

WI FS News: Solstice Greetings!

Winter tidings, everyone ~

Happy Solstice!! Every six months we enter a liminal time of the year when the 'sun stops' (the meaning of the Latin word 'solstice') it's journey toward one pole and heads back toward the other...or at least this is how it is perceived down here on planet Earth. In December, the shortest day for people in the northern hemisphere is around December 21st. Starting on the 22nd, the days will grow longer as the sun again heads toward the north. The opposite is true in June, when the longest day of the year is around June 20th.

Solstice holidays run deep in human traditions. Across the globe, and across the ages, people have celebrated the event. The winter solstice is also called the hibernal solstice, acknowledging the lengthening days as the year being reborn. The Scottish people saw the winter solstice as a time of 'cleaning out the old'. Some traditions see this as a time to plant a seed for the future: an idea or a direction...which might be where 'new year's resolutions' got their start. Resting, reflecting and planning are all part of the liminal joy of winter.

With a liminal, planning mindset, I thought I'd share some thought-provoking news!

BUT FIRST, we all owe our thanks to the donors who have been keeping this newsletter, and Fair Shake, going! Thank you all. We wouldn't be sharing news, ideas and conversations without you.

HOW RUMORS START: Newspaper Headlines!

Here's a doozy that has been circulating since early December: "Some Californians released from prison will receive \$2,400 under new state re-entry program". That sounds like a great idea, doesn't it? It also sounds too good to be true. People have been asking me for years about 'grants' that are available to people after release because of headlines like this. These headlines are called 'hooks' and are meant to nudge you into clicking on the article. If you invest the time, which many people do not, you'd learn that the "recipients will get the money over a series of payments after meeting certain milestones such as showing progress in finding places to live and work". And if you go to the Company's website – Center for Employment Opportunities or ceoworks.org – you'll learn that program participants work on "transitional work crews that provide supplemental indoor/outdoor maintenance and neighborhood beautification services to more than 40 customers across the U.S." Now a different picture is developing: a company that will pay you each day (a perk, to be sure!) to stay in their program while you work doing manual labor. Then they will give you incremental incentives when you reach goals that they have set for you. I'm not saying that any of this is bad; just that the hook is much different than the real story. This happens with articles, advertisements, book titles, the news, etc. If you're interested in learning more about the company (that particular program is only available in California, though) you can write to them here: CEO 50 Broadway, Suite 1604, NY, NY 10004. They are not yet available in Wisconsin, but they are in CA, CO, GA, KY, LA MI, NY, NC, OH, OK, PA, TN and adding new states all the time. Your supporters can find them at www.ceoworks.org.

FREE HIGHER EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS!

This amazing headline really delivers: "University of Wisconsin-Madison Offers Free Tuition for Members of Federally Recognized Wisconsin Tribes." The Native News Online article continues: "The University of Wisconsin-Madison will now cover the full cost of an undergraduate degree and tuition for certain graduate students who are Wisconsin residents and also enrolled members of a federally recognized Wisconsin Tribe beginning fall of 2024. The "Wisconsin Tribal Educational Program", covers the full cost of an undergraduate degree, as well as tuition, housing, meals, books, and other

educational expenses. The program will also cover the cost of in-state tuition for professional students pursuing a J.D. (law) or M.D. (medical) degree.”

If you'd like to share the references used above: Native News Online: <https://tinyurl.com/272jbr9x>

And UW- Madison: <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/types-of-aid/wi-tribal-educational-promise-undergrads/>

And if you'd find out more you can write to:

Office of Tribal Relations
Bascom Hall
500 Lincoln Dr
Madison, WI 53706

CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT BILLS PROPOSED

Several WI Representatives have submitted bills on each of the points below:

1. Constitutional Amendment to Ban Slavery
2. Raising Minimum Wage to \$2.33 an Hour
3. Regular and Culturally Sensitive Hygiene Products, w/ a Credit of \$25/ mo.
4. Free Feminine Hygiene Products
5. Four Bathing Periods with Heated Running Water
6. Two Visitations per Week and Original Artwork Created under Supervision
7. Recreational Opportunities and Structured Programming
8. Solitary Confinement Condition
9. Electronic Credits for Emails, Video calls, and Media of \$17.50 ea week
10. Climate Control in State Correctional Institutions
11. Ability to See Outside
12. Access to the Outdoors
13. Public Dashboard with Status on Solitary Confinement and Lockdowns, with Notification System for Families
14. Public Dashboard with Disaggregated Data on Complaints
15. Access to Prisons and Jails for Oversight Purposes
16. Constitutional Amendment - County Authority to Oversee Jails
17. Rights During Incarceration Available to all People

The following representatives have authored the bills: Samba Baldeh, Ryan Clancy, Dora Drake, Jodi Emerson, Francesca Hong, LaTonya Johnson, Chris Larson, Darrin Madison, LaKeisha Myers, Kelda Roys, Shelia Stubbs and Lena Taylor. If you'd like to see this list with the detailed descriptions, start a new message to me with BILLS in the subject line ~

BENDING BEAN: Now available to you!

