

EMPOWERMENT \$AGA

JOURNEY OF

TRADE



VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

The story begins with shape-shifters, four birds - Eagle, Raven, Hawk, and Owl - perched on telephone lines on the outskirts of the Native community. They are spiritual helpers to a group of teens - Shining Star, Theresa, Ranger, and Jay. These young teens learn financial resources as they embark on many adventures, and encounter intrigue in the process!

Journey of Trade introduces the four shape-shifters as well as the main characters of Shining Star; her father, Bear; and her grandmother, Light Woman. The story moves back and forth in time, showing readers how the past influences the present.



EAGLE

Eagle is an ancient spirit: all knowing, all seeing. As a human, he transforms into a strong leader who guides others through their journeys. He wears a medicine bag.



OWL

Owl is a wise one, and beyond. As a human, she conveys wisdom to others about their life situations. Owl always carries her fringed purse.



RAVEN

Raven is the one who brings balance; all-encompassing of all the attributes of life. In human form, she evokes reasonable consideration of all facts. Raven wears a turquoise ring.



HAWK

Hawk is a hunter and a messenger, a patient observer with a quirky sense of humor. In human form, he is always physically fit and active. He constantly wears his bead and bone choker.

SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA, A SMALL RESERVATION IS WATCHED BY A GROUP OF SHAPESHIFTING SPIRITS



THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A LOT GOING ON IN THIS SLEEPY RESERVATION.. NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE BUYING.

NO? WELL AT ONE TIME, THIS AREA WAS FULL OF PEOPLE, COMING AND GOING. THEY WOULD TRADE THEIR GOODS FOR THINGS THEY DIDN'T HAVE.

REALLY, EAGLE? THEY DIDN'T USE MONEY?

HELLO?! THAT WAS BACK IN THE DAY, RAVEN! THEY DIDN'T USE MONEY.

WHAT DID THEY USE TO TRADE, THEN?



THEIR HUNTING GAVE THEM FURS AND TRACKING SKILLS.

THE ANGLOS HAD STEEL, GUN POWDER, BEADS...



THE THINGS THAT THE NATIVE PEOPLE DIDN'T HAVE.



I BET THEY USED BASEBALL CARDS TO TRADE!

HAWK, YOU ARE A DORK!



I'M WONDERING WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE TO BE THERE DURING THAT TIME.

ME TOO, OWL. IF WE WERE THERE, WHAT WOULD WE TRADE?

BASEBALL CARDS!







ONCE THE DUST CLEARS, THE SHAPESHIFTERS FIND THEMSELVES BACK IN OUR PRESENT TIME IN THE SAME SLEEPY RESERVATION. A RED LIGHT BLINKS ON THE TOWN'S ONLY STOPLIGHT TO AN EMPTY STREET.



IN THE HUMBLE DWELLING ON THE RESERVATION, A YOUNG GIRL, SHINING STAR, HELPS HER GRANDMOTHER, LIGHT WOMAN, CLEAN WHILE HER FATHER, BEAR, DESPERATELY SEARCHES THROUGH HIS DOCUMENTS FOR A VERY IMPORTANT LIST. THIS LIST IS ONE HE HAD MADE LAST MONTH AT A TRIBAL MEETING TO HELP THE WHOLE RESERVATION.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

MY NOTES FROM LAST MONTH'S TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING. THE MEETING IS TODAY AND I'VE GOT TO FIND THEM!















SARA, GOOD TO SEE YOU!

COME IN.



WE GOT BACK FROM THE STORE AND SHINING STAR NOTICED THAT ONLY ANGLOS OWN AND OPERATE THE BUSINESSES IN TOWN.

THAT'S TRUE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE SAID? SHE SAID SOME DAY SHE WOULD OWN HER OWN.

