

# LEONARD PELTIER



LEONARD PELTIER OFFICIAL AD HOC COMMITTEE

## Newsletter

VOL. 1 | MAY 2024

### BREAKING NEWS

A full parole hearing has been scheduled for Leonard Peltier on June 10, 2024. Peltier's legal team has been working tirelessly to prepare for the hearing, gathering expert testimony and evidence that clearly demonstrates why he should be granted parole relief. This is without question the most critical hearing for Leonard, age 79 and in poor health. We ask all his supporters to urge the Parole Commission to grant him parole this June.



Jenipher Jones, Esq., lead attorney for Leonard Peltier

### Statement from Jenipher Jones, Esq., lead attorney for Leonard Peltier

The struggle for medical care for Leonard is almost as old as the struggle for his freedom because he has never received adequate medical care.

He is almost 80 years old. He has been incarcerated for almost five decades. He is on a walker, yet needs a wheelchair.

What I will say, in my view, is that there are many ways to incarcerate someone. Obviously, the prolonged sentences that go on,

Disproportionally long sentences try to break the spirit by breaking and divorcing that person from family ties and community ties. But there is also the denial of medical care, which is absolutely deliberate ... absolutely insidious. It is an attempt to debilitate that prisoner from being strong enough to defend themselves against their incarceration.



# Beyond the Bars

Members of the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee joined a multi-faceted group of supporters participating in the Beyond the Bars conference at Columbia University on April 6.



The Dakota 38 + 2,  
painting by Leonard Peltier

Lenny Foster, board member, opened the workshop with a prayer for those who support and are working for Leonard. He discussed his work as the Director of the Navajo Prison Project and his work in both federal and state prisons to bring the Sweat Lodge and Pipe Ceremonies to Native prisoners.

Silja Talvi, an investigative reporter, gave a presentation exposing the crucial aspects of Leonard's case and described the lockdowns and denial of due process for prisoners who speak out against the inhumane treatment at Coleman 1 (where Leonard is held). She also gave a history of her own persecution by the government as she exposed corruption and was forced into exile.

Dawn Lawson, the Committee's vice president, gave a history of the treatment she and other women held at the "rape Camp" USP Dublin experienced. She spoke about medical neglect at Coleman 1 as it pertained to Leonard, with emphasis on his need to see an eye doctor, as he is losing his sight.

Paulette Dauteuil, the Committee's treasurer, discussed the work of the Committee and the help of Leonard's supporters who have stayed the course for the 47 years Leonard has been held illegally in federal penitentiaries. NYC supporters Anne Lamb and Jorge Chang stepped in for an ailing Dan Battaglia, the Committee's Executive Director, to help with the setup for the Zoom presenters.

Jenipher Jones Esq., Leonard's lead attorney, spoke on the reality of "old Law Prisoners" convicted before 1989. They are the only prisoners who have to go before the parole board in order to be released. Many of them, including Leonard, are now in their late 70s and 80s. For more information on the Committee and Leonard's case, check out [www.freeleonardpeltier.org](http://www.freeleonardpeltier.org).



Grandma Jumping Bull, painting by  
Leonard Peltier

I only know that without compassion and respect for  
all of [earth's inhabitants, none of us will survive—  
nor will we deserve to.

~Leonard Peltier



# BOARD MEMBERS ATTEND PORTLAND ART SHOW FEATURING LEONARD'S PAINTINGS



In March, Opium Sabbah and Paulette Dauteuil, board members on the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee and comrades in the Jericho Movement (a national organization that advocates for the freedom of all political prisoners and helps their families while they are imprisoned), attended the week-long My Memories of Time Past art show in Portland, OR. Hosted by Adam Carpinelli at the Propulsion Zone for music, art and community events, the gathering showcased paintings by Leonard Peltier.

Michael Robideau, son of Bob Robideau of the American Indian Movement and Leonard's first cousin, performed Native American chants.

Native drummers appeared on opening night.

The following weekend, Sabbah, revolutionary hip-hop artist, activist, and hip-hop educator, served as DJ for a worldbeat set and headlined a hip-hop showcase that featured other activist artists who stand up for Leonard's freedom through their own music.

Opium also debuted the first single – "We Still Here" – from his upcoming album, expected to drop in early 2025, and filmed a video for the song at the event. The song features Opium, along with Portland natives Mic Crenshaw and Swiggle Mandela. You can find it on all streaming services. The forthcoming album features traditional Native American artists, folk singers, and hip-hop artists. All proceeds from both the single and the album will directly benefit Leonard Peltier.



# Meet the Executive Director: Dan Battaglia

As a history major at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, in 2009, Dan Battaglia transformed an interest in Leonard Peltier he'd developed in 2000 into a senior thesis, never dreaming that one day he would serve his hero directly by joining a committee dedicated to the Indigenous political prisoner's freedom.

