



Indian Country THIS WEEK FROM

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

A Letter from the Publisher

Shekóli. The creative arts sometimes look glamorous from afar, but the reality can be quite different. Writers write, actors act, and artists paint, draw or sculpt—even if there is no audience or paycheck at the end of the production. When creative people are blessed with talent and drive, they pursue their interests regardless of the cold hard costs. For filmmakers, the effort is sometimes too great: Gathering people and resources to engage in such an involved, collaborative venture as a movie takes more than vision and experience. Persistence and confidence play a hand as well.

One might say the deck is stacked even more for Native filmmakers. However, year in and year out our brilliant directors manage to produce some of the finest works in the country, even as Hollywood turns a blind or jaundiced eye towards the depiction of modern Indians.

Director Sterlin Harjo is one such laudable artist. Harjo has won fans and praise inside and out of Indian country for his cinematic range and authentic subject matter. This week, ICTMN arts and entertainment reporter Wilhelm Murg talks with Harjo about his latest project. Harjo's new film, *Mekko*, is a thriller set in Tulsa, and it is a return to feature storytelling that follows Harjo's recent forays into documentaries and shorts for TV.



For *Mekko*, Harjo used real locations and a mix of actors and street people. His eclectic inspirations include a photo series done in the 1950s of homeless Natives in Tulsa called "Street Chiefs," and *Stroszek*, a cinéma vérité entry by Werner Herzog. Most important, Harjo is bent on showcasing his independently produced work to appreciative audiences and continues to prove himself as one of the most resourceful artists working in moving pictures today. "As far as the future, I don't know, man," he says. "I think I'll end up just trying ride the wave of making films for theaters until they lock me up in an insane asylum or something."

While the manner in which Natives are portrayed in modern movies and TV can be maddening, Harjo is anything but crazy. And with his films and his growing following, he just may have the last laugh.

Ná kǐ wa,

Ray Halbritter

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Justice In South Dakota?

*When Trace O’Connell, a white man, was charged with disorderly conduct for spilling beer and shouting “Go back to the rez” at Lakota youth, a judge took jail time off the table. ICTMN contributor **Brandon Ecoffey** accuses Rapid City, South Dakota, the scene of the incident, of institutionalized racism:*

Any offense committed against children is wrong. But the obvious presence of an active and double-sided justice system in South Dakota is the real crime. Racism expressed by an individual is disgusting. But systemic

racism is the ultimate affront against any citizen.

In Rapid City, this prejudicial system has forced Native people to sit inside the Pennington County jail for days or weeks on end because they cannot afford to pay the bond issued by the judge for disorderly conduct or even more petty offenses. For those who have sat for weeks in county jail—while courts weighed their pleas for pretrial freedom—hearing that jail time was not an option for O’Connell is a joke.

Had a Native parent poured beer on the head of his or her own child in such a public way, the state would have

broken that family apart. Had a Native person spilled beer on a non-Native child while allegedly screaming racially charged statements, he or she would have been arrested on the spot.

Whether Trace O’Connell is found guilty or not, the world has seen how this city views Native people through the way it has botched the case. The one commendable thing Rapid City has done is that it has presumed that O’Connell is innocent until proved guilty. I would just hope that from now on, that same presumption of innocence would also apply to Natives.

<http://bit.ly/1DXbJqw> ☞

I Don’t Want Disney’s Pocahontas

*The Atlantic Monthly recently published a 20th anniversary essay about Disney’s Pocahontas, describing the title character as “fearless” and “radical.” **Terese Marie Mailhot** is not impressed:*

“In Defense of Pocahontas: Disney’s Most Radical Heroine” defends Disney’s portrayal of the Powhatan historical figure: “Disney had, for the first time, provided an independent and fearless heroine with a strong sense of self.” The article goes on and on, praising the film for its environmentalism and progressive storyline.

The Atlantic probably published the work thinking that no Indian reads, or that no Indian would dare contest the essay’s flawless rhetoric. But defending Disney’s version of a tale Europeans invented in the 18th century is just bad form.

Self-respecting Natives know that Pocahontas couldn’t have been more than 11 when she supposedly saved John Smith. Also, she was abducted. We’re familiar with her story. Disney’s *Pocahontas* is about as progressive as it could have been, considering that it is about a Native woman in tight buckskin who falls for a white dude and speaks English, all while talking to the birds and trees. Yep, progress.

