

Joe Toledo  
Navajo  
Community Action Committee  
Recorded by Tom Ration  
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# 570

We are still on the Community Action Committee Assesment and here is another CAC member wanted to talk to the community. Joe Toledo is in the Crownpoint District, he is a young man about the age of around 39 or 40. Mr. Toledo was born around Smith Lake area and he is married down below Crownpoint so he is in District 15. And he is a member from Vicente(??) Chapter. Mr. Toledo has been among his people and he has been a leader among his people for about four or five years already. And he went to Crownpoint schools and Albuquerque so he has a little education and besides that Mr. Toledo is some sort of Navajo Indian Medicine Man. He has learned his Medicine Man doing from his father and grandfather and the time when his father was living and Mr. Toledo was, he learned it when he was young. So Mr. Toledo has a chance to talk here, and he is known every well in his district and he is the one member of the CAC member. And he is trying to learn the Community Action Committee Leader, and here is Mr. Toledo.

Chairman and the Vice Chairman and the Secretary of the Community Action Committee Leadership and all the community in this room and the councilmen and the visitor and the CAC members and the chapter officer. I am very thankful to present myself here in front of you people and I am not very old to know much about things, but then I am just learning that I will try and see what can I put out for you. There are some good leaders ahead of me that already have their speech, but anyway whatever they miss out I might fit in something that you folks haven't known yet. But anyway I thank you all and I was born around Smith Lake area. I belong to what they call a Fire Clan, a Navajo

called his clan K-a-ani. The Fire Clan has been said that they came out from the north side of Crownpoint where the old ruins of the Tar People Clan used to live. My great-great-great-great grandfather has come out of there many, many, many, years ago. And that was what my great grandfather, and my grandfather, and father told this story about where we came from. So I am glad that I am one of the Tar Clan which is still known among the Navajo People.

For many years I was dumb about things, and then I went to school and when I was about 12 years of age. And then I went on to Albuquerque for 3 or 4 years and came back to Crownpoint. I didn't went back to school, I don't know why, but I didn't went up too high, I just went up to the 6th grade. And then I learned more about the white people that we work with the Navajo Reservation, I have been on the water project for around 6 or 7 years, and I learned more most about water. That was my trade. So I just want to say and I just happen to be in this CAC member for about two years of time and I had found out that I had to learn something about the CAC members. So we are here to get more training, to see if we can do something for our people.

The CAC members is supposed to be the leader of the community and that is what we are learning today. I don't know how far we get through when we get through. We might have more better sense, after all, so in the earliest days I noticed the time when my folks used to live, my mother has passed away and my father also. So I just happen to be among some of my friends, to get more sense and I went to school and I got a little education to go by. And there are a lot of things that I could tell you but then still at the same time, I have to take care of my own self and take care of my camp and what else I have. So that gives me more ideas that how to make a better living way, I had been among liquor business for about 5 or 4 years. Sometime I haven't drink pretty heavy but still, about a year ago something told me that it was no good for me.

And so I quite using the bad thing and then I have turned around and telling my people about alcoholism, what alcoholism will be to you. But still there is nothing that I have done to help my people because all I do was with my talk about, that doesn't help at all some of them boys and girls, like to treatment among quite a few hospitals. Some of them came up all right and some of them are still not forgetting. And it takes time to forget things, but in my way I had tried by best to keep away from things like that now. So today I don't think about it, there are quite a number of Navajo people that are like that. The Navajo Reservation, this is what is hurting us most of the time. Sometime I talked to myself, and say, I wish they never brought that thing over into our Navajo Reservation. It has ruined the whole Nation in the Navajo Reservation. But there is nothing that we can do about it, everybody is too far deep in it now, but we are just trying to do their best to take out the only severe (?) one out of the bunch. Some of them we tried it out for little over a year or two to see if we can get of them. But it seems to, that we can't do anything, unless they have treatment from the hospitals. So that is the way we are, throughout the Navajo Reservation. And I sure do hope that there might be some already that we can help our people, but trying is all we can do. So I am here to learn more about the Community Action Committee. I just wondering what it meant, the Community Action Committee. And later on I found out that some of the high education would lead us the way.

