



# Indian Country

THIS WEEK FROM

## TODAY

THE PREMIER E-NEWSLETTER SERVING THE NATIONS, CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE

### *A Letter from the Publisher*

*Shekóli.* With “Pokagon Band Goes Digital” as a lead feature this week, ICTMN belies adages about old dogs and new tricks, and confirms what most of us know to be true: Elders in Indian country are as invested in news and plans about our communities as younger generations, if not more so. The article, by correspondent Lynn Armitage, reveals how the Pokagon Band of Pottawatomi are using Kindles and Surface tablets to connect and strengthen the ties between elders of their nation with friends, families and students. Through this deft use of technology, the Pokagon have been able to solidify the traditional teaching and leading roles elders have long occupied.

Since 2012, when a lightning strike scorched the rural nation's three microwave radio towers and temporarily disabled government operations, the Pokagon have been investing in a technological overhaul to improve their health, legal and education systems. The Kindles, and new IT programs, have put the nation in the lead when it comes to state-of-the-art communications and government software. Pokagon's former head of IT (now director of health services) Matt Clay explains, “My grandfather has a smart phone and he's 87. My grandmother is 85 years old and is now on Facebook. I never thought I'd see that in my life.”



More sense of why the moccasin telegraph is deeply embedded in digital and social media comes from one of this week's opinion columns: “The Confluence of Two Worlds” by Terese Marie Mailhot. The daughter of a mom who helped found the Red Power movement, Mailhot explains that as a child she found nothing incongruous about the presence of a traditional structure in her backyard, or of a peace pipe next to her TV. “We invented so much of Western medicine,” writes Mailhot, “and developed the most efficient irrigation systems, how could we not engage in cultural innovation?”

Her choice of words is notably precise. Since the advent of colonialism, the word “progress” has taken on negative connotations for Indians, and rightly so. It is a linguistic bludgeon for forced assimilation of a way of existence that has many flaws. But innovation? That's a concept that has powered our cultures for eons.

*Ná kî wa,*

Ray Halbritter

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### Genocide in North America

Pope Francis recently described the Turkish massacre of Armenians 100 years ago as “the first genocide of the 20th century.” Attorney **Peter d’Errico** suggests that the Holy Father might want to address genocides closer to home.

Pope Francis speaking out about the Armenian genocide is significant, but his proposal to canonize the 18th century Spanish monk Junipero Serra this year during a visit to the U.S. shows he is in denial about American Indian genocide.

A PBS profile of Serra describes the

monk as “a driving force in the Spanish conquest and colonization of what is now the state of California.” PBS points out that the Spanish missions were “intended both to Christianize the extensive Indian populations and to serve Spain’s strategic interest by preventing Russian explorations and possible claims to North America’s Pacific coast.”

The pope’s legacy as an opponent of genocide will not be complete or secure until he addresses and repudiates the doctrine of “Christian Discovery.” This doctrine was crafted by the papacy in the 15th century, as the legal and religious infrastructure for Christian European colo-

nialism in the “New World.” It survives to this day in U.S. federal Indian law and in other colonizer state legal systems as the foundation for government domination of Native lands.

If Pope Francis truly intends to focus on the history of genocide, he will have to expand his references to include the North American context. He could begin to address the Native American holocaust by abandoning the canonization of Junipero Serra. The next step would be to acknowledge the role of church doctrine as a facilitator of 500 years (and counting) of colonial violence. <http://bit.ly/1EbPuJE> ☞

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### The Confluence of Two Worlds

**Therese Marie Mailhot**, a student at the Institute of American Indian Arts, dismisses the notion that tradition and modernism are mutually exclusive concepts:

As an Indian woman, I am asked many questions. The one I find most abhorrent is, “Do you feel caught between the old ways and the modern world?” This conflict seems like something non-Natives made up when they considered the romantic idea of an Indian, loincloth and all, venturing into a mysterious world of

iPhones and flat-screens.

In my adolescence I felt subtle racism in the classroom when my teachers talked to the white students about “tolerance” and I witnessed many of my best friends being shuffled into special-needs classes for their rez dialects. My mother forced me to confront racism at every turn if I wanted to call myself her daughter. So I did. I became a social activist by discussing the need for diverse reading lists in our classrooms and talking about the difference between tolerance and acceptance.

It was overwhelming, but it soon became the norm. I am now the resident

“angry Indian” woman in every classroom and social gathering, and this doesn’t bother me. This discourse has brought about meaningful relationships and meaningful respect. The one thing I cannot stand—the one thing that even the most guilt ridden, liberal minded white person will ask, is if I feel conflicted between old and new ways.

I don’t acknowledge the question of cultural conflict, because in my childhood we had a sweat lodge in our backyard and a Nintendo in our living room. These things weren’t incongruous. They were a part of the same way of life. <http://bit.ly/1JFzlkx> ☞

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### The Cultural Sins of Adam Sandler

About a dozen Native actors and actresses, along with a cultural advisor, walked off the set of the new Adam Sandler film *The Ridiculous Six* because its script insulted Native culture by using such names as “Beaver Breath” and “Never-Wears-Bra,” and depicting an Apache woman squatting and urinating while smoking a peace pipe. **Marc Yaffee** here addresses his fellow comedian:

Dear Adam Sandler,

I was very excited to hear you would

be working in New Mexico to produce the first movie in your four-picture Netflix deal. The fact that you were casting a large group of Native actors and extras for *The Ridiculous Six* was a good sign. Diversity in films is always good, and we have plenty of good Native actors willing and ready to work. Hell, your production company even hired a cultural advisor.