What brings me closer to autonomy is the real story of Pocahontas. When I got tuberculosis, my mother told me about a Powhatan girl who also got the European disease. My mother told me about an Indian girl who turned to Christianity—just like my grandmother did after being taken into boarding school. Disney perpetuated the ugly rumor that Pocahontas was a “gentle savage” who co-signed colonization.

The Atlantic would like me to adopt Disney’s Pocahontas. But I don’t want Pocahontas in my house. My kids have plenty of Indian women to look up to, and they will learn to abhor racist depictions just like I did. <http://bit.ly/1TNKUfi> ☞

The Illegitimacy of Settler Regimes

Mike Myers, the founder and CEO of Network for Native Futures, considers the implications of acceding to Indian legislation promulgated by the “settler regimes” of the U.S. and Canada:

Let’s ask ourselves, “What would our political status look like, if we truly and freely determined it?” This discussion would have to start with a clean slate, free of the impositions put on us by the Indian Act and the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). It requires us to revisit our original forms of governance and decision-making—to once again look to

the ancient principles, values and beliefs that undergird centuries of democratic growth and development in this hemisphere.

It requires us to ask a fundamental question: “Who are they (Canada or the U.S.) to come into our territories and overthrow our forms of governance and civic participation?” This question demands that we examine the fundamental racism that is the foundation of the formulation of settler laws governing Indigenous nations and peoples.

As a negotiator for several Indigenous governments, I have all too often found us engaged in a process arguing about a development or ac-

tion that has already been planned and is on the verge of activation. We have not received any prior notice nor have we received sufficient information that would be the basis of formulating an informed decision.

So what would our freely determined political status look like? To answer this question will take hard work and a dedicated focus on the re-establishment of authentic indigenous democracies. This is not about tinkering with the Indian Act or the IRA. It is about the journey of decolonization and healing that leads to the reemergence of the Ways of Life that we were intended to have by the fact of our creation. <http://bit.ly/1NxfL8V> ☞

Navajo Voters Will Set Fluency Requirements For Top Leaders

BY ALYSA LANDRY

Navajo voters have narrowly approved a controversial change to the election code that now requires the Nation's top two elected leaders to be fluent in the Navajo language. The tally puts to rest the long-simmering debate over a requirement that the president and vice president be able to understand and speak Navajo fluently, and to read and write English.

The amended code, which goes into effect for the 2018 presidential election, still requires candidates to speak fluent Navajo. But it adds the provision that "this ability shall be determined by the Navajo voter when he/she casts a ballot." Previously, fluency was determined by election officials or, in extreme cases, by courts.

According to unofficial results tallied by the Navajo Election Administration, 52 percent of voters (13,017 people) approved amending the code; 48 percent (11,778 people) cast negative votes. Only 21 percent of the Nation's 120,000 registered voters cast ballots.

The referendum came nearly a year after the language debate first erupted during last August's primary election, when 17 candidates vied to be the Nation's eighth president. Former two-term president Joe Shirley Jr., and political newcomer Chris Deschene came in first and second, respectively.

But Deschene was disqualified following a lengthy legal battle that began when two former candidates complained that he did not speak fluent Navajo. The dispute ultimately pitted the Navajo Supreme Court against the Board of Election Supervisors and the Navajo Election Administration.

Russell Begaye, the third-place finisher in the primary race, triumphed in a delayed general election in April. He and Vice President Jonathan Nez took office in May and opposed a change to the language requirements. <http://bit.ly/1K9nHtC> 📍

Housing For Veterans Coming To Taos Pueblo

BY HARLAN MCKOSATO

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Taos Pueblo tribal government of New Mexico have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will allow Native military veterans to purchase, build or renovate a home on their tribal land. The new policy will take place under the auspices of the VA's Native American Direct Home Loan Program (NADL).

Since 1944, the VA Home Loan Program has helped over 21 million veterans purchase homes. But the program has not applied to American Indian veterans living on tribal lands, because this property is classified as U.S. trust land. So, in 1992, the NADL was developed.