I have a lot to tell you but I don't know where to start from. But anyway I will be keep going with very little thing that comes up. And later on we can pick up the good things which I have said, you can pick out the good things which I have said, so I will start with the time when I enter my CAC members..

It was about a year ago, I was still using liquor. And I have stayed that the Thoreau, New Mexico and in an old car, I was sitting right near the bar, it was



summer time. And then the next morning, I stick around the fire for about two or three hours, and nobody come around. And I tried to beg some money from others, but everybody I ask they are just worst as I am, they are looking for money too. Pretty soon there were five or six of us together asking the same question. And we were kind of hungry. And it was along about 10 o'clock and I was sitting right outside at the bar door, and it was getting pretty warm and I went back a ways where there were trees and I laid down under the shade for a while I was so tired that I didn't sleep that night. So we was crowding each other in the little car, so that night, so I laid under the chair and I went to sleep. While I was laying there, I had a little dream that I was just about to fall off a cliff, and then all of a sudden I jumped up and there was somebody else on me. While I was under the shed I heard somebody laugh, and there were a whole bunch of girls that were laughing at me, after I jump up. Something told me that it was best for me to go home cause if I don't, if I stayed another night or day there would be something happen. This is what my dream was, so I started and got up and started home to the road, towards my home. And I walked a little better than a mile and then a car picked me up and brought me up to Crownpoint. From Crownpoint it was along little afternoon someting like 2 or 3 o'clock and we got up and started on the road again. My home was about 5 or 6 miles north of crownpoint and started back on the old road where I came from. I walked back home, and they picked me up and I was so tired that I got home and nobody was home. The family were out herding sheep that day so I was so hungry and tired that I couldn't do nothing at all about getting anything, so that evening, the family came back from herding sheep and I was laying there just about dead of hunger. My wife hasn't asked me anything or tried to cook me anything, I just laid there. So she never did bother me at all and after a little while they went off to the mother's place and I think that is where they ate. Where I was there was nothing had done.



Finally my wife didn't come back to see me, I was so hungry that I didn't eat for one night and half a day. I just didn't know what to do, so I just don't say nothing for me and I was just bashful to say anything to her cause he told me once that I drink once more and then she will never talk to me or say anything. So finally I made up my mind to say something to her, I was shaking all over. She gave me alcoholic moving. So I made up my mind to say something to her, and I pleaded with her back again, that I will never do it again, so that was the second time I said it. And then finally the next day they were having a meeting over at the Vicente Chapter. Finally she made, I think she felt sorry about me, looking at me, so poor and she brought me something to eat. At home we didn't have nothing to eat, I had some chili on the side and that was just using liquor mostly every other day. An I didn't even work, I just had to beg for money to buy my liquor and then finally I think everybody got tired of me, everytime I start to walk to somebody they always leave. So I thought of myself, and I was doing foolish thing and then finally the next day, I made up my mind to go to the Chapter meeting, at Vincente Chapter.

Since the Chapter House is made, I never went to meeting for about a little better than a year and a half. And I was bashful to go to the meeting and then I made up my mind and went inside where there were a whole bunch of men and women, girls and boys, and I sat right in the corner where I can't be seen but still everybody was watching. Finally they were talking about putting the members of CAC and they were appointing different people. And then finally somebody called my name, that I would be one of them. And in the first place I thought it was just a dream, finally they sure saying my name and then they told me that it was a vote. Everytime people has been voted out, the winner gets in and then finally my time came. There was one made a motion for me and then second motion came in and then

I was running against another man. And the vote was close and then the people went and were mostly all on my side, there was just six for the other man and mine was over 50, I don't know why but for some reason. Maybe they just want to get me off the liquor business, so.....

