



Society of American Indian  
Government Employees

# The Talking Leaf

SAIGE FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR: *Fredericka Joseph*

Autumn, also known as fall in North American English, is one of the four temperate seasons. Autumn marks the transition from summer to winter, in September or March, when the duration of daylight becomes noticeably shorter and the temperature cools considerably. One of its main features is the shedding of leaves from deciduous trees. As we begin the transition of our seasons so does SAIGE.

In November, we will begin the transition of Officers and the Board of Directors. It is the time we ask for nominations to serve on the Board for two years. In December, SAIGE holds the election. You must be in good standing to either run for the Board or vote. If you're not sure your dues are paid please email our Secretary at [phil.hamel@saige.org](mailto:phil.hamel@saige.org). If you're interested in running for the board, I will be announcing the process in November, so you have time to consider joining our outstanding Board of Directors. We will announce the new board members in January. Because this is a working board you must have approval from your supervisor as we have a monthly phone call which is essential to a successful organization and to our annual National Training Program (NTP).

We have had a transition of our Youth Liaison on our Board of Directors. Jared Ivins-Massey will be joining us to bring a new perspective to the growth of SAIGE by serving as a "go-between" of the youth and Board. Jared has served on the UNITY and NCAI Youth Commission Youth councils and we look forward to working with him during the next two

years. I also want to thank Brian Barlow who served on our board for two years. He is a valuable member of the Youth Program Leadership bringing a wealth of experience and ideas to grow the youth program.

November is Native American Heritage Month and SAIGE is busy receiving requests for speakers. SAIGE is working with various agencies in educating the federal workforce that American Indians and Alaska Natives still exist! Because we are the smallest group we are overlooked and are taken for granted. SAIGE has been working with agencies to help reverse those ideas and stereotypes

We recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Veterans Affairs and we are working on several other MOU's. These MOU's are important in establishing partnerships with our Federal family and gaining support for training opportunities for their employees.

We are also busy with the Combined Federal Campaign. Please remember SAIGE is on the CFC list. Our number is #26052. We are like other organizations with operating budgets and training costs to consider. We hope we can count on you to select and donate to SAIGE.

We had a great turn out at our NTP in Niagara Falls, NY. Our Co-Chairs provided highlights in this newsletter. We hope you will put the 2020 NTP in Tulsa, OK on your calendar and IDP. We will begin planning soon and if you're interested in volunteering, email Kathleen Bergeron,



Volunteer Coordinator, at [kbergeron@saige.org](mailto:kbergeron@saige.org).

If you're interested in organizing a SAIGE Chapter in your area, contact Lori Windle at [lwindle@saige.org](mailto:lwindle@saige.org) for information. I know there are outreach opportunities in your community that SAIGE can benefit from and help. Each year we waive the President's attendance at our NTP. The NTP is a great place for learning more about the culture, traditions and history of American Indians and Alaska Natives. It also provides you the opportunity to network! You never know if the person you meet may be an ally or someone who can help you one day when you're working on a project.

I want to take this time to wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season! See you in the Spring!



## 2019 NTP Highlights - Honoring Our Nations: Building Strength Through Understanding

### She:kon (Hello) My Friends!

SAIGE held its hugely successful 16th annual NTP at the Seneca Niagara Resort in Niagara Falls, NY, June 10-13, 2019. We were delighted to be on the land of the Seneca Nation (People of the Great Hill and Keepers of the Western Door) in Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse/Iroquois Territory), and the birthplace of democracy. The theme Honoring Our Nations: Building Strength through Understanding was reflected through the Plenary Sessions and Workshops. We were privileged to have 283 registered attendees including 26 Students and 5 student leaders who attended the Student Track.

William Crouse Sr., faith keeper and member of the Seneca Nation Hawk Clan, opened the NTP Cultural Reception Monday evening with a reading in both Seneca and English of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address to thank all life and bring our minds and hearts together as one. At the conclusion of the reading, he and other members of the Allegany River Dancers performed several cultural dances for the attendees.

The first day started with outstanding speakers. Fredericka Joseph, SAIGE Chair welcomed all the attendees and Mrs. Brenda Deeghan, Turtle Clan member and Executive Assistant to the President of the Allegany Seneca, welcomed attendees to Seneca territory and provided a tribal overview. She was followed by Dr. Zina Sutch, with an OPM update and JoAnn Brant, NTP Co-Chair and SAIGE Youth Program Director. Later that morning, Stephen Pevar, a long time SAIGE supporter, provided an informative and in-depth analysis of the Indian Child Welfare Act. He was followed by Commissioner Karen Narasaki speaking about federal funding shortfalls for Native Americans and ended with Brian Patterson, Bear Clan representative from the Oneida Nation Council. The luncheon speaker was Patrick Malone who spoke on leadership in federal agencies.

