in Northern Minnesota to tell the world that the days of tar sands pipelines are over." If you'd like to share this information, please send them to the Treaty People Gathering website: treatypeoplegathering.com

As I do in each newsletter (or I hope that I remember to!) I want to remember the generous donors who keep Fair Shake afloat. Even though many more readers were released in the last 12 months than in years past, many more have signed up. Thank you donors, for making sure we can get the newsletter out!

IS THERE AN ECHO IN HERE?

I keep hearing people say – throughout many parts of the country – that they won't be able to get a job because they have been incarcerated. I feel this is a pre-COVID echo that has not yet begun to diminish.

When negativity rears its distrustful head, remember the phrase: "Don't believe everything you think." Before 2020, I had never received a call for applicants. In the last year, I've received at least one call or email from large companies around the country each week. I'll be adding more information to the website for trucking...that was one call that came in...and Effluent Revival in PA and NJ wants you to know they are offering \$20 per hour to start. If you're interested in finding out about them, let me know!

D.C. REENTRY NAVIGATOR

The fBOP announced the release of a 900+-page resource book entitled "D.C. Reentry Navigator, Empowering You to Succeed with a D.C. Criminal Record". If you're releasing to DC but haven't received a copy yet, know that "all DC inmates with less than 10 years remaining on their sentence will be provided a copy." The BOP announcement stated they wish to "empower affected individuals to take an active role in their reentry preparation."

The BOP's Reentry Services Division worked with the DC public defender, as well as other divisions within the BOP, "to provide relevant and accurate information in Chapter One: Preparing for Release from the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). The chapter features a checklist of things to do and consider, along with information on "Making the Most of BOP Programs." Additional topics include: Learn How You May Be Able to Reduce Your Time in Prison, Request and Obtain Important Identity Documents, Start the Process of Applying for Public Benefits, Learn About Voting, and Create a Release Plan." It's now available in the Fair Shake Reentry Guides area of the Resource Directory on the BOP website:
https://www.bop.gov/resources/news/20210422_dc_reentry_navigator.jsp

A GIFT FROM THE ANISHINAABEG

Seven Grandfathers (and Seven Rascals) Principles for Living Well

Many people native to the Great Lakes region understand this teaching as what is needed for a community to survive. According to the authors at the Ojibwe.net website "Each Grandfather Teaching is a gift the Anishinaabeg carry, a potential tool for living a good life. Our understanding is that as we use these gifts our experience of living improves. Using these gifts in our lives is an ongoing challenge for each of us, requiring attention, discipline and perseverance."

The 7 Grandfathers are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Humility, Generosity

The 7 pesky Rascals are Greed, Revenge, Inferiority, Negative Attitude, Fear, Jealously, Resentment

Nibwaakawin – Wisdom. Sound judgment, ability to teach others what you have learned or experienced. Use good sense and form a good attitude and course of action.

Zaagidiwin - Love. Strong affection for another forming out of kinship or personal ties; attachments based upon devotion, admiration, tenderness, unselfish loyalty, concern. Feel and give absolute kindness for all things around you.

Minwaadendamowin - Respect. Showing regards for the value of persons or things through courteous consideration and appreciation, to be upright with a good giving heart. Don't hurt anything or anyone on the outside or the inside.

Aakodewewin - Bravery. The personal inner strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Have courage and a strong heart to make positive choices.

Debwewin -Truth. Sincerity in action, character, and utterance. Learn truth, honor truth, no truth, see truth.

Dibaadendiziwin - Humility. A measurement or reflection of your own self-worth. To be humble, to be human.

Miigwe'aadiziwin - Generosity Sharing your ability, time, and extra or non-necessary things. Standing together / Responding to needs

Worth remembering! Miigwetch!

MENTAL FITNESS TIME!

From the Coa website (for Coalescence) I found a 'Mental Health Gym' that wants you to improve your 'Emotional Fitness' The founders suggest that we focus on the following areas;

1. Self-Awareness: Understand emotional triggers & biases
2. Play: Foster a safe space of connection....sports, board games, imaginative conversation...
3. Curiosity: Pursue growth over defensiveness
4. Empathy: Understand the emotions of others
5. Resilience / Anti-fragile: Bounce forward from failures & setbacks
6. Communication: Put words to needs, boundaries, & expectations
7. Mindfulness: Become more aware...of self within situations

FAIR SHAKE REENTRY PACKET TURNS INTO THE OWNERSHIP MANUAL

I'm sorry to say that I have to cut this newsletter a little short. I'm finalizing the new Fair Shake Ownership Manual (formerly the Reentry Packet) and hoping to send it to the printer next week. When it's done, I'm planning to send at least 10 copies to each prison library that will take them, so everyone will be able to check them out. (of course, I hope to send the new software, too, which will be ready at the end of the month! ~ ;) If you'd like to share your thoughts about what I should include in the booklet, I hope you will send me a note to let me know!

Book Review:

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES: 1492 – Present by Howard Zinn

I remember seeing this book when I was in my last year of high school (an alternative school). According to a review in 1998, Zinn said he had set "quiet revolution" as his goal, "from people beginning to take power from within the institutions." The book was revised many times and the most recent edition includes Pres. Bill Clinton's first term. It is a compact, valuable reading of American history through a critical lens!

QUOTES:

"They were not mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, they were absent in the Constitution and they were invisible in the new political democracy. They were the women of early America." - Howard Zinn

"A battle lost or won is easily described, understood, and appreciated, but the moral growth of a great nation requires reflection as well as observation to appreciate it." - Frederick Douglass 1864

"In the aftermath, we are because they were." - R.J. Heller (ubuntu!)

"In the face of impossible odds, people who love their country can change it." -

Barack Obama

Unrelated to remembrance, but more oriented toward building, I wanted to include this wonderful quote from the playwright August Wilson, from an interview in 1998:

"We need diverse cultural representation..."so that we begin to become the society which we're capable of becoming; of which we aspire to; so that everyone participates in the making of culture in America, so that you will have something that you can call an American culture."

To our bimaadiziwin** transitions

Ubuntu! ~ sue
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**Life-in-the-Fullest Sense

Remember these resources can be found in your phone-gizmo: 2-1-1 AuntBertha.com Fairshake.net
HelpYourselfTherapy.com