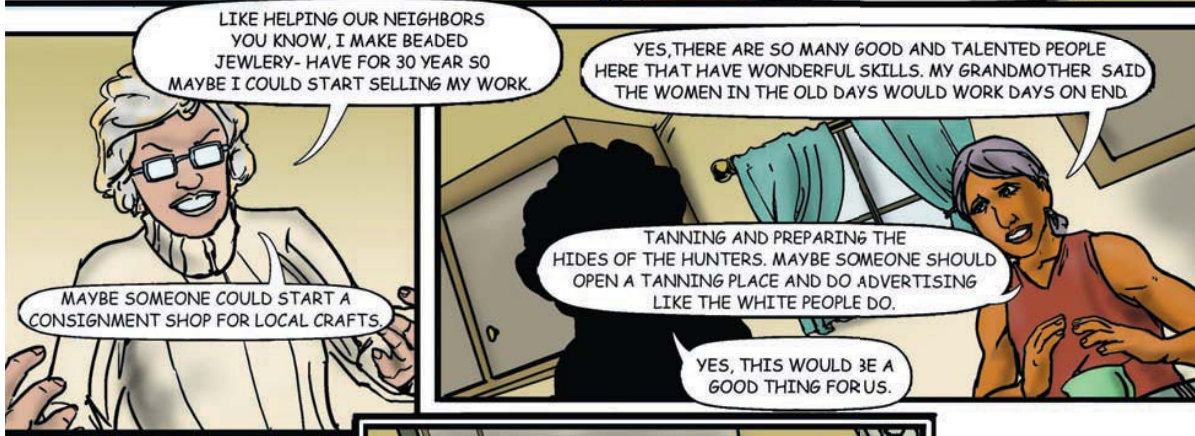


YOU KNOW, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MY UNCLE OWNED A HIDE-TANNING SHOP.

OH YES, I REMEMBER THAT. SURE.



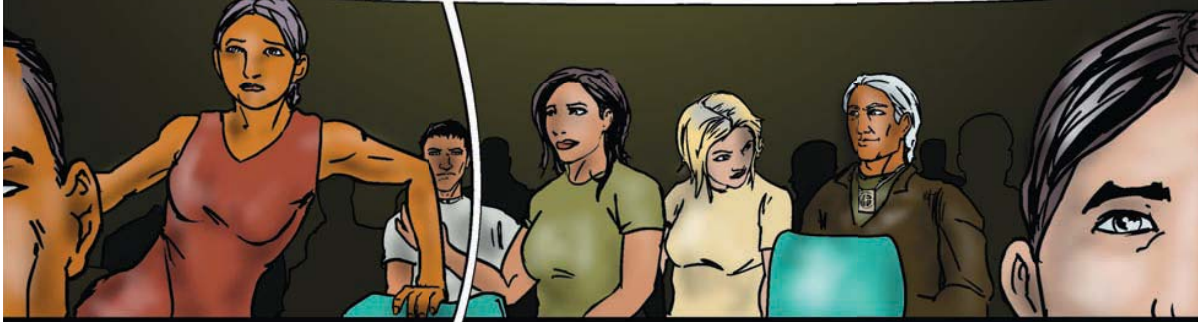
WHAT HAPPENED?





THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING - IT IS GOOD TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU HERE.

BY NOW YOU HAVE HEARD - AND PROBABLY FELT- THAT WE NEED TO START PUTTING OUR TALENTS AND RESOURCES TOGETHER TO GROW THE GARDEN OF OUR OWN COMMUNITY. OUR FAMILY, OUR NEIGHBORS,

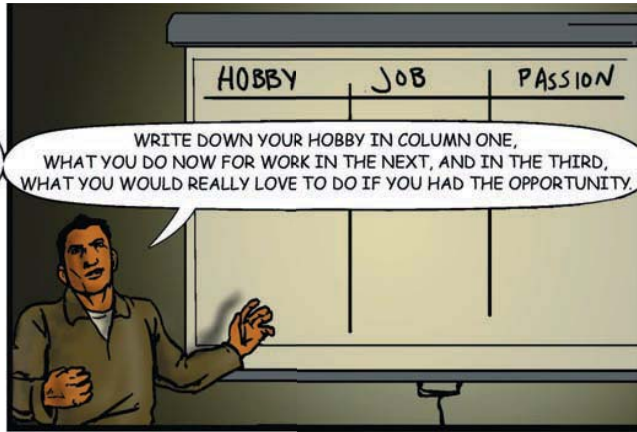


WE CAN FLOURISH IF WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT'S AVAILABLE TO US; TRIBAL LOANS IN BOTH THE PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS, THE UNIQUE NECESSARY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT WE CAN OFFER AND OUR HERITAGE OF COMMUNITY.