Visiting Peltier in prison and speaking publicly about the intricacies of Peltier's case and about the abuses suffered by his friend and countless other inmates in prisons across the U.S. is a far cry from where he started.

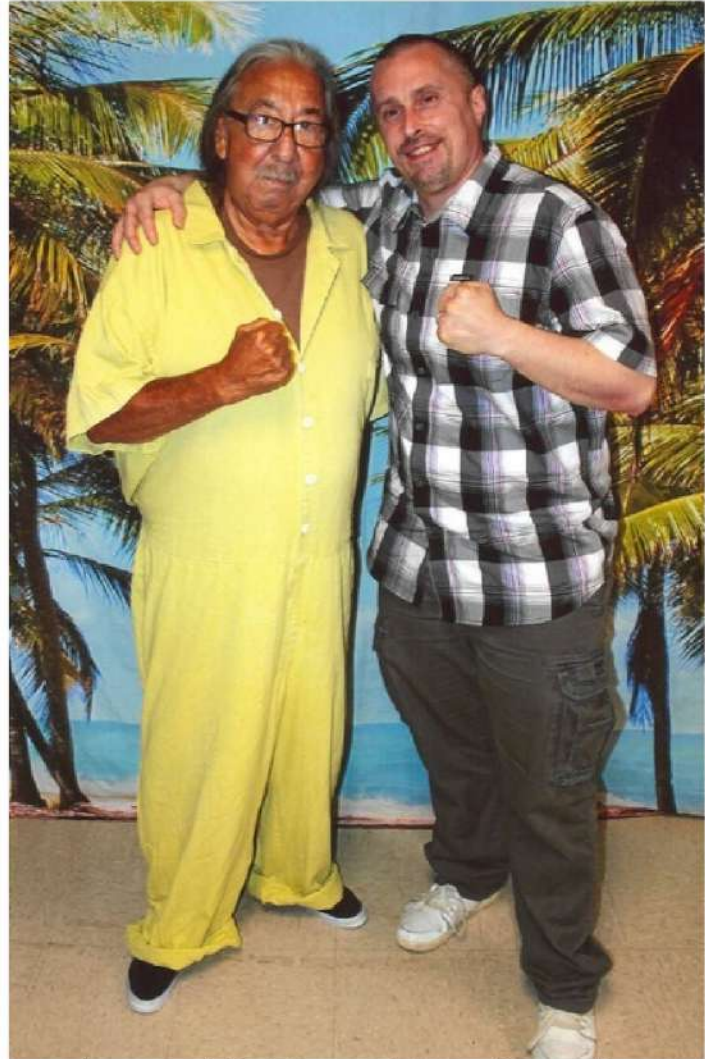
The youngest of three boys, Battaglia grew up in an Irish-Sicilian household in Edison, N.J., where he developed a love of history and music. An avid music collector and guitar player, the New Jerseyite served for a short time as a roadie for the Wailers. "Bob Marley's music changed my life," he reflects.

His life changed again, thanks to a college assignment for which he researched Native American rights and their history of abuse at the hands of the U.S. government. "The movie 'Thunderheart' came out while I was researching," Battaglia, whose nickname is Thunder, recalls. "That's when I found out about Leonard. I wanted to trumpet his name everywhere."

He's doing just that. His career in publishing and media equipped the new Executive Director for this role, but Battaglia says his primary jobs as head of the committee are to coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of directors, liaise with the legal team, and provide leadership.

Battaglia also serves as the Committee's archivist and has collected the most extensive compilation of documents on Peltier's case. Some of those documents formed the basis of a film he worked on with Preston Randolph, a documentarian he met at Peltier's parole vigil in 2009. In his capacity as the film's researcher, Battaglia visited the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations and met key people in the case. He also caught the attention of the famous prisoner himself.

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Leonard Peltier and Dan Battaglia





Peltier called Battaglia in 2017 and asked him to join the group. Valued for his extensive knowledge of the case and the relationships he's fostered, Battaglia joined that committee. He transitioned to the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee when it was formed in 2023, where he rose from historian and archivist to Executive Director.

The New Jersey boy, now adopted nephew of Peltier, says this committee has "more momentum than I've seen in quite a number of years" and he believes it has potential to make an impact on Peltier's behalf.

## **Letter to the UN on behalf of Leonard Peltier**

On April 17, 2024, Lenny Foster, board member on the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee and spiritual advisor to Leonard Peltier, wrote the following letter to the United Nation's Permanent Forum for Indigenous People's Issues:

Yá ee'tah! Greetings in Diné language.

We are respectfully submitting this statement to the United Nation's Permanent Forum for Indigenous People's Issues twenty-third session. This letter is requesting that the Indigenous People's Forum recommend the immediate release of Leonard Peltier, indigenous political prisoner, number 89637-132, the longest-held political prisoner, currently being detained at USP-Coleman 1 in Florida.