The afternoon provided extremely informative workshops on SAIGE core tracks: Federal Indian Law/Indian Country; Indigenous Natural Resources/Cultural;



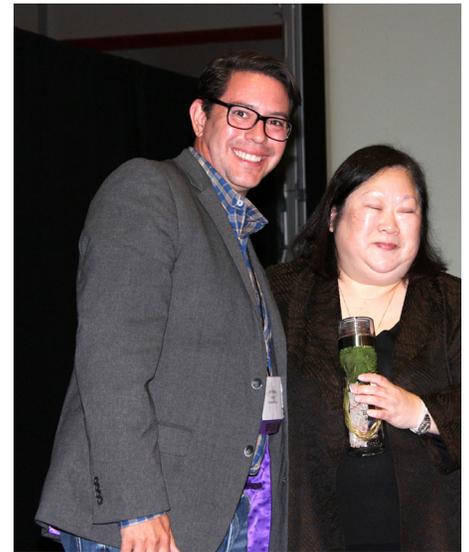
*Allegany River Dancers at Cultural Night Reception*



*Photo: Brenda Deeghan, Executive Assistant to the President of the Allegany Seneca and Phil Hamel, SAIGE 2019 NTP Co-Chair*

Professional Development; and EEO & HR. A range of topics included: American Indians/Alaska Natives 101; Traditional Teachings of the Good Mind and Roles of the Special Emphasis Program Manager. The evening rounded out with beading demonstrations and the movie Brother Wolf.

Day two plenary sessions began with Jay Spaan, SAIGE Board Member, presenting about Promoting Capacity Building in Tribal Governments followed by an update by Jerry Gidner, Director, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians. Michael Martin, Onondaga Beaver Clan Faithkeeper, provided an exceptional



*Photo: Jay Spaan, SAIGE BOD Member with Commissioner Karen Narasaki*

presentation, Bundling Our Arrows – Building Strength through Understanding and Unity. Aren Sparck opened the eyes of attendees regarding “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.” After Mr. Sparck’s presentation, Danny Garceau Board Member and Past Chair, provided a very moving memorial tribute to Jason Edwards, SAIGE long time member, photographer, past Vice-Chair and Chair, who passed away in January 2019.

Once again, the afternoon workshops provided a wealth of information on topics ranging from Tribal Self Governance to Pathway to Leadership; and Tools for working Effectively with Tribal Nations to Racial Discrimination in the Federal

## 2019 NTP Highlights - Honoring Our Nations: Building Strength Through Understanding

Government. A career fair was also held and open to local community members. The evening events included the SAIGE Achievement Awards and Partnership Recognitions followed by entertainment by Don Cōqayohōmuwōk Chapman.

The final day began with the concurrent Veterans' Track in addition to the extremely varied and informative workshops. The workshops included Two Spirit Natives; The Peacemaker Story; Carlisle Indian School Project; Personal Achievement through Culture and Healing;

and Rez Dog. The Veterans' Warrior Society Awards Ceremony luncheon was outstanding. The silent auction was a great success bringing in \$5,235 for student scholarships. The NTP ended with the always-entertaining Youth Presentations.

We hope all attendees enjoyed the 2019 NTP and walked away with an increase in knowledge of issues important to American Indians and Alaska Natives. We look forward to seeing new and old attendees and friends at the 2020 NTP in Tulsa, OK, June 23-25th.

**Niá:wen (Thank you). Phil Hamel, Secretary, 2019 NTP Co-chair**



**Photo: Joann Brant, SAIGE NTP Co-Chair with Michael Martin, Onondaga Beaver Clan Faithkeeper**



**Photo: Zina Sutch, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)**

### SAIGE YOUTH TRACK - GROUNDED IN CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

"It was an honor of mine to join the student leadership team for this past SAIGE Conference in my homelands of the Seneca Nation. It was a great experience meeting with the Board of Directors and the many representatives of Federal agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations, on how we can use our collective power for betterment of our people. It was also amazing to have been afforded the opportunity to network and learn with some remarkable fellow young people through the youth track. For me it was very special as I was able to walk away with being grounded in our culture and traditions with the "Good Mind" concept of my Haudenosaunee people which was and still is very useful. With this concept, I completed a summer law clerkship for the Seneca Nation this year and currently as a Pre-Law student. I look forward to continue working with my fellow young people on learning the best practices of healthy leadership for the future of Indian Country." Rory Wheeler, Youth Leader