That is the day that my mind went around, into a better way of thinking, the day I was sat in front of the Community and they told me to say something, I just didn't know what to say, but I tried my best to tell the truth about myself, and I told about the days how I came about, up to this morning, and so that the people were glad for me to say that, so I wasn't CAC members then, Community Action Committee, I was just surprised that when I got out of the Chapter House I felt big. A big man and it looks to me that I was just almost a big boss. So that is the way I started my behaving and forgot my liquor.

For about one months time I was getting back to a man, a little better, feel better and then as time, my wife was so happy that every time she turns around she hugs me, and I felt a lot better that way. And now this is my story among the alcoholism which I got away from it, it is your own mind that can bring you out of it. It is not the medicine, that you eat, but it your mind yourself that can do the job for you. So this is what I have done today and today I am a better man than I was before. Now I got mostly everything, I have horses, cattle, sheep and I got my children are all doing fine, I have a good home. And I have pick-up to haul wood with. So this is the way I start to make my better way of living. So I hope that most of you people that ate in here listening would think about what I have told you, that it is a true story about myself. There is somebody else that knows about it, and in this community and my old lady can tell you about what happened to me, but then I have told you what I have seen today. So this is the way I forgot that I have got away from liquor. And I know some of you men that are in here that are still using, a big old bottle. So it manner and way that you can get out of it. Just like I say, just try your best. And work your mind

around it, you can easily forget things, and this is what I learned about myself and you boys and girls, and men and women, can take my word for it that I have sure done, fight it out in my mind. There was no kind of medicine, shots that would make me get out of it, I just work my mind up and I just forgot it. This is the way, things can go, so I just want to tell you the truth about what happened. And I sure do hope some of you men would have that has trouble of this kind, try and work your mind out and you can do it yourself if you try. And that is one thing that the men have forget to have a better way of living, so this is what we are fighting now. I think this is what they call Community Action Committee.

Well in another way we can help our people, talk with the, and see what we can do for them. It is the truth, if we work together, talk together and discuss things together. That is the only way that the Navajo people can get ahead. There are 900 out of 1,000 people that are undeucated and are sure living in a poor way. So we could, we have got to work hard and we have to poor all of these up. So we won't be very poor and living in a bad way, this would be our job. This is what we are here for. We have to learn about a better way of living. So this is what our leader members here that have been talking to us for two days and I know that they are, they are saying the right things, they are not fooling us. They have better sense that we have. So that is why they are training us. And to get that is our minds, and we can go around to the other countries to tell our own people, how to work together and live together and help each other in the various ways. This is the only way that we Navajo people can get along.

I would like to tell you a little story of old time. There are a lot of things in my mind that we wish we could do. I would like to start with our culture, that we had many years ago. It was one great thing that we had in the past time. I know most of our white people has church religions and the said that they had for many



years and this is the same way of us too. We have our old religious ways for many, many years with nobody knows when according to our song story that we got in the whole Navajo Reservation. And I sure do want to tell the community that we must hold our culture as long as we can. There are some church members in this community right now but I am not talking against them. They have their way of doing things in church and we have our way of doing things at home. So that is the only reason I wanted to tell you that it would best for us to try and keep our religious way and that is what the Navajo people went by for many years, they took care of them. And we still have and at the same time we can teach our younger generation to live a better way of living, some of us has learned to have a very good experience of living ways, helping each other. There was many years ago when our people used to work together there was a time that people didn't have no money to talk about, they just had to work together, help each other. That is what most of our old people have said we can work together to be strong. Many years ago the Navajo people use to help each other. So that is why they got along together, there was a time that my grandfather and my father and mother have said that if we do work we can work together, we would do fine. I still remember the time when my father told me in a garden where he was working down around south of Standing Rock and I still remember we used to go and help hoe gardens for other people for nothing, all the way all we do is just go up there and they feed us and just help them all day long, hoeing weeds in the garden. And this is the only way people can keep up with each other and so let us go back to our old times which we had before. And about I just know just about when this was quite by our people, helping each other, it is the time when they start this public work when they approve to the Navajo people to have a budgets and different history or different Chapter Houses so that they can get back a little money of their own, what they have to work for, the tribe don't give them