"What we've found over the years is that many banks were not willing to lend on federal trust land," said VA Loan Guaranty program director Mike Frueh, who signed the agreement with Taos Pueblo Governor Luis Romero. "The program works exactly the same as the VA Home Loan Program except that Native veterans, or veterans that have a Native American spouse, can borrow money from the VA to build a house on U.S. trust land. We wanted to open the credit to Native veterans on their ancestral homelands."

Taos Pueblo War Chief Robert Espinosa, an Army veteran who offered remarks at the signing ceremony on July 30, was pleased by the agreement. "I personally tried for a VA loan, but since I lived on the reservation, I couldn't get one—I didn't qualify," said Espinosa. "This signing made me very happy."

Approximately one-third of Taos Pueblo village residents are veterans. This is the 95th such agreement that the VA has negotiated with a federally recognized tribe that has federal trust land. <http://bit.ly/1hAbbwC> 📍

Legislation Would Return 'Kennewick Man' To Tribes

BY TERRI HANSEN

A bill proposed by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) on August 6 would return the prehistoric skeleton of the Ancient One—known to non-Natives as "Kennewick Man"—to his Columbia Basin tribal descendants for reburial. The bill accords with various tribal pleas to transfer the remains from the Army Corps of Engineers to the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, which is authorized to carry out repatriation.

"The Ancient One is returning from

20 years of displacement, and in these 20 years he has become the most studied individual in the world," Yakama Nation Chairman Jode Goudy told ICTMN. "The most recent DNA studies show that the Ancient One is not only Native American, but of the Columbia Plateau region, where he was buried."

The nearly complete male skeleton, which is about 8,500 years old, was found along the Columbia River near Kennewick, Washington in 1996. The Yakama, along with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and

the Wanapum Band of Priest Rapids in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, maintain he is their ancestor.

The tribes initially requested a return of the remains under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. But a 2004 federal court ruling allowed a group of scientists to continue their study of the skeleton, which is stored at the Burke Museum in Seattle.

"The Ancient One is our relative, and anything but the immediate return and reburial of our relative is a continued act of dishonor by all individuals and parties involved," the Yakama Nation said in a statement. <http://bit.ly/1TlaLWv> 📍



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Tribes Receive Climate Funding

\$11.8 million to prepare for change


President Obama's Tribal Climate Resilience Program awarded \$11.8 million last month to help tribes plan for and cope with climate change. Alaska Native villages in particular will get about \$2 million. All together, 104 awards were made to provide for training and workshops, climate adaptation planning, ocean and coastal management planning, and other initiatives. Previously, the Interior Department had awarded \$10 million for similar efforts among tribes. "These funds will help the American Indian and Alaska Native communities on the front lines of climate change prepare, plan and

build capacity," said Interior Secretary Sally Jewell. <http://bit.ly/1Tl3lm8> 

Museum Will Return Medicine Bundles

Precious parcels are going back to Crow


Eighteen Crow medicine bundles will soon be transferred from the Portland Art Museum to the Crow people in Montana. According to *The Oregonian*, a collector named Elizabeth Cole Butler acquired the bundles from dealers of Native antiquities for 20 years beginning in 1970; she donated all of them to the museum. In Crow culture, a medicine bundle is a container made of animal skin that may contain small sacred items, e.g. shells, seeds, wood, feathers and arrowheads. "They're profound-

ly sacred objects, each unique to an individual," said Donald Urquhart, the museum's director of collections and exhibitions. The repatriation is scheduled for September. <http://bit.ly/1f0rfWk> 

Suspect Named In Choctaw Death

Held in murder of tribal council candidate

Authorities in Philadelphia, Mississippi, have named a suspect in the suspicious death of Native American activist and medicine man Rexdale Henry while in police custody. Justyn Schlegel, 34, was in the Neshoba County Jail cell with Henry when police found him dead, Sheriff Tommy Waddell said, according to WAPT News; Schlegel is now being charged with

Henry's murder. Police arrested Henry on July 9 for failing to pay a minor traffic citation. According to reports, Henry was last seen alive at 9:30 a.m. on July 14, but by 10 a.m. he was deceased. Henry, a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was recently a candidate for tribal council. <http://bit.ly/1h5dAzm> 