**Photo: Student Youth Track participants.**



**Photo: L to R: Rosemary Reano, Joann Brant, Jared Massey, Brian Barlow, Rory Wheeler, Trey Pritchett and Elaine Robles.**

## 2019 SAIGE Achievement Award Recipients

The purpose of the SAIGE awards is to recognize Individuals who have made contributions in the recruitment, retention and advancement of AI/AN employees in the Federal workforce. The 2019 recipients were honored at the Wednesday evening SAIGE Achievement Awards and Partnership Recognition Reception.



*Photo: Fredericka Joseph, SAIGE Chair with Jennifer Cole, who accepted the Agency Award on behalf of USDA/FSA*

### AGENCY – USDA–Farm Service Agency (FSA)- Montana

For prioritizing service to tribal members, tribal governments and communities, promoting the employment of American Indians and increasing education about American Indian history and culture through its Special Emphasis Program.



*Photo: Roberta Lewis with Georgeie Reynolds, SAIGE BOD Member*

### GENERAL SCHEDULE GRADES – Roberta J. Lewis, Property Management Specialist, Logistics Management Office, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Tulsa, OK.

For serving as an emergency response team member, responding to 15 state and federal declared disaster areas ranging from hurricane, flood, tornado and ice; serving on the American Indian/Alaska Native Special Emphasis Committee and mentoring young Native girls.



*Photo: Bob Rabin with Duane Matt, SAIGE Vice Chair*

### LEADERSHIP – Dr. Bob Rabin, Meteorologist, NOAA/ National Severe Storms Laboratory, Norman, OK

For going above and beyond his duties as a Meteorologist to promote NOAA science by giving presentations at Tribal Colleges and Universities, American Indian Youth STEM camps, AISES, and at the Native Youth Community Adaptation Leadership Congress.



*Photo: Christopher Sacchetti with Fredericka Joseph, SAIGE Chair*

### EEO – Christopher Sacchetti, Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), Ft. Meade, MD

For increasing the American Indian/Alaska Native Employee Resource Group membership from four members to eighty-five and working with senior leadership with the goal of emphasizing the recruitment, hiring, retention and career development of the American Indian/Alaska Native employees.

## Triston Black Winner of the 2019 Dallas Peterson Youth Leadership Award



Photo: Rosemary Reano, Triston Black, Brian Barlow and Joann Brant

Triston Black is a student at Diné College in Tsaile, AZ, majoring in Diné Studies. He was instrumental in creating the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council and is serving on the Diné Studies Conference Inc. as Board of Directors.

In his essay for the award he said, "I was very blessed to have been in the presence of Dallas when he was an intern at Diné College Land Grant Office (LGO). I attended the Youth Camps at LGO, and Dallas would wake us up and talk to us. The one thing I remember was picking him up in Chinle, AZ. He had a pizza box with him and he shared his pizza with me and we talked about the state of our Nation and land. He left a great impact on a lot of people, including myself and to know he is being remembered through a leadership award, is an honor to be applying for an application."

## SAIGE Partners



Photo: Roberta "Bobbi" Martínez Hernández accepts the Office of Surface Mining Partnership Award from Danny Garceau. Bobbi has given workshops on federal-tribal partnerships in environmental remediation of coal mining the past two years at SAIGE. She has also spoken to the youth about the VISTA program, of which she is an alumni. She is an Environmental Engineer with the Indian Programs Branch of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.



Photo: L to R: National Coalition for Equity in Public Service (NCEPS) Partners. President Olivia Adrian, FAPAC; President Karen Rainey, FEW; Chair Fredericka Joseph, SAIGE; President Veronica Vasquez, National Image, Inc; and Matthew Fogg, representing BIG.

## Musical Performance

Photo to the right: Don Chapman (Côqayohômuvôk) provided the entertainment for the Awards Night.