Unfortunately, there was just one problem with the whole movie: You wrote it. I only read a small portion of the script but it was like taking one bite of tainted meat or one sip of rotten milk. It stinks. It’s not only offensive to Native Americans;

it’s offensive to all Americans. Not every Native actor or extra walked off the set. But I have a feeling that when it comes out on Netflix, the rest of them will wish they had.

If you want to lampoon and stereotype a people for laughs, at least be satirical and brilliant, instead of ignorant and unfunny. And next time you really want to insult Indians, go old school and hire Italians and Mexicans to play them. At least no Indians would have to feel embarrassed about being in your movie.

After all, our people have already suffered enough. <http://bit.ly/1EOSwXI> ☞

## Keystone XL Opponents Win Delay in Permit Process

Opponents of the Keystone XL oil pipeline who want to block its route through South Dakota won a victory before the state Public Utilities Commission on April 27—with a new ruling that puts off a key hearing on the project until the end of the summer.

At issue is whether details of the application by TransCanada, the proposed builder of the pipeline, have changed sufficiently to warrant a complete resubmission of the paperwork.

In January, four tribes led by the Yankton Sioux, along with Cheyenne River, Rosebud and Standing Rock, lost a bid to defeat the permit when the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission voted that there was not enough of a case to do so. The commission's ruling let stand a ruling that was scheduled to take place next month.

But the new ruling defers that hearing until the end of the summer. The Public Utilities Commission cited a tight schedule that did not allow enough time for all parties to evaluate and study the available information. "For due process to be afforded to all parties, we felt that some additional time was necessary," Public Utilities Commission Chairman Chris Nelson told the Associated Press.

Environmental advocates applauded the decision. "Citizens and allied tribal nations worked to ensure more time was given to address the serious risks to water on the current route in South Dakota as well as the lack of proper spill response planning," said Jane Kleeb, founder of the anti-Keystone XL group Bold Nebraska.

Keystone XL would carry up to 800,000 barrels per day of bituminous crude from the Alberta oil sands in Canada to the Gulf Coast in Texas. <http://bit.ly/1IhrPJU> ☞

## Murder of Indigenous Union Leader Sparks Anger And Calls for Action

BY RICK KEARNS

Local authorities in Colombia are reacting with outrage to the murder of the indigenous leader, human rights figure and miners' advocate Fernando Salazar Calvo, who was shot to death outside his home on April 7.

"The murder of Fernando Salazar Calvo constitutes an act of aggression against our collective right to the ancestral territory, the indigenous authorities of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Reserve, the rules of our organizational processes, basically those of the mining process, to the leaders of our reserve and to the community in general," said the Traditional Authorities of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Reserve (TACLR) in a statement.

Calvo was a spokesman for the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reserve Ancestral Mining Association and president of the Miners Association Union. His people—the Embera

Chami—have been mining gold in the region since before the Spanish invasion; they use traditional methods that eschew chemicals like mercury and cyanide. In keeping with tradition, the community has banned large-scale industrial mining operations by outside interests. In the last year, Calvo and other indigenous Embera Chami leaders have received death threats.

Following the threats, Calvo received precautionary measures of protection from Colombia's Constitutional Court. The same precautionary measures have been issued to other Embera Chami leaders, including former Gov. Gabriel Ángel Cartagena, who was killed by paramilitary forces in 2003.

"We need pressure for a top-level investigation, now," said Hector Jaime Vinasco, Coordinator of Mining Issues for the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reserve and its former governor. "What is under attack are our rights to self-determination and autonomy—our rights to regulate our own ancestral mining, under our own jurisdiction." <http://bit.ly/1ziEwUb> ☞



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## Colorado Senate Kills Indian Mascot Bill

BY SIMON MOYA-SMITH

The Republican-led Colorado Senate last week defeated a bill that would have scrutinized the use of Native American-themed mascots at schools across the state. The bill eked out of the House Education Committee by a vote of 6-5 in March. But it died by a vote of 3-2 in the Senate State Affairs Committee on April 29.

Formally known as 15-HB 116 ("Concerning the Use of American Indian Mascots by Public Institutions of Education"), the bill would have established an all-Native American subcommittee to determine the appropriateness of Indian mascots used by any public school in Colorado. Currently, more than 30 schools across the state have a Native American mascot and moniker.

Republican state legislators have argued that any review of school mascots should be conducted by local authorities. However Rep. Joe Salazar (D-Thornton), who proposed the defeated bill, said that legislation is necessary on the state level.

"I am disappointed, but not surprised," he told Indian Country Today Media Network of the defeat. "It is evident that Colorado Republicans care very little for American Indians and communities of color. We should be saddened as a state to know that one political party cannot enter into the 21st century with the desire to care for the well being of all people. Surely, if children in their communities suffered the harm that American Indian children suffer as a result of the use of racist and derogatory words and images, they would stop such behavior."

Salazar added, "I vow to bring the bill back next year and to continue the conversation." <http://bit.ly/1HVEgeO> 

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# Pokagon Band Goes Digital

*In Michigan, a wireless dynamic* BY LYNN ARMITAGE

**Bottom Line:** *The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi is connecting as never before—thanks to technology.*

Donald Sumner wasn't much of a book reader. Then he got his Kindle.

The 59-year-old member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi in rural southwest Michigan is participating in a far-reaching tribal technology initiative.

That initiative includes distributing at least 600 handheld electronic readers to tribal elders—and training them—so they can download e-books and language applications, create email accounts, shop online and even do a little Facebooking.

"It's a very useful tool," said Sumner, a tribal educational associate who helps provide mentoring and continuing education services to Natives. "I can now read Native American books, watch movies and listen to music."