LET ME ASK YOU TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES AND MAKE THREE SEPARATE COLUMNS.



HOBBY JOB PASSION

WRITE DOWN YOUR HOBBY IN COLUMN ONE, WHAT YOU DO NOW FOR WORK IN THE NEXT, AND IN THE THIRD, WHAT YOU WOULD REALLY LOVE TO DO IF YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY.



WHAT IS THIS SUPPOSED TO DO? I THOUGHT WE WERE MEETING ABOUT BUSINESSES!



TRUST ME, JUST HUMOR ME AND DO THIS SIMPLE EXERCISE.



NOW LOOK AT YOUR PAPER AND SEE WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN.

I BET SOME OF YOU HAVE INCREDIBLE SKILLS. WHY NOT USE THOSE TALENTS AND SKILLS TO START BUILDING NEW BUSINESSES WITHIN OUR RESERVATION?



MY MOTHER, LIGHT WOMAN, USED THIS EXERCISE TO HELP ME UNCOVER WHAT KIND OF TALENTS I HAVE AND WHAT I COULD CONTRIBUTE.



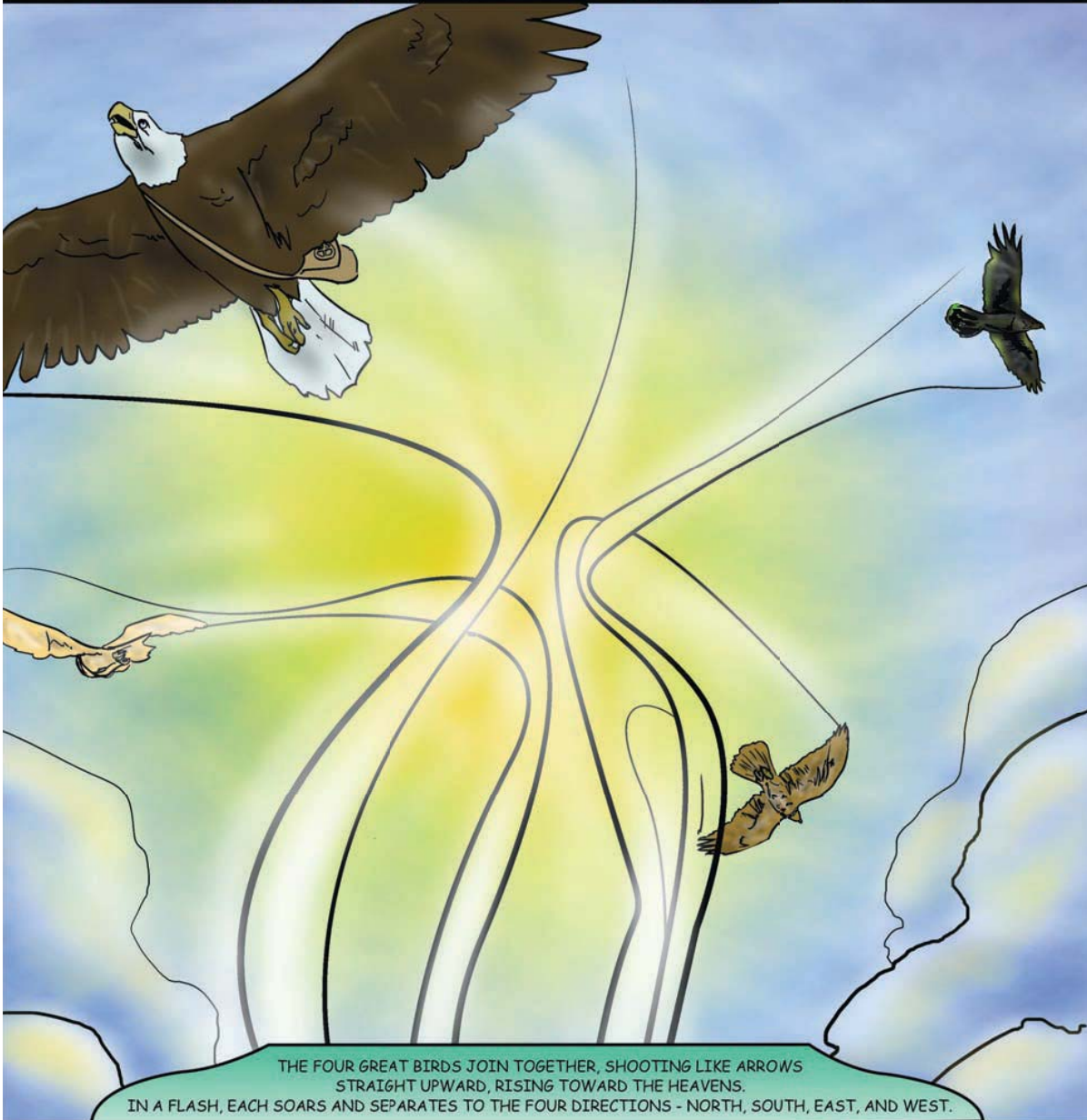
OUR RESERVATION IS LIKE A GARDEN; IF WE WATER IT, IF WE PLAN WHAT WE WANT TO PLANT, IF WE CARE FOR IT AND LOVE IT, IT WILL KEEP GROWING. AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO REAP THE HARVEST.

