

June 1, 2010
Just Like Always



Most of this comes from an assortment of reports that have come in from people who witnessed the scene, and/or heard it on the police radios. I might get some of this out of sequence, and if it is really important to fix it, let me know and I will.

A lot of things played into the death of Mary Feather. An accumulation of missteps and neglect all along the way.

Drinking and drugging are about all there is to do on the rez. Unemployment at a staggering 60% or higher, the corrupt still running just about everything. Piggy Cavanaugh taking the grant money that is supposed to go to healing, the clinic, training, even the equipment (ambulance, Jump Kits and extrication tools) seem to just more or less go into Piggy's family account.

She still drives the GSA vehicle around like a personal car. She is commonly seen parked outside of the casino, or driving her daughter down to Standing Rock to pick up friends and family and drive them back to the rez... y'all are paying for the vehicle, the insurance, the gas and the wear and tear.

And, if she gets into an accident while driving on personal business? You pay for that too. In fact, the tribe can be sued for it. Just waiting for that to happen.

I don't know if you ever got a new ambulance. I do know that the previous one was way overdue for a change out. Broken down more than it was running and long past the required trade in date.

The training is something else as well. Piggy gets grant money from the government for training. But she makes the EMS and other personnel --- pay for their own. So, where does that money go?

The SLN Fire Department has some new Extrication tools... Jaws of life, that sort of thing. But no one knows how to use them because no one has received the training for it. So, where did that money go?

People are dying from all sorts of things that connect right back to Piggy

Cavanaugh. She is not qualified to have that position. She has abused and misused it.

But that is par for the rez, right? Good teachers are fleeing a corrupt, laughable school system where the superintendent gets to hand pick his pals for the School board, including Beaz Stensland and her special needs son who cannot read nor write, and they in turn, give him raises on an already over paid contract, for running Four Winds so far into the ground, the AYP scores are at rock bottom. For that he gets a raise?

Wanda Trottier meets none of the requirements for running the personnel department, but because she is tied into the cluster that does what they want... she gets the job. Nothing changes.

Kids are failing. Kids are losing hope. Kids are growing up thinking that drinking and drugging is all there is to a social life. And when they get into trouble, there is no rehab, no counseling and no equipment to pull them out of the ice cold arms of death and misery.

April

So, Mary's day started off like any other day. It just ended up with her dead.

She and her sisters were at Randy and Denne's house. They were obviously too drunk to even walk by the time they left. By that time, all judgment was impaired. Her sister, Carolynn was feeling too out of it to drive, so she got Mary to drive. Mary drove a little ways, but could not focus on the road and got scared. Carolynn knew she could not drive so she had the other sister, Keyana take over. She drove a little ways and got scared so she told Carolynn to drive.

And it was Carolynn behind the wheel. The road was made of rubber and fog, the steering was surreal. Perceptions were drastically, critically altered. Judgment impaired. Eyes half closed, fighting to see the road, drifting...on their way to the Mish (Mission).

Carolynn took her eyes off the road or started to pass out or something. No one is really sure. The car drifted into the ditch and hit Carol Brown's approach and Carolynn over-corrected her steering and came out of the ditch, crossed directly into the path of Brent and Tammie's SUV, right in front of Ed Solway's approach.

The call went out to dispatch, but the information got to the first responders incorrectly. It said there was a "single car rollover" with two occupants. It was actually a two-car, head on with multiple injuries and people trapped in the back of Carolynn's car. Two vehicles with seven victims, three of them critical.

Brent and Tammie, to their credit, refused EMT assistance, despite their own

injuries, and insisted that the others be looked after first.

It was all hands on deck.... or was it a Clown Car?

Spirit Lake Fire Dept shows up at about the same time with TWO people and in their grass fire fighting truck. That's like bringing a squirt gun to a fully engulfed building. They had no extrication equipment. Only two of the guys were wearing their Fire Gear. It was hard for people watching, and I imagine for those working the scene, to tell who was with the Fire Department and who was just 'there'.

Finally, when the extrication equipment arrived they could not get it running.