The Kindle distribution is just one part of a comprehensive technological overhaul of government operations that is touching nearly every aspect of Potawatomi life, including health, education and the legal system. And it all started with a literal bolt of lightning in 2012.

"We were testing three towers with microwave radios," said Matt Clay, a former tribal information technology director. "Lightning struck one of the towers and fried everything at our disaster recovery site, where our backup server was. Our government was shut down completely." Clay worked through the night with his staff to get their computer operations up and running within 24 hours.

That disaster turned out to be a wake-up call, said Clay, who now directs health services for the tribe. "We realized that our infrastructure was outdated and our technology systems didn't perform well." He immediately put a plan into motion that called for an initial investment of \$1.6 million in new technology.

Working with Microsoft, Planet Technologies and local vendors over the last three years, the tribe's IT department has completely transformed the way nearly

210 tribal staffers conduct business. Some technological improvements include Microsoft Office software on all desktop computers, Lync communications (like Skype for business), Windows servers, a CRM (customer relationship management) system to manage tribal enrollment, and Office 365, which includes SharePoint for collaboration.

The collaborative nature of SharePoint has made a tremendous difference in the way tribal government communicates, said Clay. "We can all be working on the same document at the same time. It doesn't matter where we are—even in China—as long as we have access to the Internet."

Putting Surface tablets into the hands of everyone in his department has been particularly helpful, especially for remote educational workers like Sumner.

"Before, when our educational associates would be offsite, we wouldn't be able to communicate very well," said Sam Morseau, a Pokagon Native and director of education for the tribe. "But with Surfaces, we can send a quick e-mail and get the information we need to serve our citizens."

Don Lionetti, a Microsoft account manager who works with Native American businesses, affirmed the tribe's state-of-the-art IT status. "They are one of the most sophisticated tribes in their use of technology that I have ever worked with, and I cover the entire U.S. Native American market," he said.

To those in Indian country who wish to emulate his tribe's example, Clay offers this advice: "Don't be afraid of technology. You have to embrace it because it will help." He adds. "You also need to get people to trust technology. You can have all the technology in the world, but if people don't trust it, they won't use it."

Clay has seen the results firsthand, within his own family. "It's becoming easier and easier to use now. My grandfather has a Smart Phone and he's 87. And my grandmother is 85 years old and on Facebook. I never thought I'd see that in my life." <http://bit.ly/1JEXFAA> ☎

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# Defending the Blackfeet

*New initiative for sacred site in Montana* BY TERRI HANSEN

**Bottom Line:** A renewed effort to protect Blackfeet homelands has garnered support from more than a dozen tribes and nations, a U.S. senator—and a rock band.

The Blackfeet Nation recently stepped up an action plan to protect its traditional homelands Badger-Two Medicine traditional homelands, situated along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, by launching a national campaign and website, as well as a Change.org petition on April 22.

The Blackfeet also asked President Obama to cancel remaining oil leases in the 165,588-acre region.

The tribe, which comprises more than 17,000 members, has been locked in a court battle with Solonex LLC since the energy company filed suit to develop its leases in 2013.

The effort, timed in connection with Earth Day, is being supported by a diverse coalition. It includes 19 tribes, former Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman Jon Tester (D-Montana) and the rock group Pearl Jam, which issued a statement of support via its activism page on Facebook.

"Join Pearl Jam's Jeff Ament, Senator Jon Tester and the Blackfeet Nation to protect the Badger-Two Medicine region from illegal leases sold to oil companies," wrote Pearl Jam Activism in a post that links to the Change.org petition. "Sign the petition to stop oil companies from exploiting this sacred land in Montana."

The mountains, ridges, river valleys and wetlands along the Rocky Mountain Front are "sacred to our people, central to our culture and to our spirituality," said Chief Earl Old Person, former Blackfeet chairman.

The area lies at the intersection of the Blackfeet Reservation, Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness complex. Old Person recently wrote an open letter to President Obama seeking an end to the leases.

The Blackfeet will use "any means pos-



*Badger Creek, in the sacred Badger-Two Medicine region of the Blackfeet Nation's traditional homelands, is part of the area threatened by oil leases granted more than 30 years ago.*

sible," including legal measures, treaty rights and social pressure, to preserve the area, said Blackfeet member and tribal historic preservation officer John Murray.

The fight has been brewing since the 1980s, when 47 oil and gas leases were granted—illegally, the Blackfeet allege—without tribal consultation to drill in the area. The Blackfeet Nation tried to get the government to cancel them 30 years ago, but 18 leases remain. Solonex LLC is seeking to develop a federal oil and gas lease on 6,200 acres.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has also gone on record in support of the Blackfeet. In March, the group sent a request to Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell asking that her department work with the Blackfeet to cancel the remaining oil and gas leases.

Doing so is in keeping with a core principle of NCAI's mission of protecting and preserving cultural heritage, religious practices and sacred places of worship, NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata (Tlingit-Haida

Tribes, Alaska) told ICTMN. Federal agencies have a trust relationship and responsibility not only to protect Indian access to religious places but also to ensure their preservation and protection from desecration, Pata said.

"We're hoping the DOI will do its part to ensure their responsibilities are upheld," Pata said. "NCAI will continue to work with the Blackfeet to support their efforts, and we are encouraging tribes to also reach out and support the Blackfeet leadership."

The matter is on the NCAI agenda for its mid-year conference from June 28 to July 1 in St. Paul, Pata said. "It is through our combined voices and efforts that we can let decision makers in D.C. know that the desecration of tribal sacred places cannot occur."