BUT IF WE DO NOTHING, WE WILL REAP NOTHING. CHANGE TAKES PLANNING AND IT TAKES TIME. AND IT WILL NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT US.



WE ARE A PROUD AND GIFTED PEOPLE, AND WE HAVE BEEN DORMANT LONG ENOUGH! THE BEAUTY OF CREATING OUR OWN BUSINESSES GIVES US A UNIQUE GIFT TO THE PUBLIC, WHETHER IT BE GOODS OR SERVICES.







Rose Red Elk (Sioux/Assiniboine)

Author of the Empowerment \$aga series of stories, Rose is an international performing arts entertainer, also known by her Native American traditional and stage name, Red Feather Woman. An accomplished award winning recording artist, storyteller, singer, songwriter and author from the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, Montana, and an enrolled member of the Sioux/Assiniboine Tribes, Rose continues to discover the realms of spiritual awareness through the gift of storytelling, in written, oral and musical forms. Her fiction is themed with traditional values, blended with ancient stories from the past.

www.redfeatherwoman.com

Matthew Barkhausen

Matthew worked with the Native American and woman owned small business Circuit Media as an illustrator for the Empowerment \$aga series of stories. His artwork for this and other projects focuses on Native American culture. He has provided artwork to the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce and other Native American organizations. Matthew is of Cherokee and Tuscarora heritage. He has a B.A. in interactive media design from the Art Institute of Colorado.



www.matthewbarkhausen.com

Other Circuit Media illustrators who contributed greatly to the project were **Jon Hormachea**, creative design director, **Abby McMillen**, illustrator, and **Ali Bibbo**, graphic designer.



Joseph Arnold

Working as a freelancer for a Denver based company, Joe created the original images of the characters. His artwork reflects his philosophy that dedication and practice are critical aspects of being an artist. After serving five years active duty with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne and three years with the Colorado National Guard, Joe completed his education in June 2102 at The Art Institute of Colorado with a bachelor's degree in media arts and animation. He has worked for Disney Online Studios Boulder and 12-6 Studios in Denver.

Original concept by J.P. Barham

Creating the Empowerment \$aga

The Empowerment \$aga is a series of stories to engage youth 14-18 years of age in developing basic financial skills so they will learn how to build and preserve their own financial wealth. These stories, offered in colorful comic-style graphics, are reservation-based in order to bring "home" to Native youth the message of handling their finances from an early age.

Recognizing the importance of financial knowledge to IIM account holders, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) has been working for years to bring financial skills training to account holders of all ages. OST has partnered with other government agencies, Native community development financial institutions, Native organizations, and others to offer culturally sensitive financial education.

The Empowerment \$aga is another opportunity to expand financial skills training in Indian Country by encouraging youth-to-youth and multi-generational discussions about this topic. The stories highlight the value of knowing these financial skills, and illustrate the challenging consequences when this knowledge is not known or used properly.

The characters and stories of the Empowerment \$aga series are wholly-owned by the government of the United States and cannot be used without the written consent of the government. For more information regarding financial education opportunities in Indian Country, please contact:

OST's Director of Financial Education

brian_ross@ost.doi.gov

or

Trust Beneficiary Call Center

1-888-678-6836

To contact your Fiduciary Trust Officer please visit:

<http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto>



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