

Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network
(UAITPEN)
Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Date: May 17th, 2007, 2-4pm

Location: Native American Student & Community Center, Portland State University

Present: Lori, Darlene, Linda, Karen, Luci, Elizabeth, Shannon, Tabitha, Christine, Judy, Ruth.

Facilitated by: Becky Wright

Agenda Items:

- I. Introductions/Icebreaker
- II. Project updates
 - a. NARA tobacco policy
 - b. Portland Parks
 - c. Evaluation Process
- III. Tobacco marketing presentation
 - a. UTNE Reader
- IV. Judy Bluehorse Skelton
 - a. The role of sacred plants in our lives today
- V. Discussion: What can UAITPEN provide your organization?
- VI. Member announcements/upcoming events
- VII. Adjourn

Project updates: NARA tobacco policy

A group of NARA employees gathered together on April 27 to discuss tobacco policy at NARA. See attached minutes from that meeting. Since meeting, I have spoken with Jackie Mercer, NARA Director, and she has indicated she would like to see a proposed policy before providing full support to project. So, next step is for NARA employees task force to meet again and possible draft policy, or at least provide basic parameters, i.e. completely commercial tobacco free, allowances for residential, etc.

Project Updates: Portland Parks

Multnomah County TPEP is working to expand smokefree playgrounds to all Portland parks or at least to sports fields. This would affect the Delta Park Powwow, requiring the powwow to be completely smokefree. Question was asked of network- for our community, would the better strategy be to work w/ TPEP to get city ordinance passed, or to approach powwow committee to talk about the creation of at least a smokefree arena. Unanimous response was the importance of working with powwow committee and community rather than going the city ordinance route, although support for that ordinance was clearly expressed.

This led into a wonderful discussion of the importance of commercial tobacco free community events. Through the phasing out of casual smoking and tobacco use at powwows and other events, the message would be sent to our youth that tobacco use must be done in only traditional and sacred ways. Some ways to "enforce" a tobacco policy at an event includes MC reminders, more signs, whip man enforcement, there was a question of designated areas, perhaps starting with smokefree arenas.

Project Updates: Evaluation Process

Evaluation planning of the UAITPEN with NPC Research has been completed, with the last meeting occurring on May 2nd, 2007. Becky passed out copies of the materials that NPC Research developed with evaluation team to help guide evaluation of the work we do to ensure it meets the community's needs.

Tobacco Marketing: UTNE reader

It was recently brought to my attention that the magazine UTNE Reader accepts tobacco advertising from Natural American Spirits. When asked why a progressive magazine would accept tobacco advertising, they responded that unless a product is misrepresented, they felt consumers could make the right choice about purchasing that product such as tobacco that is legal. Clearly there is some misinformation about Natural American Spirits, as they are owned by RJ Reynolds and exploit sacred Native imagery to sell a product that kills.

This led into a discussion of the use of Native imagery to sell tobacco, and the way that even within Native community's commercial and traditional tobacco get confused as the same thing. One network member spoke of her experiences of going to ceremony and seeing cigarettes used as traditional tobacco, and how it then made it feel like the ceremony wasn't quite right. A real dissatisfaction at the idea of medicine men using commercial tobacco during ceremony was expressed. Another member spoke of the importance of remembering that everything has a spirit, and that if you use it in the right way, it will be good, but if you use it in the wrong way, it will kill you. We were reminded that we need to respect and honor the traditional ways, and return to what our tribes do.

Becky offered to draft a letter that members can send to UTNE about how Natural American Spirits are misrepresenting their product, and send it on the email list so folks can send on if they feel they want to. That will be done by June 8.

Handout looking at how Camel is expanding marketing to women: see attached article with pictures "From Joe Camel to Barbie Camel"

Guest Presentation by Judy Bluehorse Skelton: "The role of sacred plant in our lives today"

We were very lucky to have Judy join us to talk about the plant tobacco and the ceremonial/medicinal uses of the plant, to ground us in what we mean by "Keep tobacco sacred." Some of things that she spoke of include:

- Everyone has sacred plants
- Tobacco purifies, carries to the creator our prayer
- Tobacco is a medicinal plant, it kills pests, worms, parasites, can be very toxic.
 - Incidentally, pinworms are often packed into the appendix when it is removed; in the past, tobacco could be used to treat pinworms and prevent appendicitis
- Tobacco is used as a springtime purifier, as a purgative to deal with parasites, etc, that enter the intestines
- Nicotiana (tobacco plant) is actually part of the nightshade family, with peppers, potatoes, etc. Has trumpet leaves, smells good at dusk, white, pink or coral flowers.

- Lobelia is a similar plant grown in small gardens, does not have nicotine so it can be used as a transition off commercial tobacco b/c it fills the same receptor spots as nicotine w/out being addictive. It's too wet to grow here.
- Plants have a dark side when we forget ceremony- we must honor and use them the right way.
- Kids are hungry for ritual, for a rite of passage. Smoking can be a transformative moment, where we try to connect with the healer, but it falls short of that experience b/c it's done outside of ceremony. Some ways to create ritual for youth includes gardening, working with hands, but most importantly honoring youth through celebrating lives and celebrating voices.
- Tobacco needs to be given it's special place

Discussion: What can UAITPEN provide your organization?

There was a very brief discussion about what network members want out of the network, and Becky presented a sheet that can be used when requesting assistance from the network in order to keep everything in order and tracked. If you are interested in a much more informal process, that's ok too! But make sure that Becky and other Network members know when you have upcoming events.

Adjourned 4:00pm