Among the tribes and Nations that have pledged their support to the Blackfeet effort are the Bannock, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Eastern Shoshone, Kalispell, Northern Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne, Ojibwe, Shoshone and Sioux. <http://bit.ly/1Dwktwn>

# Tracking 'Food Deserts'

*When communities and sustenance disconnect, trouble often follows* **BY ALYSA LANDRY**

**Bottom Line:** *The Navajo are trying to fight poor nutrition with a "junk food tax." But why do Natives eat so unhealthily—and what can be done?*

If at least 20 percent of your community lives in poverty, and at least one-third of residents have to travel more than one city mile or 10 rural miles to reach a grocery store, you might live in a food desert.

The term, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), refers to a census tract that is "vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables and other healthful whole foods." The distinction applies to some 23.5 million Americans and is determined by median family income levels, access to vehicles and distance to grocery stores.

It is a complicated formula that confirms what many Natives already know: geography and income can severely limit regular access to healthy, affordable food.

"What we're talking about is food insecurity," said Valerie Segrest, a traditional food and medicine program manager for the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe in Washington. "It means part of your income is set aside to fund the journey to get food. It means the land you live on does not provide food for you."

The USDA applies the term "food desert" to the Navajo Nation, where unemployment hovers near 60 percent and people often drive hundreds of miles to reach a grocery store. Ten grocery stores serve the entire 27,000-square-mile reservation, and as much as 80 percent of items sold in grocery

stores have "little to no nutritional value."

These circumstances recently led the Navajo Nation to enact the country's first "junk food tax," a two percent levy on all sodas, chips, pastries, candy and fried foods sold anywhere on the reservation.

The Navajo are not alone. Based on USDA criteria, much of Indian country lacks easy access to grocery stores or to fresh, affordable food.

But combating food deserts requires answers more complicated than just building more grocery stores. "What we're working toward is more of a method of life," Segrest said.

Call it food sovereignty. For tribes, this means access to traditional ways of life, land to cultivate and the right to hunt and fish. Contrast that with the recent trend toward packaged foods and distance from traditional food sources.

"Different tribes can define food sovereignty differently," said Mari Gallagher, president of a namesake Chicago-based food research and consulting group. "At its core level is the ability to have influence over, if not control over, the local food system."

Food deserts stem from colonization and from changes in the way America produces and consumes food, experts say. They also result when people grow apart from their food sources—geographically, culturally and emotionally.

"We're seeing consolidation of farms, people growing things without nutritional value," Gallagher said. "We're seeing more reliance on outside processed food and distancing from what

the land has to offer."

Food deserts can also come from loss of traditional knowledge. Where people once thrived on growing their own fruits, vegetables and grains, they now rely on vendors.

"Not so long ago, we had a food system that was producing, as well as people who were active in producing," said Segrest. "We harvested, made memories, ate foods in season and shared. Our cultural patterns have shifted."

Grocery stores are relatively new to Turtle Island, said Adae Romero-Briones (Cochiti Pueblo and Kiowa), an agricultural consultant for First Nations Development Institute. "Only recently has a grocery store become a main source of food," she said. "Food deserts have a lot to do with grocery stores and the food business, fairly new concepts in the time-

line of Indigenous Peoples. This is a clash of two very different value systems: food as a commodity to be purchased versus food as a gift to be shared."

Traditionally, food systems were integral to tribal communities, said Romero-Briones. Food influenced politics and social behaviors. "Now food is an afterthought," she said. "You can eat in your car now. You don't have the ceremonial aspects of gathering food."

So how can food sovereignty be attained? Perhaps from revitalizing farms and returning to traditional recipes. Or, maybe even more importantly, from tribes' rights to determine what works for them.

"I think tribes are in a unique position where we have to advocate and fight to build our food systems," said Romero-Briones. <http://bit.ly/1HQAKCp>



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# Gay Marriage, Tribal Heritage

*Threading a delicate needle of commitment and tradition* BY SAMANTHA MESA MILES

**Editor's Note:** Last week the Supreme Court heard the landmark case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*. At its crux is the issue of whether states are constitutionally required to issue same-sex marriage licenses—and if they must recognize those marriages in states where they are legally permitted.

In recent years, as the national fight for same-sex marriage has been making headlines, a quieter battle has taken place in Indian country. To date, at least 10 tribes have formally approved same-sex marriage. This has occurred mostly in small tribes where lawmaking is more informal, and where it is easier to extend rights to gay couples.

What follows is the story of two tribes that have confronted whether to legalize same-sex marriage on their reservations—and how they resolved it.

## Suquamish Tribe, Washington

Four years ago, Heather Purser stood in front of the Suquamish Tribal Council, awaiting the answer to a life-changing question: Would she—a citizen of the tribe—be allowed to marry her non-Native girlfriend?

In Washington State, home to the Suquamish people, the answer then was still no. But federally recognized Native American tribes are not bound by state laws. So Heather decided to appeal to her tribe. If the state wouldn't approve gay marriage, maybe her people would.

For some time, Purser had been a quiet pro-gay marriage activist in her community. Then she heard about the Oregon-based Coquille Tribe, which had approved same-sex marriage in 2009. This gave her an idea: She might have a better chance of legalizing gay marriage if she approached the council of her tribe of 1,000 people, rather than a state of over seven million.



Rebecca Platter (left) and Heather Purser. Purser is a citizen of the Suquamish Tribe, which unanimously voted to permit same-sex marriage.

So on a quiet spring morning, Purser stood up at the tribe's annual meeting and asked for a formal approval of same-sex marriage. She told the council members that what she wanted most was to feel loved, accepted, and as an equal within her tribal community.