the money. They have to cut some wood for each other or else to work together  
someway to earn the money, this was the way the money was being put out to the  
reservation. This was the time when they started. They have got each other to help,  
to help for nothing, since the money came in the people always want to get something  
for, have something done and it is, it was spread all over the reservation now. "If  
When you want to ask somebody for help they will tell you or ask you how much are  
you going to give me?" I have worked 10 days and I make this much money. So this  
is the whole set up between the Navajo people and when they used to help each other.

#### NAVAJO LANGUAGE

(English Translation)

At different places what people do, we know almost about all of their work today.  
What they compete for and what knowledge they know about living, all of these are  
what the CAC committee are doing, bringing help to our people.

I have forgot it and it was supposed to be English!

In this community in which we are working together, by the day it is a leader, a leadership members, what a leader is to lead our people in the right way, in the best way. So this is what we are doing today and it is in our hand to help people and in every way we know how to lead our people. We CAC members have to discuss these things and get together often. This is the only way that we can do this leadership. And the people are looking up to us to a better way of living now and we have to work hard to do so. Some of us people has learned a long time ago, which I have just told you about my time, about how I went along with my liquor during the time when I was fighting with my liquor. And so there are alot of ways to get off of it and we people ought to work together and help our people. There are lot of poor people in our Navajo Reservation. And the Navajo tribe headquarters has helped us in any way they know how and I think we Navajo people are getting to realize about alot of things which is a way that we are trying to work together in our community and in our country, our reservation. And before long we used to be gorgotten each other, but since the ONEO has a program out for us and two year's ago it was a time that they started the CAC members, the Community Action Committee. Our younger generation has learned about things, about how to run things in the way of working together. So I think we are smart enough to find these out and in the way of better way of living. And as I say that we Navajo people got to learn something like of a kind that we are talking about. And it is a good set up to be of the ONEO has brought this up to us. So we are trying to be taught and trained in the leadership so that we can lead our people to better way of living. For many years as a man says that we are just lost and it was pretty near lost forever. Just like the Bible story, if we don't believe in the bible we are lost forever. So it is something like that, that the ONEO has brought it up to us to be saved. Not forever, but to saved from bad things, if we talk together, like I say that for many years



alcohol had worked on me and just about loose my life during three times, especially in the winter time. The hardest thing that a man could do is when you have a cough, an alcoholism it is hard to say to stay home. Every time you think about liquor it always take you to the bar and it is very hard thing to fight it is something like that that we have to fight problems like that in order to raise our own generation. It is the children, the new generation that we ought to think about, building them a good place to live to build them up and in the right way and I would like to tell you a story about something that I know that started out about a long before four or five years ago. There is a lot of boys and girls and they are well educated. And they have learned a lot of things from school and they went up to 12th grade, high education, and when they come back home they learn these bad habits of drinking. And then when they started they never get off of it. The good education boys and girls will be at the bar all the time. So this is one greatest things that we ought to fight among our people, to try to teach them how to stay away from it cause it is a bad habit and it is a bad living. So I would like to say that we are gettingto where we are learning something, there are a lot of boys and girls that went to higher education that has habit like that all over the reservation and some of them has lost their life through different things from hungries and harship, loosing their life when they are drunk. Driving cars, go off roads, hit somebody, all of these things. So it is a bad habit that we ought to work and fight hard for our people or people that are like that. This is one of the greatest problem that we have today, so my friend in this community here, that I sure do like to say that it can be done, if we try hard, and like I told you, I had to fight my way through from the bad habits I had today I know myself, I know where I am going and I can live on now and try to work together with you people.