### *A Message from the Warrior Society Director Danny Garceau*

The 2019 Warriors/Veterans Track at the SAIGE NTP in Niagara Falls, NY was a success. We had good speakers who provided updates on programs to help our veterans. A highlight of the program was the awards program that was attended by all NTP and Youth Track attendees. A lunch was provided along with a keynote address by Clarence A. Johnson, a member of the Senior Executive Service, who is the Director of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Washington, D.C. After the keynote address, Mr. Johnson was joined on stage by New York Brigadier General John Andonie and myself representing our SAIGE Chair, Fredericka Joseph to present the SAIGE Military Meritorious Service awards to ten deserving individuals. A thank you is due to LTC Monique Foster for providing professional assistance with the awards program and spearheading the support from the New York National Guard.



The next 2020 SAIGE NTP will be on June 22-25 at the River Spirit Resort in Tulsa, OK. The Warrior/Veteran day will likely be on Thursday, as it has in the past. The planning process has just begun. If there are specific subjects or a speaker you would like to see during the Warriors/Veterans portion of the NTP next year please send me an e-mail as soon as possible. A MOU between the Veterans Administration and SAIGE was signed this year to help get more Veteran Affairs' employees to our training.

In November, I will be speaking to the Georgia National Guard about Native American Heritage month, the warrior culture and SAIGE. It is my intent to educate, gain support and maybe grow our ranks. The Warrior Society is always looking to grow with support and membership. Just as with SAIGE, the greater the membership the greater the network, which benefits the members and organization. To join the SAIGE Warrior Society, you must be a SAIGE member and either currently serving in the military or a veteran. If you want to support or join the Warrior Society, please contact me at [danny.garceau@saige.org](mailto:danny.garceau@saige.org).

The Warrior Society conducts a voluntary teleconference meeting the last Monday of each month. It provides an opportunity for the membership to help in planning our training program along with sharing information and comradery.



*Photo: L to R: Danny Garceau, Clarence A. Johnson and Fredericka Joseph with all the Military Award Winners.*

# NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

## Navajo Code Talker, Thomas Begay, Speaks at IRS Veterans and Native American Heritage Month Celebration

Fredericka Joseph, Chair, Board of Directors and her husband, Clarence Joseph, Lifetime member and a veteran, were invited to attend the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Veterans Day and American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month Celebration on October 30, 2019 at the IRS Headquarters located in Washington D.C.



Photo: L - Thomas H. Begay, Navajo Code Talker. R - Fredericka presents Thomas Begay with a Pendleton blanket provided by the IRS Utah and Kansas City Chapters.

Mr. Thomas H. Begay, Navajo Code Talker was the keynote speaker. He spoke about his experience of becoming a code talker. He stated that he wanted to be a “gunny” but ended up liking the code talker school and stayed on through the war. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps at 16 and was selected as one of 33 Navajo Code Talkers assigned to the renowned fifth Marine Division Signal Company and in the Radio Section of the H & S Company, 27th. He went on to serve during the Korean War as a parachutist. He is a survivor of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir against Korean and Chinese forces. His seven children served in the military like their dad. Mr. Begay is 95 years old.

SAIGE presented Mr. Begay with a Pendleton Blanket provided by Coralee Mackay, President of the Utah IRS SAIGE Chapter, Jennifer Cantrel, President of the Kansas City IRS SAIGE Chapter and Bill Jennifer’s husband and a veteran along with Richard Regan, IRS employee.

## A few other activities that members highlighted in the SAIGE listserv



From Estelle Bowman, US Forest Service:

Read more: <https://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/news/blog.shtml#story045>

**NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH**

**CHUMASH OCEAN CANOES, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ALAN SALAZAR

CHINA LAKE	PONT MUGU
NOVEMBER 5TH	NOVEMBER 7TH
1000-1130	1000-1130
BLDG. 5, MICH LAB, BC ROOM	BLDG. 36, MIC ROOM 2301
CISL-EVT-FY20014	CISL-EVT-FY20015

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CO-SPONSORED BY AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE DAT TEAM AND EEO AND DIVERSITY DIVISION

From Shawna Clay, Department of Navy

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

**Native American Heritage Month**

**Creating a Community for Native Americans at NASA**

a Virtual Panel

NASA's Native American employees share their stories and discuss ways to cultivate community at NASA.

This event is jointly supported by NASA's SACO American Indian/Alaska Native Working Group, NASA's Minority University Research and Education Project, and NASA's Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

**NOVEMBER 20 at 1:30pm Eastern Time**

Adobe Connect: <https://ac.nasa.gov/epo>  
Teleconference Line: 1-844-467-6272 Passcode: 9278649

To join this presentation please use both the Adobe Connect link AND call into the teleconference line for audio access.

www.nasa.gov

From Marcellus Proctor, NASA

## SAIGE at the American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) Conference

by Marcellus Proctor

This year's AISES National Conference was held in Milwaukee, WI from October 10 - 12, 2019. There were various activities where professionals from federal agencies and private companies engaged with indigenous students. One of the activities was participating with STEM related activities at the Indian Community School, in Franklin, WI.