Natives Boost Colorado Economy

Huge returns from small population

Natives make up less than 2 percent of Colorado's population but contribute more than \$1.5 billion annually to the state's economy, a new study has concluded. The Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report found that Colorado has

more than 485 Native-owned businesses, spanning 40 industries and employing more than 8,000 people. "I don't think we ever imagined we'd be seeing the numbers we are looking at in this report," said Ernest House, Jr. executive director of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. The Office of Economic Development and International Trade for Colorado and the Denver American Indian Commission conducted the research for the two-year study. <http://bit.ly/1JSFZ6A> ☞

Ohio Man Bought Native Remains

Pleads guilty to illegal purchase

An Ohio man pleaded guilty on August 5 to purchasing Native human remains and violating the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation

Act. Mark Beatty, 56, bought the remains of eight individuals from men he saw digging in a rock shelter on Jackson County farm; according to the county sheriff, "He was purchasing from grave robbers." Beatty will receive three years' probation, perform 100 hours of community service, and pay a \$3,500 fine and restitution of \$1,000, which will be used to rebury the remains. Beatty has also agreed to publish a newspaper advertisement warning others against similar transactions. <http://bit.ly/1DyeQ7Z> ☞

Cheyenne River Sioux Reject Foundation Funds

Decision follows \$25,000 offering

The Cheyenne River Sioux tribal council voted on August 5 to reject all current

and future donations from the Washington Redskins Original Americans Foundation. Amid controversy over the NFL team name, Redskins owner Dan Snyder established the foundation last year to "provide meaningful and measurable resources that provide genuine opportunities for Tribal communities." But after the foundation offered \$25,000 to the Cheyenne River Rodeo Association in July, the tribal council elected to refuse any such funding. The council's motion also mandated that chairman Harold Frazier no longer communicate with the football team "and any group or person associated with them." <http://bit.ly/1MjRbLr> ☞

Washington Supports Tulalip Lawsuit

Government enters dispute over taxes

The federal government has joined in a lawsuit filed by the Tulalip Tribes that is challenging the authority of Washington State and Snohomish County to tax non-Indian businesses on Indian land. The Justice Department is arguing that the state and county's imposition of taxes on commerce in Quil Ceda Village undermines tribal and federal interests, infringes on tribal self-government, and violates the Indian Commerce Clause of the Constitution. "The United States takes seriously the federal role in protecting tribal self-government, which has its foundation in federal statutes, treaties, and regulations," said Assistant U.S. Attorney General John C. Cruden. <http://bit.ly/1h46qva> ☞

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Ominous ‘Man Camps’

Another troubling aspect of a troubling oil project BY JACQUELINE KEELER



Temporary housing facilities like this one near Watford City, North Dakota are said to be breeding grounds for abuse against Natives.

Bottom Line: *A massive influx of workers on the mammoth Keystone XL pipeline could wreak havoc on South Dakota tribes.*

Recent public hearings about running the controversial Keystone XL pipeline through South Dakota focused largely on such issues as environmental effects and a lack of corporate consultation with area tribes.

But during those hearings, another concern emerged—the advent of so-called man camps.

“Man camps” are compounds that house temporary laborers, consultants and associated personnel—almost exclusively male—who work on large civil en-

gineering projects. In recent years, they have gained a reputation for fostering illegal activities ranging from drug use to human trafficking.

In the case of the \$8 billion Keystone XL pipeline—which would convey oil some 1,700 miles from the Alberta tar sands to Nebraska—three such camps would be built near treaty and unceded territory of the Yankton Sioux, Rosebud Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes. They would be managed by Target Logistics, which currently manages 12 such installations in the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota. There, almost 4,000 workers are housed.

The three proposed Keystone XL facilities in South Dakota would be much

larger than the average Bakken camp, housing about 1,000 workers each.

But at evidentiary hearings before South Dakota’s Public Utilities Commission (PUC), which took place from July 27 to August 5, it was not clear that the pipeline builder—the energy giant TransCanada—could manage the threats that workers might pose to residents of the nearby Yankton Sioux Reservation.

Close questioning established that TransCanada had not consulted with local tribes, and that the camps were insufficiently equipped to deal with criminal activity that residents might commit outside of camp boundaries.

The Keystone XL project prefers to call its facilities “work camps.” The company’s

website quotes Dunn County Sheriff Clayton Coker as saying, “This place is a safe haven. . . . No fights, no thefts, no issues at all in here.” The site also quotes Bill Moseley, a safety consultant from California.