So my fellow man and my listeners in this community, I am very thankful for you people to listen and I think you have getting a better idea with most of our leadership has talked about things in the manner of way of living better life. And there is no other questions and stories that we can say to you all, that if we work together

and talk together we might get to be living better life in our reservation. That is just like the white people are today, so a lot of you people have been around different cities, how do the white people live together and working together, so I don't know what else can I tell you about life. You have most of you have learned about a lot of these good ways of living, so I sure thank you all for trying your best to make a good leadership. And I sure do thank Mr. Peter MacDonald, the Director of the ONEO, that has done a great thing for us which we could say that he is helping his people in the way and leading his people to a better way of life. The main thing is to cooperate together and to have a meeting often and talk about the various problems what we can do for ourselves and living a better way is not too far off if you know how. That was what I told them in my story. How I was before, and all of a sudden I started to work myself out to a better way of living and if you try yourself, you can easily get away from things that are not right, and all of you people here that I know of that you can help your own people.

Along in 1966 the boys and girls had training sessions at Naschitti Boarding School and I noticed that the time some of our boys that were in habit of my kind has been through some of the training sessions since then I found out a lot of boys and girls had learned a better way of living. I know some of our boys and girls in this room, that I know had the same problem, and after they enter the ONEO program I think they realize what they were doing and now they learn a better way of living. Today I notice some of our boys in this room was like me, during the time before the ONEO started. And I think the Community Action Committee is working among us more better than schools because I have seen it with my own eyes that most of you men, women, boys and girls, are different today as I see most of the faces in this room that used to be in the wrong road. But since they get to be members of different jobs they got to learn a better way of living, so this is what came into me. Today I didn't thought of myself that I was going to be in front of this much people. And I am surprised that I am getting to learn a better way of living and I don't know

for a long time that I was going to be in this room, I was way out in the cold place for many years and some would rather I have worked hard out of what I was doing before, so I know most of our people can do the same thing and I am very thankful of myself, what I have done now. I have worked myself out of such things of a kind, and the white friends that we had among us, working with us, in this membership leader are very kind people.

Just like the Fort Sumner times, the time when they call the Long Walk. Our people had done wrong in these early days and that was the reason why they were sent to Fort Sumner to learn their behaving. So they have learned their lesson at Fort Sumner for four years. Everything that comes to us it is truth to learn, our great white friends, has taught us all of these good ways of living. Before Fort Sumner our people had done wrong, all over the country, the way our grandfather and grandmother have told the story. So I think that is the way the liquor is among us today, that it is hurting our people. All over the reservation, our people don't know how to use liquor, I think that is what is the biggest problem in our reservation. Because in early days that is the way they learn it, Indian has a habit by getting a bottle and using it all at one time. He can throw a pint away in two minutes, and this is where the trouble starts. An Indian doesn't know how to use it, white people use it very carefully, they take their time using it. That is why, that is why they never get drunk on it, so my friends, we ought to work hard and see what we can do about this problem. There are alot of ways of helping our people and right now we have that big problem on our hands so let's get down to work and teach our Navajo friends to try and get them off most of these ideas that they got that can be done, if we all work together some way. And then besides that they can learn that themselves if we showed them how, they can get on the ball to make to make a better living. I think there is alot of ways to do these things to help our people, one thing is to talk very carefully to them, because talking very carefully is the main problem, don't make them jump up, just take your time talking to them, that is the



way I have done before. I had a brother like that, that used to use liquor mostly every other week, and I used to go out with him and work with him together. And I always talk about myself, saying that I learned how to live better life. One day I came to him and he was half drunk he tried to give me a shot but I told him "no". And then after he got sober up, I went back to him again, and then we build up what they call a Navajo Sweat Bath.