The first vote from the 200 people present was a resounding "Yes." Then the tribal attorney and seven council members voted. The answer, again, was "Yes." There was no voiced opposition, not even a debate.

"It was very humbling, and I felt very honored," Purser recalled. But she said the decision did not surprise her. "It was completely in flow with the values I've always observed with the Suquamish people."

Purser's new rights did not reach beyond areas within tribal jurisdiction. But

on the reservation, gay couples now have the same rights as straight ones: A gay couple can be married by a tribal leader as long as one partner is an enrolled citizen of that tribe. The couple can then receive tribal health care coverage and may adopt children. The law also makes it possible for a non-Native spouse to remain in tribal housing if the Native partner passes away.

"This is a small step in changing the way LGBT people are viewed on the reservation," Purser said. "I hope that kids who are questioning their identity, and then their rights, will not be as fearful or ashamed as I had felt. The changing of the law was necessary not only for legal purposes, but to create an environment of greater love and acceptance among the Suquamish people."

## Little Traverse Bay Band of Indians, Michigan

In 2004, Michigan banned same-sex marriage and civil unions. But Tim LaCroix of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Indians (LTBB) still dreamt of the day he could marry Gene Barfield, his partner of 30 years. LaCroix knew that to do so, he would have to appeal to his tribal council. What followed was a much more divisive process than Purser's experience.

"Everyone generally knows who's gay, but they don't talk about it," said Winny Wemigwase, an LTBB tribal council member.

LaCroix knew that in historical terms, being gay was once accepted—even celebrated—among some Native cultures. He identified as "Two Spirit," a term used in a number of Native American cultures to describe a third, non-heterosexual gender with both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities.

Before colonization, those who identified as "Two Spirited" were respected as spiritual leaders within the tribe. They dressed in both men's and women's clothing, and they often served special roles such as storytellers, counselors, and healers.

But in the Odawa tribe, extending rights to same-sex unions had been turned down in a 5-4 vote the previous year. LaCroix first had to sway the vote of the council before Tribal Chairman Dexter McNamara could approve it.

The pivotal meeting took place on March 3, 2013. LaCroix told the council that having marriage rights would mean that he and Barfield could live their lives as equal citizens on the reservation. The floor was then opened for comments.

Doug Emery, a tribal elder, argued against the motion, referencing Romans 1:27 ("And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error"). Emery said, "I'm a Christian, and my personal values are that gay marriage is against the Bible. God created man and woman, a simple scenario. If two men can't reproduce with each other, we become extinct."

Amid the tension, there was a potential



*Tim LaCroix (left) and Gene Barfield after their marriage was approved.*

swing vote—Wemigwase, who was struggling with which side to choose. She felt conflicted because of her Christian values, which defined marriage for heterosexual couples only. And she worried about how this change would affect the tribe's members. "Are they going to have to deal with discrimination from other tribes knowing that our tribe allows this?" she asked herself.

Minutes passed as people in the room were silent. Finally, she marked her vote in favor of gay marriage. "I had thought and prayed so hard about it," she said. "Love is love."

At that point, LTBB Chairman McNamara had 30 days to veto or sign the law. McNamara and LaCroix had worked together and served on the tribal board, and McNamara never indicated he had a problem with LaCroix's lifestyle.

LaCroix then asked him to not veto the law. But McNamara did not need convincing. On March 7, 2013, he confirmed that he would sign the legislation into law. With McNamara's signature, the Tribal Council passed the new Marriage Statute by a 5-4 vote, defining marriage

as "the legal and voluntary union of two persons, to the exclusion of all others."

The couple knew the law could change back, so they asked McNamara to marry them that same day. Shortly afterward, over 100 tribal citizens threw a wedding reception and sang traditional songs for the couple. "It was the highlight of my life, and also the strangest thing in my life," Barfield said. "People made such a huge deal about us being gay and getting married."

For the first time, LaCroix felt he fully belonged in his hometown. But some tribal elders refused to support the marriage. Emery went on a Christian radio station and apologized to other tribes for what the council had done. "I think the entire tribe should have had a say in making this decision," he said.

McNamara disagreed. "It's not about what other people want," he said. "Tim and Gene wanted to get married, and there was a law made to do that. Plain and simple."

"Tim and Gene had love in their hearts for what they believe in. It just happens it's something we're not used to seeing."

<http://bit.ly/1bBR0uG> 📱



### Grand Canyon Resort Corporation Is looking for a Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

#### Qualifications:

1. Bachelors' Degree in Business, Tourism or a related field required; an MBA is preferred
2. Prior senior leadership experience with a minimum of 10 years in progressively responsible positions in the hospitality or tourism industry
3. Excellent oral and written communication skills and strong interpersonal skills
4. Valid Driver's License
5. Prior experience with Native American tribes or business operations desired.
6. Preference given to Hualapai Tribal members
7. Must provide at least 3 professional references

**Deadline to apply is May 29, 2015**

For more information please contact:

Kristen Begay  
[Kristen.Begay@grandcanyonresort.com](mailto:Kristen.Begay@grandcanyonresort.com)  
 Phone: (928)-769-2640 ext. 162  
 Fax: (928)-769-2410

### Bishop Boardman Senior Apartments

Beginning on April 27, 2015 our 200-unit building at 1615 Eighth Avenue; Brooklyn, NY 11215 will be re-opening its waiting list to the elderly, where the head or spouse is 62 or older and non-elderly persons with disabilities with limited income.