As you know from the previous edition of the FS News, I'm making products and opening a store to raise the funds necessary to sustain and grow Fair Shake. In response to this news, an alert reader asked if I would consider sending a catalog to the FS newsletter readers so they could send a gift to a loved one while also supporting Fair Shake. I thought this was an outstanding idea, so I've been learning how this works...and I'm ready to give it a whirl. The store will sell lip balm, travel toiletries, bumper stickers (and computer/bike stickers), Ethiopian coffee and more items as I add them. If you're interested in receiving a full-color product sheet (or two? I'm not sure yet! ~ :) with an order form, please send an SASE (or a stamp and your mailing info) and I'll send out the information with a \$.70 discount toward your first order. There will be one confusing hitch here: you will not be writing to Fair Shake (because it's a non-profit), you'll be writing to the for-profit business that donates its profits Fair Shake. The store is called Bending Bean. (The IRS would not let Fair Shake make or sell goods). If you're interested in receiving the information, please send your request to Bending Bean, PO Box 142, Westby, WI 54667.

THE THINGS WE CARRY

Fifteen years ago I read a story by Tim O'Brien called "The Things They Carried." It is a fictional story about a group of American soldiers in Viet Nam. The 'narrator' of the story weaves together

descriptions of the characters with the items they carry with them; from the military gear, to photos and letters, and the emotional 'things', too: memories, hope, grief, terror, love, and longing. Each man's physical burden underscores his emotional burden.

The story has become something I carry. It reminds me to inventory the things I will carry into the new year. (Much like the Scottish tradition in the second paragraph.) When I reflect on what serves me and what I'm just dragging along, I have a choice of what to keep, what to suspend (and think about a little more ~ :), and what to let go of. Some precious items are tied to my values and I will carry them for my entire life.

I certain that you carry memories that are deep and important; that reinforce your values, your commitments, and your goals. Are there, perhaps, also items that you carry that no longer serve you?

We expand our mind and our options all the time...but there is a limit to what we access regularly. This liminal time of year is great for clearing out space to make room for learning!

PONDERABLE QUOTES:

"Reason flows from the blending of rational thought and feeling." - Erich Fromm

"I close my eyes in order to see." – Paul Gaughan

"Never again will I set myself on fire to keep other people warm." – Clifton Posey

"How can a man come to know himself? Never by thinking, but by doing." ~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." - "Teddy" Roosevelt

Life is harder when you expect a lot of the world and little of yourself.
Life is easier when you expect a lot of yourself and little of the world.
High standards, low expectations. – James Clear (author of Atomic Habits)

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.".. You must do the thing you think you cannot do. - Eleanor Roosevelt

"Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime." ~ Ernest Hemingway

All the best to you in 2024 ~ and be good, (just) for goodness' sake ~ :)

Ubuntu! ~ sue

As always, when you are released, remember to find support in your phone-gizmo:
2-1-1 Fairshake.net National Reentry Helpline (24/7): 844-916-2577

Free reentry publication: "Mapping Your Future" from the Education Justice Project 1001 South Wright Street Champaign, IL 61820

Newsletters are available at FairShake.net for your family and friends to read or print.

MADISON REENTRY:

Nehemiah Center 655 W. Badger Road Madison, WI 53713 608.257.2453
Nehemiah Reentry Services offers Housing, Coaching/Mentoring, Employment, Advocacy and Case Management. Contact: Anthony Cooper acooper@nehemiah.org

Forward Service Corporation 4600 American Parkway, Suite 301 Madison, WI 53718 608-665-9760 <https://fsc-corp.org/> FSC serves 51 Wisconsin counties with employment training, support, case management, and other services.

EXPO and EXPO-R of Wisconsin PO Box 259654 Madison, WI 53725 (414) 831-2070
info@expowisconsin.org EXPO now has a reentry house for women returning to Madison.

JustDane 2115 South Park Street Madison, WI 53713 608-256-0906 or 1-888-616-0043
Formerly called Madison Urban Ministry or MUM.