“We don’t need any issues of people bringing bad habits to this location because most of us just don’t have time for that,” he said. “We’re up 14-, 15-, 16 hours a day while we’re here so it’s important to have some respect in this community, right here, which I’ve seen a lot of. I haven’t seen anything disorderly here.”

But reports from the Bakken oil fields, personal testimony and anecdotal evidence paint a very different picture.

Increasingly, reports from the Bakken fields of steep increases in trafficking, assault and domestic violence affecting neighboring Native American communities have raised concerns about their proposed South Dakota equivalents. In the reservation border town of Williston, North Dakota, rates of theft, abduction, violence, domestic abuse and sex crimes triple have tripled during the oil boom of the past five years.

Annita Lucchesi (Southern Cheyenne), who works for the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Council, recalled chilling remarks she overheard from Bakken workers.

“They were saying, ‘Oh yeah, North Dakota is the f—ing best; in North Dakota you can take whatever pretty little Indian girl that you like, and you can do whatever you want, and police don’t give a f— about it’ she told *Pacific Standard* magazine.

“To hear something like that—he was literally talking about kidnapping and raping girls in public at three in the afternoon—that is how bad it is,” said Lucchesi.

Grace Her Many Horses, a former Rosebud Sioux Tribe police chief, witnessed widespread lawlessness when she worked temporarily in the Bakken Region near Newtown, North Dakota on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. In 2014, she told the Rosebud Sioux newspaper *Sicangu Eyapaha* of drug use and police officers who had to resort to SWAT gear to conduct raids.

One time, the former police chief said, “We found a crying, naked, four-year-old girl running down one of the roads right outside of the Man Camp. She had been

sexually assaulted.”

Man-on-man assault was also a problem, she recounted. “[T]here was a 15 year old boy [who] had gone missing. He was found in one of the man camps with one of the oil workers. They were passing him around from trailer to trailer.

“It was scary,” she said. “I feel really bad for the local residents because the flavor of their reservation has changed so much.”

During the recent evidentiary hearings, Yankton Sioux tribal elder and traditional leader Faith Spotted Eagle predicted similar trouble along the proposed South Dakota Keystone XL construction route. She pointed out the projected proximity of the man camp to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, the Yankton Sioux Reservation and the Yankton Sioux Tribe’s Fort Randall Casino and Hotel.

This “large-scale entertainment center

*There was a
15-year-old boy
who had gone
missing. They
were passing him
around from
trailer to trailer.’*

that offers a large selection of gaming, evening entertainment, bar and restaurant, and hotel in one place,” she predicted, would yield “undesired consequences”—specifically, “a surge in violent crime for an already overburdened police force.”

The chief Keystone XL witness was Project Manager-Logistics and Services Rick Perkins. He testified that there had never been complaints about rape or sexual harassment at man camps run by Target Logistics. He stated that he had no knowledge of drugs or human trafficking at the facilities. And he stressed that “pipeliners” were career professionals and union members.

Perkins attributed any lawlessness at man camps to “bad elements” but said that such workers are kept out of Target Logistics camps by a code of conduct that all residents must sign. Pressed by Yankton Sioux Tribal attorney Jennifer Baker, Perkins testified that Target Logistics camps do not permit the presence of alcohol, firearms, drugs or open flames.

But prostitution is not prohibited by the company’s code of conduct, and Perkins acknowledged that neither Target Logistics nor TransCanada requires camp-worker background checks. He also could not attest to whether a typical pipeline worker has a criminal record.

Indeed, registered sex offenders are not precluded from employment or from taking up residence at the camps. Perkins did promise that Target Logistics would turn over to law enforcement any resident engaged in criminal activity.

Perkins further pledged that TransCanada will work to solve cross-jurisdictional issues. But he acknowledged that the corporation had not met with tribal police at any of the affected reservations. And he confirmed that TransCanada had not conducted any studies regarding potential increase of criminal activity because of the presence of workers in neighboring reservation communities.

Baker brought out that TransCanada has subsidized the hiring of additional police officers in and around its camps to help keep order. When she asked Perkins if these payments might prejudice local authorities in the course of prosecuting TransCanada employees, Perkins denied that there would be any potential conflict of interest.

In general, Perkins’ responses did little to instill trust in the tribes that would be affected by the influx of oil-pipeline workers. “If anything,” said Yankton Sioux tribal attorney Thomasina Real Bird, “Mr. Perkins’s testimony reveals serious deficiencies.”