Qualifications for the 200 units, which include 20 units for the mobility impaired, will be based on Section 8 guidelines. Interested persons may obtain an application by writing to:

Bishop Boardman Senior Apartments  
 c/o P.O.P. MANAGEMENT CORPORATION  
 191 Joralemon Street, 8th Floor  
 Brooklyn, New York 11201

Or in person at 1615 Eighth Avenue; Brooklyn, NY 11215; leave contact information. **All applications will be mailed.**

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE SENT BY REGULAR MAIL TO THE POST OFFICE BOX INDICATED ON THE APPLICATION FORM.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE POST OFFICE NO LATER THAN **MAY 23, 2015.**



### Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

Invitation for RFP # 10254 –  
Native American Legal Services

**Due Date –**

May 29, 2015

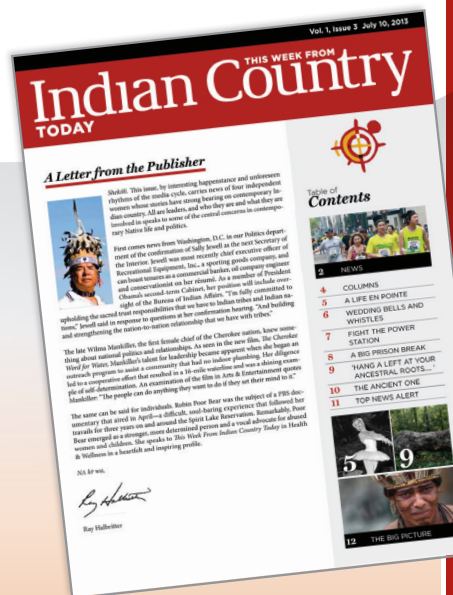
**Torresmartinez.org**

**[Joanswenson@TMDCI-nsn.gov](mailto:Joanswenson@TMDCI-nsn.gov)**

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ICTMN contributor Vincent Schilling (Akwesasne Mohawk) released a rehabilitated bald eagle in Pungo, Virginia on April 12.



Progress on the Keystone XL pipeline route through South Dakota is on hold following a ruling that will put off a key hearing until summer.



Actors David Hill (Choctaw) and Loren Anthony (Navajo) walked off the set of Adam Sandler's film The Ridiculous Six.



Jeff Bridges and the Abiders rocked at the American Indian College Fund's 25th anniversary celebration in Los Angeles.

MICHELE FOWLER; FACEBOOK; INSTAGRAM; JONATHAN WHEELHOUSE

# Headlines from the Web

**TRIBE'S REQUEST TO HUNT WHALES UNDER PUBLIC SCRUTINY IN SEATTLE**  
<http://bit.ly/1FvZcsM>

**LAWMAKER TELLS ADMINISTRATION: PULL BACK INDIAN TRIBE RULES**  
<http://wapo.st/1DKim9D>

**MAINE TRIBES SEEK DEAL WITH STATE ON COMMERCIAL FISHING**  
<http://bit.ly/1JACult>

**SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBE TO DECIDE ON LEGALIZING RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA**  
<http://bit.ly/1DUFvoT>

**JUDGE IN INDIAN CHILD WELFARE CASE ASKS COURT TO RECONSIDER**  
<http://bit.ly/1dqDCLc>

**TINY MODOC CASINO TRIBE ADOPTS WHITE MEN IN FAILED ATTEMPT TO PROFIT**  
<http://bit.ly/1betjbl>

## Upcoming Events

### IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT PUBLIC MEETINGS MAY 7 AND MAY 14

Pursuant to a new rule to govern the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 by state courts and child welfare agencies, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is holding a series of public meetings and tribal consultation sessions. The proposed regulations provide a more consistent interpretation of, and promote compliance with, the Act by incorporating standard procedures and requirements for state courts and child welfare agencies in Indian child custody proceedings.

**Locations:** Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, Minnesota; Tulsa Marriott Southern Hills, Tulsa, Oklahoma

### INCLUSION WORKS '15: EMPOWERING PERFORMANCE MAY 12-14

Canada's largest indigenous workplace inclusion event and recruitment fair will offer participants insights into expanding their inclusion community of practice and advancing their social and economic capital. Thought leaders, case studies and networking opportunities will be avail-

able to provide inclusion efforts in the areas of human resources, corporate social responsibility, communications and procurement.

**Location:** Sheraton Center, Toronto, Ontario

### AMERICAN INDIAN JUSTICE CONFERENCE MAY 12-14

Approved by the Justice Department, and conducted by the National Criminal Justice Training Center at Fox Valley Technical College, this eighth annual conference offers the opportunity to learn about relevant issues affecting tribal communities in the company of their peers. Participants will be able to gain knowledge of new approaches and strategies to build strong and sustainable tribal justice systems; discover programs being used by other tribes to achieve effective justice systems; and learn more about emerging issues relevant to tribal justice development.

**Location:** Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Tulsa, Catoosa, Oklahoma

### JOINT ABORIGINAL-CORPORATE SUMMIT MAY 14

This is the second portion of a joint sum-

mit by the Canadian Board Diversity Council and the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, which will be given over to "The Power of Collaboration: Bridging the Gap Between Aboriginal Leaders and Corporate Canada." Invited business leaders from both communities will address how aboriginal communities make decisions that affect the value of companies; what aboriginal and corporate leaders can learn from each other; and how organizations can benefit from higher representation of diverse board leadership.  
**Location:** The Calgary Westin, Calgary, Alberta

**GREAT PLAINS SYMPOSIUM MAY 14-15**  
 "Standing Bear and the Trail Ahead" will be conducted by the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs. The gathering will explore the status, challenges and especially the opportunities and prospects that Native Americans and First Peoples face going forward. Winona LaDuke, executive director of the White Earth Land Recovery Project, will be the keynote speaker.  
**Location:** Various locales, Lincoln, Nebraska

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re the disputed claim of Vanilla Ice that he is Choctaw (April 28):

Blood quantum and DNA should be more specific in determining Native American heritage. There are too many "pale eyes" running around claiming to have that heritage. Some of these people even claim to be members of now-extinct tribes or non-existent tribes.