The crowd continued to grow. Cars were lining up on both sides of the road, people were crowding around, and the EMS's were trying to get to the most critically injured in the back seat, which was crumpled.

The Firefighters kept asking what they could do to help. They wanted to help. But they came in the wrong vehicle, and with equipment they had not enough training on to know how to operate it. That is not their fault. That is Piggy's.

Someone yelled at the two firefighters to at least block and direct traffic. Do some sort of crowd control. Mary's father, himself pretty drunk, kept pulling at the EMS's and arguing with them as they were working to save Mary. He was pushing them and screaming at them as they are trying to save his daughter. Clearly, being drunk does not help.

Mary's dad kept screaming at the EMS to "GET HER OUT OF THE CAR!!!" He was desperate, scared, panicky, and drunk. I can't imagine the horror that it was turning into before everyone's eyes. Especially for family.

Mary's legs were pinned by Brent and Tammy's vehicle. Time was running out.

Calls to Fort Totten PD to come and assist with the traffic piling up and the crowd were met by the dispatcher saying: "They are in Tokio". Un-believable. Several people have told me they heard that over the radio. EVERY COP ON DUTY WAS IN TOKIO? ARE YOU SERIOUS? Who is running the Badgers these days? Let me guess: No qualifications, no training and no idea.

An off-duty cop shows up. By now, the scene is chaos. There was nothing he could do either. This required everyone, but "They are in Tokio" ??

The EMS worked at getting a tube down Mary's throat to aid her breathing. The screaming, continued. It was in the words of several who have described it:

A mess.
Chaos.
A horror.
A clusterfuck.

Someone, again, in desperation, and without proper training, tried to back Brent's SUV away from the vehicle that had Mary trapped. They were desperate to help and there was no more help on scene. People want to help, but sometimes, like this, made it even worse. When they tried to back the SUV off, they had it in DRIVE and shoved it and the car with Mary and the EMT's in it even further before they got it into REVERSE, and shut it off.

Someone threw a tow rope to the SUV and pulled it away from the car. Again. They were desperate to help and there was not enough trained help on the scene. But that also caused more problems. The wheels were not chock blocked and it caused the car to slide even farther into the ditch with EMS personnel and Mary in it.

Devils Lake Fire were the ones that eventually got Mary extricated. One of the EMS called the minute they saw the vehicles. Devils Lake also sent to rigs. They had the know how to start the extrication equipment. (A little training goes a long ways.)

Somewhere, in all this chaos, Mary's spirit left.

May

Her sister, Carolynn just graduated High School. She's broken up that her sister could not be there to see it and celebrate with her.

That's right. She was in High School. She's a kid herself. She's doing what everyone else is doing. Or at least, what it appears everyone else is doing -- "Having Fun".

Who were the people that gave them all that alcohol? Why is no one looking at them?

Many of the emergency personnel lacks either equipment or training or both, and Piggy just keeps rolling along. Just like always.

Meanwhile, hearts are breaking and nothing is learned. This is not the first young person to die needlessly in a drunk driving accident. Not even the first this year. Probably not even the first that month.

What else is offered to the kids out there? Who is guiding them? Who are their role models and what are they doing? Look at your schools. Look at your School Board. Look at your Leaders. Look at the corruption that is still running everyone into the ground. You can't miss it. It's everywhere.

Everybody loved Mary. Everyone loves her sister. Her sister now carries a memory that could in itself bring her down if she does not get good counseling and help. Where will she get it? She won't.

She and her family will keep on doing what they have always done. So will so many others out there. Just like always.

There will come a day when the graveyard holds more children than are walking around alive. Maybe then someone will stand up. maybe then someone will stand with them. Maybe then it will change.

Until then-- It's just like always. Except that now, Mary is not there.

Everyone that wanted to help, tried to help, could change nothing. It was too late.

Try now, before it is too late for the next son or daughter. Try now as hard as if they were trapped in a vehicle, fighting for their life. Try now. They are trapped in the futility of the rez and they have no idea how to fight for their own lives. Try now, while they are still here and it might make a difference. Or wait until the next "clusterfuck".

You know where to find me.

~Cat