The evidentiary hearings were required to determine whether TransCanada must resubmit its application entirely, or if it can get the original permit—which was approved in 2010—recertified. A final decision by South Dakota’s Public Utilities Commission is expected in November.

<http://bit.ly/1P8IPUB> 

Sterlin Harjo Strikes Again

Mekko is a thriller set in the streets of Tulsa BY WILHELM MURG

Bottom Line: *The acclaimed Seminole filmmaker Sterlin Harjo is back, with his unique combination of fact and fiction.*

Sterlin Harjo's new movie, *Mekko*, takes place in a street community of homeless Natives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The project was designed to be shot quickly, directly, and inexpensively through location filming. It was most recently screened at a July 18th benefit at Tulsa's Circle Cinema, in the neighborhood where much of the footage was taken.

Perhaps *Mekko's* most distinctive aspect is Harjo's hiring of homeless people, via a nearby soup kitchen, as extras.

"*Mekko* is about a man who comes to Tulsa and gets taken into this community because he has nowhere else to go," Harjo said, "but there's also this person who represents ultimate evil that creeps into this community, and darkness. Then it becomes this thriller, where they're kind of chasing each other."

Harjo, one of the leading forces in Native American cinema, has worked mostly in documentary formats for the past few years. He has created shorts for Tulsa's This Land Press and the Cherokee Nation television show *Osiyo, Voices of the Cherokee People*. Last year he released a feature-length documentary, *This May Be The Last Time*.

Mekko marks Harjo's return to cinematic fiction with reality bleeding in. He has explored the genre, which he has "played with over the years," in such works as his acclaimed 2009 entry *Barking Water*.

"The idea was to make a film with people I know in Oklahoma and Tulsa, with some of the crew I had been working with," he said. "The project grew a little bit, but I wanted to keep that shooting style."

Harjo's approach is a hybrid: "I have a script but I really try to make things feel real, capture reality, and use real people in the scenes, like in all of our interior shoots in the restaurants. I never filmed



Actors and street people mingle in *Mekko*, which itself combines the real and unreal.

when they were shut down; I requested that we would be allowed to film while they were open. We would just work around the real customers and anyone that was there. The idea was they knew that they would be in the background in the film."

Some of his subjects were homeless Native Americans, with whom he became acquainted through a soup kitchen and food bank, The Iron Gate, in downtown Tulsa. According to the charity's website, 30 percent of the people it feeds are Natives.

Part of Harjo's inspiration for *Mekko* was a classic photo series from the 1970s and 1980s, "Street Chiefs," by Richard Ray Whitman, who starred in *Barking Water*. Whitman's series featured brutally honest, yet sadly beautiful, portraits of homeless Native American men in Oklahoma—a legacy of the Relocation Program from the 1950s.

"I always liked Richard's series of Street Chiefs," Harjo said. "Whenever I left home and moved to Tulsa I missed my family, I missed my community—you know, the joking around, the Indian hu-

mor and things like that. In downtown Tulsa, at the time, I didn't run into a lot of Indian people. But I started noticing this homeless community, and they just kind of hung out like a tribe, they were like a family. I got to be friends with some of them.

"And then I was watching an old Werner Herzog movie called *Stroszek*, and he did the same thing, where he shot in real locations and used real people with the actors. There's just something really cool about that. . . . When you let real life seep its way into the filmmaking, something interesting happens."

Harjo is a member of that generation of directors whose work is more often seen on the web than in theaters. "As a filmmaker I want theaters to last, but my films don't get shown in theaters unless they get shown in festivals, or in Oklahoma they'll show them in theaters," he said.

"As far as the future, I don't know, man. I think I'll end up just trying ride the wave of making films for theaters until they lock me up in an insane asylum or something." <http://bit.ly/1DN039R> 📍

Toxic Spill Assaults Tribes

Three million gallons of mining wastewater is unleashed

Bottom Line: *It may have been an accident. But the release of huge amounts of toxic sludge into precious waterways has outraged tribal officials and Western governors.*

The Navajo Nation, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the states of Colorado and New Mexico declared disaster emergencies last week as three million gallons of acidic mining waste tumbled into Cement Creek and the Animas River, turning them a lurid yellow-orange.