Going back to three generations of great-grandparents doesn't necessarily make one Native American.

—C.J. Klepper  
 Phoenix, Arizona

A DNA test would help specify if there are Native American ancestors in Vanilla Ice's family. Much to my dismay, after

hearing the same "grandmother stories" in my family, I learned the truth. Never again will I claim I have Native ancestors. Many of my predecessors were married into other branches of our family, but they have no direct lines to me. I am disappointed. But I will stand by the truth.

—Michelle Law  
 Scottsville, Kentucky



## TOP NEWS ALERTS

From [IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com](http://IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com)

### CROW RECEIVE VETERANS' CEMETERY FUNDING

The Crow Tribe has received more than \$1.2 million from the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish the Apsaalooke Veterans Cemetery on their reservation in Montana. Nearly 240 places will be reserved for Crow veterans and their relatives; currently, there are 906 Crow veterans in Montana. "This cemetery will be a monument to courageous men and women and their families," said Sen. Jon Tester (D-Montana), former chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

### NEW GAMING CHIEF OF STAFF

Shannon O'Loughlin, a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is the new chief of staff of the National Indian Gaming

Commission, which oversees the \$28 billion tribal gaming industry. In her new position she will lead the daily operations of the commission; her responsibilities include compliance, public affairs, finance and newly created technology divisions. O'Loughlin has more than 16 years of legal and policy experience, with considerable background in federal Indian law and policy.

### WHITE HOUSE GRANTS FOR NATIVE YOUTH

Funding for the White House's Native Youth Community Projects (NYCP) initiative is now available, with applications for the \$3 million program being accepted through June 29. Part of President Obama's Generation Indigenous undertaking, NYCP will support projects to

prepare American Indian and Alaskan Native children for college and careers. The projects must include tribes and the Bureau of Indian Education or public schools. Funds can be used for a range of in- and out-of-school activities, such as culturally responsive teaching, access to high quality preschool or mental health services.

### PECHANGA MAY RECLAIM ARTIFACTS

The Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians will likely retrieve thousands of its ancient artifacts that were taken from a village archaeological site in the 1950s. The items have been on loan to the Pechanga from the San Bernardino County Museum since 2011. Then, last week, the Interior Department determined that the Band has

a valid claim to them. The collection of some 50,000 items includes ceramics, stone tools, animal bones, ornamental shells and human remains.

### NEW YORK TIMES SPOTLIGHTS NATIVE SUICIDE

*The New York Times* last week drew attention to a series of recent suicides among young people on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. As the *Times* reported, nine individuals between the ages of 12 and 24 have killed themselves on the reservation since December; moreover, there have been more than 100 suicide attempts from December to March. "It is devastating," said Oglala Sioux Tribe President John Yellow Bird Steele, who has declared an emergency on the reservation.

# How Did I Miss That?

*Military code names, sudden death and the best government money can buy* **BY STEVE RUSSELL**

I was reading in *The New York Times* about controversies surrounding a young entrepreneur, Joshua Bryce Newman, when a line jumped out I had to share with my cousin Ray Sixkiller:

“While the total amount in dispute appears to be relatively small—roughly a few million dollars . . .”

\*\*\*

The *Daily Tribune* reported that Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato, leader of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) is dead, quoting Philippine military sources as being “99.9 percent” sure. Kato was first reported dead in 2008. He “died” again in 2011.

“It’s a duel,” Cousin Ray chortled, “between third time’s the charm and a cat has nine lives.”

\*\*\*

*Foreign Policy* reported that about 300 troops from the 173rd Airborne Brigade have arrived in western Ukraine to train Ukrainian National Guard troops. This officially begins Operation Fearless Guardian.

Who picks these names, anyway? The Army did not bite on Cousin Ray’s suggestion, “Project Pummel Putin.”

\*\*\*

Equipment for Fearless Guardian was not airlifted, but rather shipped, in a ground convoy from Vicenza, Italy across Austria, Germany, and Poland. This road trip followed another by the 2d Cavalry troops who were rotated out of Estonia, and drove through Lithuania, Poland, and the Czech Republic to get back to their base in Germany.

“Our boys do love their road trips,” Cousin Ray said.

\*\*\*

Is arrogance contagious? All sports fans

can cite arrogant statements by young athletes with too much money. CNN and many other outlets reported on ESPN’s suspension of reporter Britt McHenry after a video went viral of her cruel and obnoxious rant to a tow company clerk that went off on the woman’s intelligence, her teeth, and her weight—comparing them all unfavorably to McHenry’s superior self.

CNN points out that McHenry joins other ESPN personalities like Keith Olbermann (denigrated Penn State fans), Bill Simmons (called the NFL Commissioner a liar) and Stephen Smith (accused domestic violence victims of “provocation”).

\*\*\*

KCBD reported that Stacy Jones, 42, of Baker, Louisiana confessed to sex with a 15-year-old boy that “just happened” when she was giving him a ride to church. I omit most of Cousin Ray’s crack about “what kind of ride she was giving him.”

\*\*\*

In other church news, the *Victoria Advocate* reported that Rev. Darryl Edwards, pastor of the Fannin Street United Methodist Church, was delivering a funeral eulogy. The *Advocate* quoted his sister Sheila: “He was talking about how you need to be ready for death because you never know the day or hour. And about then, it happened.”