SAIGE members Brian Billy, Carl Etsitty, Duane Matt, and Marcellus Proctor gave presentations on a wide variety of topics from federal



*Photo: L to R: Duane Matt, Brian Billy and Carl Etsitty at their AISES session, "SAIGE Professionals in STEM - Working for Tribes"*

professionals working to bring STEM activities to tribes and imparting knowledge on what is needed to be a manager and a leader. Many federal employees volunteered their time at the Resume Room to support and review resumes from students and professionals.

During the Government Relations Council meeting, three subcommittees were established, Intelligence/National Security, Agricultural/Water Development, and STEM. These subcommittees will meet periodically and give reports during the Summer and National Conference GRC meetings.

Special congratulations to Duane Matt for being selected for the 2019 AISES Government Partner Service Award. Recipients named in the Government Partner Service Award are recognized by the AISES staff for their service to and advocacy for AISES. They go above and beyond to support AISES' students, professionals, Board of Directors, and staff, as well as the overall organizational mission.



*Photo: Danny Garceau at the SAIGE Exhibit booth.*



*Photo: Duane Matt receiving the 2019 AISES Government Partner Service Award*

*Sharon Charley, IRS, Ogden, UT, SAIGE Utah Chapter  
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program*



The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$56,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

Sharon Charley (Diné) has volunteered for four years for this program. Here is what she says about it:

This year was a little more challenging due to the new tax law changes and the federal government shutdown. Volunteering with IRS VITA is very fulfilling and a wonderful experience. You meet repeated filers from previous years to new filers with varying degree of tax preparation. I encourage everyone to contribute to volunteering in your area. Let me tell you one of the best parts is seeing the relief on the taxpayers faces.

Here in Ogden UT, I've never worked with such a nice group of volunteers, emulating teamwork focused on achieving and sharing the same goals preparing tax returns. My combined contribution of around 200 hours, 92 tax preparations and maybe 120 quality reviews is only a small token of the overall VITA success and networking of

great wonderfully dedicated volunteers across the country.

To add...there was this taxpayer I spoke with in the Diné language while preparing their tax returns. Although she spoke English, I was glad to have a good conversation in Navajo. That's what makes being a volunteer so cool is that we connect multi-culturally. Even when VITA gets busy, I use what Spanish I remember to help Spanish speaking taxpayers. Just imagine me explaining, W2, dependents, insurance...etc.- quite humorous - but we got the taxes filed. So come join me this coming tax season and become a VITA volunteer.

For more information on the VITA program go to <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers>

## Talking Leaf Newsletter

Talking Leaf is issued twice a year - Spring and Fall. SAIGE welcomes your stories, suggestions, and ideas. Please email: [georgia.madrid@noaa.gov](mailto:georgia.madrid@noaa.gov).

## SAIGE Board of Directors

Contact board at:  
[chair@saige.org](mailto:chair@saige.org)

### OFFICER POSITIONS

- **Chair:** Fredericka Joseph (Kaw Nation)
- **Vice Chair:** Duane Matt (Confederalte Salish Kootenai)
- **Secretary:** Phil Hamel (Mohawk ancestry)
- **Treasurer:** Sue Morris (Comanche Nation of Oklahoma)

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

- Sadi Ali (First Nations Mi'kmaq)
- Kathleen Bergeron (United Houma Nation)
- Tilford Brown (Dine')
- Teresa Estoril (Cherokee)
- Danny Garceau (Anishinaabe)
- Juanita Mullen (Seneca Nation of Indians)
- Georgeie Reynolds
- Jay Spaan (Cherokee Nation)
- Lori Windle (White Earth Chippewa)

## 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  
[www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)



PHOTO: SAIGE Planning Committee Members at the 2019 NTP in Niagara Falls, NY  
Third Row L to R: Danny Garceau, Georgeie Reynolds, Tilford Brown, Duane Matt, Jay Spaan  
Second Row L to R: Joann Brant, Sadi Ali, Kathleen Bergeron, Fredericka Joseph, Sue Morris, Teresa Estoril  
First Row: Sue Marcus, Genny Haskins, Phil Hamel.  
Not pictured: Lori Windle and Juanita Mullen