The deluge began on August 5 at the abandoned Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colorado. It occurred when an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) team working at the site underestimated the amount of water behind what turned out to be a flimsy dam. The water burst out as the crew, using a backhoe, moved the loose soil and stones holding back the water as they tried to begin draining the area in a controlled fashion.

Their action unintentionally unleashed a sludgy torrent into Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas River, which flows through Southern Ute territory. From there, the spill went to the San Juan River, arriving on August 8.

Tribal officials quickly warned members to avoid the polluted areas. As ICTMN went to press, the worst of the plume of toxic sludge had already passed. But the lasting effects of the spill on water quality and wildlife are not yet known.

Residents along the San Juan River have been warned to stay away from the waterway. It is closed until further notice and should not be used to water crops or feed animals, the Navajo Nation said.

The wastewater is known to contain lead, arsenic, cadmium, aluminum and copper, among other heavy metals, but tests on the amounts and exact composition are still being conducted. The yellow-orange color of the water is caused by the presence of iron, the EPA said.

"This is a huge tragedy," said EPA Regional Director of Emergency Prepared-



The effects of three million gallons of acidic mining waste on the Animas River and surrounding waterways are still not clear.

ness David Ostrander at a community meeting in Durango, Colorado. "It's hard being on the other side of this. We typically respond to emergencies, we don't cause them."

But state and tribal officials were not mollified. "I am heartbroken by this environmental catastrophe," New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez said after touring the site of the deluge. She specifically criticized the varying estimates of the scope of the emergency.

"I am very concerned by EPA's lack of communication and inability to provide accurate information," she said. "One day, the spill is one million gallons. The next, it's three million. New Mexicans deserve answers we can rely on." Moreover, Martinez said she was not informed of the spill until 24 hours after it took place, according to *Newsweek*.

Martinez's disaster declaration makes at least \$750,000 available for monitoring and cleanup. So does the emergency declaration of Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, who freed up \$500,000 from the state's Disaster Emergency Fund to pay for the response and technical assessments.

"Our priority remains to ensure public

safety and minimize environmental impacts," said Hickenlooper. "By declaring a disaster emergency, we are able to better support impacted businesses and communities with state resources."

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye, who toured the site, vowed to make the EPA accountable for cleanup and for supplying water to Navajo chapters that rely on the San Juan River to water crops and feed livestock.

"We intend to make sure the Navajo Nation recovers every dollar it spends cleaning up this mess and every dollar it loses as a result of injuries to our precious Navajo natural resources," Begaye told a packed Shiprock Chapter House in Window Rock on August 8. "I have instructed [the] Navajo Nation Department of Justice to take immediate action against the EPA."

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe found itself overwhelmed by the accident. "The cost and magnitude of responding to and recovery from the impact of the water contamination from the Gold King Mine Animas River Spill, caused by the EPA on August 5, 2015 is far in excess of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's available resources," the tribe said in a statement. <http://bit.ly/1NnVvGA> and <http://bit.ly/1EftLyH> 📱

Domestic Violence Staff Attorney – Scottsbluff

Legal Aid of Nebraska, a law firm providing free civil legal services to low-income persons, seeks an attorney to serve Native American victims of domestic violence in Western Nebraska. Must be admitted to practice in Nebraska or have a Nebraska license pending, and be licensed or willing to become licensed in the Ponca, Winnebago, Omaha and Santee Tribal Courts. This position entails extensive travel throughout panhandle and Cherry counties. Duties will include but will not be limited to: provide assistance to members of the Omaha, Ponca, Santee, and Winnebago and to other Native Americans who are victims of domestic violence primarily residing in the panhandle and Cherry counties. This position entails providing training to law enforcement; making community presentations; conducting outreach to Native American victims of domestic violence; developing culturally appropriate materials providing legal information and information about Legal Aid of Nebraska's Native American Project and domestic violence; fostering relationships with the Tribes, tribal members, domestic violence agencies and other service providers. The attorney in this position also provides quality and aggressive representation of low-income Native American domestic violence victims who are clients of LAN primarily in state court, and, engages in the day-to-day practice of law according to the priorities and practices set by Legal Aid of Nebraska. Ideal candidate will possess expertise in the area of domestic violence and have a connection to Native American issues. This is a full-time position requiring a committed individual. Company cell phone and laptop will be provided. Location in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Legal Aid of Nebraska offers excellent supervision, training and support, and state-of-the-art technology. Loan assistance repayment may be available assuming eligibility for Legal Aid's repayment program. Experience-based competitive salary. Excellent benefits package. Please send resume, references, writing sample and cover letter via email to: Jonathan Seagrass, Managing Attorney of Legal Aid of Nebraska's Native American Project, at seagrass@legalaidofnebraska.org. EOE. Position open until filled.

