

Boarding school survivor

By Amy Cook

Dave Boda, 44, grew up in Petoskey, Michigan. His mother, a nurse, and his father, a machinist, had eight children, with Dave and his twin brother being the fifth and six children born. Dave is a member of the Grand Traverse Bay Band of Ottawa Chippewa. Dave is currently a senior at Northern Michigan University majoring in Aviation maintenance with minors in Welding and Native American Studies. In a recent presentation in his NAS-295: Special Topics, History of Indian Boarding School Education class, Dave discussed what life was like at boarding school. His story is one that can be related to by many other Native Americans who grew up away from home at boarding schools.

Dave's older siblings attended a local Catholic school and Dave attended public school in Petoskey. In his senior year of high school Dave and his mother decided to send him and his younger sister to an Indian boarding school. Dave's mother can tell the story of what boarding school life was like because she was a student at Flandreau Indian Boarding School in Flandreau, South Dakota. She was comfortable in the decision to let Dave attend the same Indian boarding school that she had. The system had undergone changes for the better since Dave's mom had been a student. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) offered to pay the cost of flying Dave from Michigan to South Dakota. Dave's mom accompanied him on the plane ride along with three other students from Michigan.

Dave recalls that it was a little difficult getting used to the routine at the school. The days were regimented with school work, industrial training and chores. He states, "A typical day would start at 6:30a.m. with the morning wake-up being sounded over the intercom system. Then we had an hour and a half to get dressed, make our beds and be at breakfast. Breakfast was from 7a.m.-7:30a.m. with class starting at 8a.m." The curriculum covered general academic studies such as English, Mathematics, U.S. History, which with no Native content, Music or sports. Lunch time came at 11:50a.m. and lasted till 12p.m. Then it was time for industrial training. Training ranged from topics such as automotives and welding to sewing and culinary classes. Classes typically went until 4p.m. which gave students an hour before dinner. Dave recalls, "We did not have much free time because when we were not in class we were doing our chores, mainly cleaning the floors, mopping, buffing and waxing."

Flandreau had about 1,000 students enrolled at the time Dave and his younger sister attended. Classroom sizes were twenty students per one teacher. The majority of teachers were Native Americans who had also gone through the boarding school experience. There were grades 9-12 offered at the school as any other typical high school. Dave says there were not the outbreaks of diseases as one might hear about when boarding schools were new and students died but there were the typical colds that got passed around. Dave also remembers that the food was not very good at school. Perishable items were bought cheaply and the meat that was served was very fatty. Leftovers from the week were saved and used for meals on the weekends.

Sports were also an important part of Flandreau's curriculum as they had become at many boarding schools. There was

wrestling, football and basketball to name a few. The big rivals to play were the local high school teams. Other situations that follow the familiar stories told by boarding school students are the way students were disciplined. Students were brought into an auditorium and any student who had broken a rule would be called up to the front and humiliated in front of the whole school. Dave also recalls that there were some runaways from the school but not as many as there formerly were.

The school offered Native American arts and crafts to the students but items were not made traditionally. Traditional supplies were too expensive to obtain so students made due with what the school provided. The school allowed the students to hold some traditional ceremonies. Dave says that being away from home and his family made him homesick but having his sister at the school did help. He kept in touch with his mother and siblings back home by writing letters. Spending Thanksgiving and Christmas at the boarding school also contributed to his homesickness.

Dave graduated from Flandreau in 1981. He states, "I didn't feel more of Indian or less of an Indian when I left the boarding school." Dave went on to Southwestern Polytechnic Indian Institute secondary education in Albuquerque, New Mexico for four years. There he received a certificate of completion in electronics. He plans to graduate from NMU in December of 2007 and begin working in the aviation industry. For Dave, as for many other Indian students, a boarding school education was a springboard into higher education and a better life.

don't miss the 7th annual

First Nations Food Taster

Friday, November 2 from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

D.J. Jacobetti Center
NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY-Marquette, Michigan

Menu will consists of traditional & contemporary Native American dishes with buffalo, wild rice, vegetables, fry bread, desserts and more.