This statement is presented as a recommendation for the release of Leonard Peltier, and approval of a visit from the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues, Francisco Cali, to be accompanied by Lenny Foster, longtime Spiritual Advisor to Leonard Peltier.

Amnesty International says, "President Biden must grant Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds and as a matter of justice."

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We add that he must be released based on his extremely critical health condition, and the violation of his human rights, expeditiously.

Leonard Peltier is 79 years old, suffering from severe diabetes, hypertension, an aortic aneurysm, and is rapidly deteriorating and going blind. He is approaching his 50th year of incarceration.

The U.S. attorney James Reynolds, whose office prosecuted the case against Leonard Peltier, wrote in a letter to President Joe Biden, appealing for clemency for Leonard, "We were not able to prove that Mr. Peltier personally committed any offense on the Pine Ridge Reservation," on June 26, 1975.

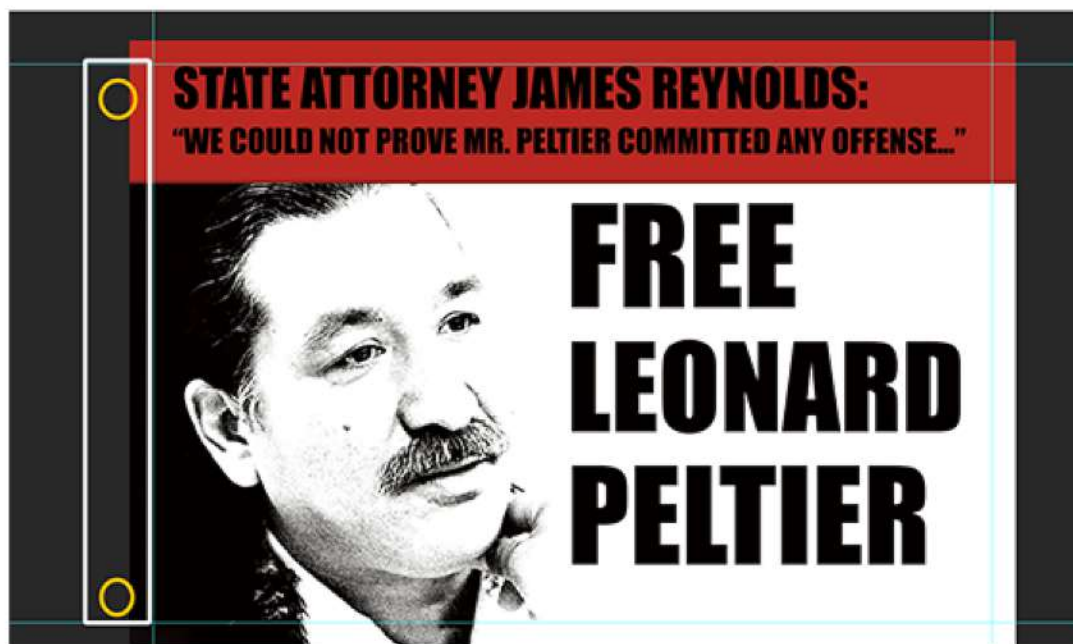


Lenny Foster  
Spiritual Advisor to Leonard Peltier

We thank you in advance for the visit recommendation for Special Rapporteur Francisco Cali and Lenny Foster, Spiritual Advisor, and for Leonard Peltier's expedited release due to his critical and life-threatening health conditions, without delay.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent request.

Lenny Foster  
International Indian Treaty Council, Board of Directors  
Spiritual Advisor to Leonard Peltier



**Available for sale now:  
double-sided Free Leonard Peltier flag.**



# AIM history: the beginning

The American Indian Movement is a national organization founded in July 1968 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by Dennis Banks and Clyde Bellecourt, with support from Clyde's brother Vernon Bellecourt, Mary Jane, Eddie Benton Banai, Pat Bellanger and George Mitchell.

Originally called the Concerned Indian American Coalition (CIA), the name was changed after an elder named Alberta Downwind insisted they reclaim and repurpose the term "American Indian."

When Dennis and Clyde called the first meeting, hundreds of people attended. Initially little more than a local entity, the grassroots movement was created to end racial profiling and give a voice to urban American Indians. As the group evolved, it began to address Indigenous Tribal issues, such as treaty rights, unemployment and efforts to preserve Indigenous cultures.

Inspired by the civil rights movement, they met to advocate for Native civil rights, create community programs and organize protests. They launched the AIM Patrol to monitor treatment of Indigenous people by the police and the courts. They created the Indian Health Board of Minneapolis to provide healthcare to the local Native population.