What happened was Edwards collapsed and died of an apparent heart attack.

\*\*\*

The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee has set the reauthorization of the National Science Foundation for markup. At this writing, the bill imposes a 45 percent cut in funding for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate.

Cousin Ray wondered that if social scientists would publish results more friendly to Republican positions, maybe they wouldn’t get their funds cut.

\*\*\*

*The New York Times* covered the murder and conspiracy trial of the entire leadership of Golden Dawn, a racist and neo-fascist party that has emerged from the seamy underbelly of Greek politics to be the third largest bloc in parliament. Like the fascists before WWII, Golden Dawn blamed economic distress on immigrants. They became a force in 2012, during the first Greek debt crisis.

“Gee whiz,” Cousin Ray said with tongue in cheek, “I’m sure glad no politicians in the U.S. blame immigrants for our problems.”

\*\*\*

Thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court shooting down limits on campaign financing, we are going to have the best government money can buy. The disclosure requirements that the high court’s opinion anticipated never occurred. And so Super-PACs run on “dark money.”

Nor will Congress require publicly traded corporations to report political donations to shareholders now that corporate persons have the same rights as human persons to buy politicians.

\*\*\*

On the same issue at the tribal government level, kudos to the *Cherokee Phoenix* for publishing links to all the financial disclosure statements of all the candidates. Incumbent Chief Bill John Baker raised more money than everybody else put together and given how far out the election is, Baker looks poised to become a million-dollar candidate at \$836,536.99. So far, he’s crushed former Chief Chad Smith 8-1. Charlie Soap and Will Fourkiller together do not equal Smith.

“If the U.S. gets the best government money can buy,” Cousin Ray muttered ruefully, “why not the Cherokee Nation?”

<http://bit.ly/1bJVtfg> ☞

# UPCOMING POW WOWS

## **39TH ANNUAL EDISTO NATCHEZ-KUSSO POW WOW**

5/8/15—5/9/15

Four Holes Indian Organization Community Center  
1125 Ridge Road  
Ridgeville, SC  
843-871-2126

## **AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION SPRING POW WOW**

5/8/15—5/9/15

3381 Hunting Country Road  
Tryon, NC  
803-667-2613  
[3dbbdb@bellsouth.net](mailto:3dbbdb@bellsouth.net)

## **47TH ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MOTHER'S DAY POW WOW**

5/8/15—5/10/15

University of Oregon, MacArthur Court  
1601 University Street  
Eugene, OR  
541-346-3723  
[asuonasu@uoregon.edu](mailto:asuonasu@uoregon.edu)

## **44TH ANNUAL STANFORD POW WOW**

5/8/15—5/10/15

Stanford University  
Stanford, CA  
650-723-4078  
[chairs@stanfordpowwow.org](mailto:chairs@stanfordpowwow.org)  
[powwow.Stanford.edu](http://powwow.Stanford.edu)

## **MARIPOSA POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Mariposa County Fairgrounds  
Mariposa, CA  
209-742-2244  
[mariposapowwow@yahoo.com](mailto:mariposapowwow@yahoo.com)  
[Facebook.com/mariposapowwow](https://www.facebook.com/mariposapowwow)

## **34TH ANNUAL BEN CALF ROBE TRADITIONAL POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre  
11000 Stadium Road  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
United States Minor Outlying Islands  
780-471-2360  
[rhonda.metallic@ecsd.net](mailto:rhonda.metallic@ecsd.net)  
[Facebook.com/bencalfrobeannualtraditionalpowwow](https://www.facebook.com/bencalfrobeannualtraditionalpowwow)

## **MARIPOSA POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Mariposa County Fairgrounds

Mariposa, CA

209-742-2244

[mariposapowwow@yahoo.com](mailto:mariposapowwow@yahoo.com)

[Facebook.com/mariposapowwow](https://www.facebook.com/mariposapowwow)

## **FARMINGTON SPRING POW WOW**

5/9/15

Farmington Indian Center  
Farmington, NM  
505-327-6296  
[mnewman@fmtn.org](mailto:mnewman@fmtn.org)  
[FMTN.org/indiancenter](http://FMTN.org/indiancenter)

## **DARTMOUTH COLLEGE POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Dartmouth College Green  
Hanover, NH  
603-646-2110  
[powwow@dartmouth.edu](mailto:powwow@dartmouth.edu)

## **26TH ANNUAL CHEROKEE COUNTY INDIAN FESTIVAL AND MOTHER'S DAY POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Boling Park  
1200 Marietta Highway  
Canton, GA  
770-735-6275  
[chipa.wolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:chipa.wolfe@yahoo.com)  
[RThunder.com](http://RThunder.com)

## **21ST ANNUAL NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL AND MOTHER'S DAY POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Riverside Park  
Grants Pass, OR  
541-531-6104

## **10TH ANNUAL WHITE BUFFALO POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Tupelo Buffalo Park and Zoo  
Tupelo, MS  
901-876-5344

## **10TH ANNUAL NOXEN'S MOTHER'S DAY POW WOW**

5/9/15—5/10/15

Noxen Fire Company Grounds  
3493 Stull Road  
Noxen, PA  
570-947-2097  
[wisteria18704@yahoo.com](mailto:wisteria18704@yahoo.com)



*Cheyenne Brady (Sac and Fox/  
Cheyenne/Tonkawa) was crowned Miss  
Indian World 2015 on April 25 at the  
Gathering of Nations.*

**THE BIG PICTURE**