Entertainment by Dr. Elda Tate, NMU Music Department

This is a dish bag event!
Bring your own non-breakable dishware & your name will be entered into a special raffle of excellent prizes.

For more information about how to purchase tickets or to volunteer, call the Native American Student Association at 906-227-1397 or email us at nasa@nmu.edu. Visit our website at www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans.

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Special thanks to Chris Kibit and the Culinary Arts Program and the D.J. Jacobetti Center Staff.

Barb Bradley

Okosimaan Gitigaan (Pumpkin Garden)

For my NMU Native American Studies Service Learning Project this niibin, we planted an okosimaan gitigaan at the tribal community center in Harvey. With the Center for Native American Studies and the KBIC Weed and Seed and Youth



Committees working together, we were able to provide a gardening experience for tribal youth.

Most of the children (ages 5-12) were from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, but we also had two participants from the Soo Tribe and one from Lac du Flambeau.

Our lessons included:

* *Using the medicine wheel as a tool for the stages of a garden (in which we also planted a four-colored flower medicine wheel in the center of our gitigaan)*

* *Learning the difference between heirloom and hybrid miinikaanan (seeds) and about several pumpkin varieties (we also planted native, heirloom sunflowers)*

* *Composting (And yes, there is a word for "compost" in Ojibwemowin - nebwashkigaadegin.)*

* *Installing a zhingob (balsam) weather stick for predicting fair or foul weather.*

* *Making a "scare-away girl", oshaakaaniniikwezens (since traditionally, it was the women and girls in the Ojibwe culture who shooed away the crows)*

We used Ojibwemowin garden terminology throughout our six workshops and each child went home with an Ojibwe garden glossary. Even during our snacktimes, of wholesome food and drinks from the Marquette Food Coop, we carried on conversations using the language when it was known.

Throughout heat waves, hailstorms, and drought our little gitigaan has been growing, but we're not counting our okosimaan until they're harvested.

From this experience, I can see that new "seeds" have been planted in the children. It seems that they have grown closer and have more respect for Maamaa Aki now. I can see it in their smiles when they are in the garden. We are hoping that this little gitigaan will be the beginning of a larger community garden.



Above: Barb Bradley works with community children.

Left: The growing pumpkin patch.

Photos courtesy of Barb Bradley

Lynna Gurnoe NASA Student Profile



What is your year and major? I am majoring in Environmental Conservation and minoring in Criminal Justice. I am a junior by the number of credits I have, but a sophomore by major.

Why is this your major? I'm hoping to work for the DNR, a tribe, or for a national or state park when I graduate.

What tribe/reservation are you from? The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

What made you come to Northern, besides the laptop? The main reason I chose Northern was that it is still located on Lake Superior and I could not live without a lake nearby.

Do you live on campus? Nope! I don't live on campus. I absolutely love it here, it's everything I'm used to weather wise plus I meet all kinds of new people. I do miss my family and friends from home often however.

What kind of sports do you like? Who are your favorite sports teams? I love to play volleyball and slow pitch softball. My favorite professional sport team is the Minnesota Wild.

Would you be interested in going to volleyball, football, and hockey games with NASA? Yes! If I don't have to work, which is almost everyday.

Do you currently have a job, if so where do you work? Currently I work at Applebee's as a host.

What type of position do you feel you have with NASA, do you feel like a strong member, or do you still feel new? Why? As a NASA member I feel as though I'm still new. Because of my work schedule I can't make it to all the meetings and I don't know as many people or everyone as well as the rest of the group.

What kind of music do you listen to? Any favorite pow wow jams? I like all types of music, from bluegrass to rap. I'm not going to lie either; I love it when I hear "Mighty Mouse" at pow wows... haha

Where do you see yourself fifteen years from now? Hopefully working my job of choice in my location of choice! So, on a reservation or near home at one of the jobs listed above!