This Sweat Bath has been among our people for many, many, many years, so I brought it up to him, and we build a sweat bath, in an arroyo. Here we had a lot of fun, having sweat baths, there was a little river right near it, and every time we got out of the sweat bath we always jump out of the water and then finally some way rather he started to talk to me inside the Sweat Bath, and he asked me all kinds of questions. And finally he got to where to ask me how I quit my drinking. So this was the chance for me to break him in. So I went very slowly about it, I talked the best way I know how, I watch every step of my talk that I worked him in until finally he said to me, "brother, I think you are right." I have been to your home, a dozen times I watch and sit inside of your home, you have mostly everything, TV, radios, you have good things inside, bed and closet, sewing machine. He told me everything that I had, and the way I dress. And he said that I think you are right, I am going to try my best and fight it out and see what I can do with myself, he says. So one morning, he came up again and he said brother, I am hungry for meat he said, I had a few sheep then and I was kind enough to give him one for nothing, he didn't have to pay for it. They cost around \$15 for a fat sheep, so I just gave it to him. And I told him, brother you take this sheep home and treat it to your children and see how they like it. This is one step that you must learn. If your children likes it, it is up to you to make up your mind to raise some sheep and then he took the sheep in the next week he came back and he asked me to build another sweat bath. So which I have done, I put up another sweat bath, the same place where we was before. And

there we had a happy time jumping in the water again and then inside the sweat bath he says brother, it is about mostly month, since I haven't went back to the bar, there is nothing happen. My wife sure likes me, my children aren't the same, they sure are happy of me not drinking, so I am very happy myself, which I have started to fight my way out of liquor. And he says that he is going on the railroad job, so he left in the next two days on the railroad. The old boy didn't come back for 6 months, here he came back and he came right straight to me at home, and he says "brother, I have brought back about \$700, where can I buy some sheep," he says, so that was surprised me. I just pretty near cried for him, that he believed me, that it was the best thing to do. And I took him into the Gallup at the Navajo Shopping Center and here we bought some Angoras, little goats at \$6 a head, and we bought about 50 head, but still we had some ooney left. And then we turned around and we bought some sheep and at \$12 a head, this was cash money on the barrel head, and we was doing business. So I had my pick-up to haul these goats and sheep back home. In one day he build up as many as 55 head of sheep and goats, the next morning his little kids were very happy to herd the sheep, there were about seven children, some went to school, this was school out then, it was in the summer time, mostly all the kids were herding sheep. So from here on he learned a lesson that he will never beg for no meat again.

One day he came around and he said, "Brother, I will go to repay you back the sheep that you have me here a while back about a year ago he said, and don't say "I don't want it", but I will give it back to you. So he gave me back his sheep the time when I gave him one, he repaid me back. And this was a very kind thing to do, so this is the way I worked it my brother around, to better way of living. Now, he is one of the chapter members in around shiprock, his family came from Shiprock. So he has a big garden over there, he works on his garden, he raises all kinds of alfalfa. And he has a good home, last fall when they had the Yeibichai over at Shiprock I went down there. While I was wandering around, on the fair-

grounds, I ran across him and he says, "brother, he says you are still young."

And I just thank him for what he told me. So he says, "brother, I want you to come over an look at my house, we are living in that canyon over ther." So he took me back to his home, there I found his house like a millionaire. And his big bunch of sheep, and I stayed all night there with him. And that night, he said to me, remember the time when we went to Sweat Bath, you know how I was. It was about 4 years ago, he says, for those four years up today, you see what I have done, for myself, so I am very proud of you and myself, that we are working into a better way of life. You have done it he says, so I was surprised that he thanked me for a hundred times that day. So we men can do that, here, to work among our people. And we can do something for our people, this is the main problem working together, talk together, in the right way, there is nothing can be loose out, so I am very thankful to talk to you this long. And I sure do hope that most of you people understand about my problem, which I have just told you and I think you for listening to me this long. So I will thank you all in this community, I thank you very much. Good-bye.

END OF TAPE