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The first AIM board members in 1968



Protests against police brutality grew the membership. In 1969, AIM staged an occupation of the abandoned penitentiary on Alcatraz Island to reclaim the facility for redevelopment as an Indian cultural center and school. The activists remained on the island for 19 months.

Other early protests included seizing a replica of the Mayflower in Boston Harbor on Thanksgiving Day 1970, which they declared a national day of mourning, and occupying Mt. Rushmore in 1971, where they demanded federal recognition of the Treaty of Fort Laramie, which granted the area to the Lakota.



To further draw attention to the many broken treaties, AIM, along with other Indian groups, protested in Washington, D.C., in October 1972 at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Trail of Broken Treaties, as the protest was known, provided an opportunity for hundreds of Indigenous people to deliver to U.S. government officials several proposals they believed would improve US-Indian relations.

Demands included recognition of Native tribes, abolition of the BIA and federal protections for Indigenous cultures and religions. It resulted, three years later, in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, reversing the termination policy and providing recognition and funds to Indian tribes.

In the next issue: Leonard's introduction to AIM.



I wonder what it would be like  
to breathe  
By Dawn Lawson



Recently, I was asked to identify the date when Leonard Peltier started to experience deliberate medical neglect at the hands of the Bureau of Prisons.

That is an easy answer: February 6th, 1976 – the date Leonard was incarcerated.

BOP prisoners are not considered worthy of healthcare. Leonard has several health conditions that have been ignored and allowed to deteriorate to the point they could turn lethal. For example, he has not seen a dentist in over 10 years. His few remaining teeth are infected. The last time he did see a dentist, Leonard ended up in a coma and almost hemorrhaged to death.

Leonard says frequently, "You have got to tell them what they do to us!"

Leonard has sleep apnea. Several studies have shown an association between sleep apnea and problems like diabetes, strokes, and heart attacks. Every time one quits breathing during sleep, it puts an immense amount of strain on the cardiovascular system. People with sleep apnea can have hundreds of episodes a night.

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The BOP's version of treatment for this?

They gave Leonard a CPAP machine, a non-invasive ventilator. However, there is no electrical outlet to plug it into.

How does that make sense on any level?

I sleep with a machine. The first night I used it, I realized that I had gone to sleep every night wondering if I would wake up breathing. It was not something I consciously pondered. It was a vague awareness I tried to force to the back of my mind.

Leonard gets to stare at a CPAP machine and wonder if he will wake up in the morning.

The good news is that Jenipher Jones, Leonard's lead attorney, has gotten an independent doctor in to consult with Leonard and is leading international advocacy efforts to get him the medical attention so long overdue.

## Coming Events

On June 26th the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee will sponsor a vigil in San Francisco to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Jumping Bull Camp. More information will be forthcoming soon: watch our website.

Other June 26 commemorative events include:

New York City, Peltier in the Park – info at [NYCFreePeltier@gmail.com](mailto:NYCFreePeltier@gmail.com)

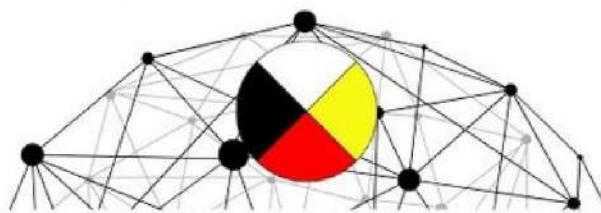
San Jose – Honoring Leonard Peltier and Commemorating the Lakota People on Pine Ridge on the 49th Anniversary of the Shootout at Oglala; Frank Bramhall Willow Street Park; 6pm - 8pm, For more information, contact [freedomnow4LeonardPeltier@gmail.com](mailto:freedomnow4LeonardPeltier@gmail.com).

Oglala, S.D. – Oglala Commemoration Committee, contact <https://www.oglala-Commemoration.com>

Supporters across the nation are encouraged to join or initiate vigils and events in your city. Send us information if you're planning something and we'll put it in the next newsletter. If sharing on social media, please tag us and use the hashtag #peltiervigil2024.



# THE WORLD IS WATCHING INTERNATIONAL FREE PELTIER 2024 CAMPAIGN



Established & convened by the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee, The World Is Watching International Free Peltier 2024 Campaign is a human rights initiative which catalyzes our international partnerships and international intergovernmental forums with the objective of raising awareness concerning the case of Leonard Peltier and the specific issues related to his case. With our international partners we are leveraging both formal and informal means to achieve the above goals.

For more information or to be involved, please email [info@freeleonardpeltiernow.org](mailto:info@freeleonardpeltiernow.org)

Follow us at:

Instagram: [@iampeltier](https://www.instagram.com/iampeltier)

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YouTube: [@iampeltierAdHoc](https://www.youtube.com/@iampeltierAdHoc)

Twitter/X: [Free Leonard Peltier Now](https://twitter.com/FreeLeonardPeltierNow)

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