REQUEST FOR BIDS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

RFP 05-2015

The Ramah Navajo School, Inc. (RNSB) seeks Statements of Qualifications for proposals to provide Fully Insured Medical/Dental/Vision Benefit Plans with some partially self-funded components. Qualified companies may obtain RFP specifications, please contact: Anna Mae Pino, Acting Executive /Deputy Director Email: anna@msb.k12.nm.us Telephone number (505) 775-4152 OR Ms. Lisa Baeza Insurance/Benefits Administrator lisa@msb.k12.nm.us (505) 775-4163. Please submit bids marked "seal bids for benefit plan" to the Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc. PROPERTY & PROCUREMENT, Attention: Boots Maria, BIA Rt. 125, Receiving Center, Pine Hill, New Mexico 87357

All bids must be received by close of business day August 28, 2015, 4:30 PM, MST. No fax or emailed proposals will be accepted. The sealed bid proposal shall include the cost for services and Statement of qualifications. Navajo/Indian preference will apply.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Shoshone-Bannock Gaming Commission is requesting proposals from qualified firms with substantial gaming auditing experience to conduct a 2015 fiscal year external audit. Your response to this invitation is requested within 30 days of the date of this mailing. Proposals must be received on or before August 28, 2015, 4:30 PM, MST.

Should you like more information on the stated project or job, please contact Marvin D. Osborne, Executive Director, Shoshone-Bannock Gaming Commission, at the number listed above. Your bid and accompanying documents must be received by the specified deadline.

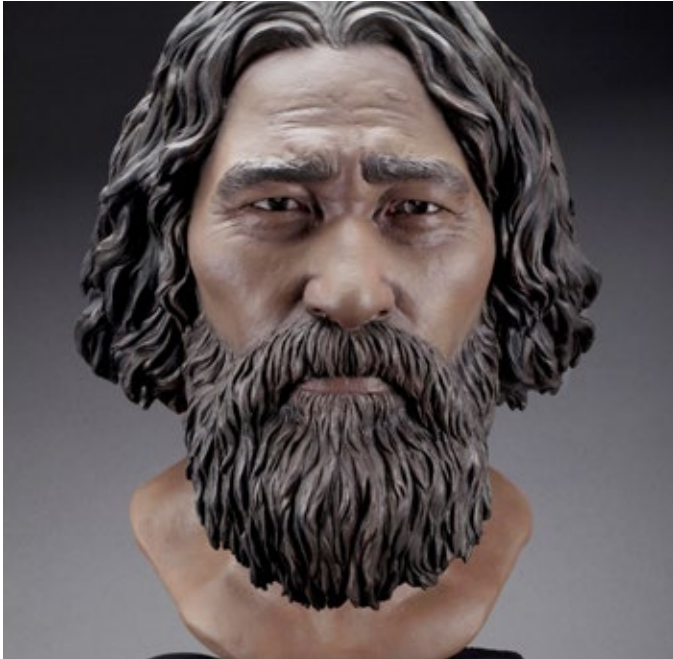
Please be advised that the Tribal Business Act, Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. These are Tribal Laws and shall be enforced by the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in all business transaction, employment, contracting, and land use regulations on the Reservation. For more information about these laws please contact the Tribal Business License, (208) 478-3716 and TERO, (208) 478-3848.

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A Senate bill would return the remains of “The Ancient One” (here reconstructed) to his Native soil in the Columbia Basin.



Ish-Kaysh Tripp (Yurok and Karuk), a student at Humboldt State University, is now a Rodney T. Mathews Jr. scholar.



The Spokane Tribe of Washington has sworn in Carol Evans, seen here in 2013, as its first female tribal council chair.



Confusion surrounds Marilyn Manson’s role as a Native hit man in Let Me Make You a Martyr and his claim of “Sioux” heritage.

Headlines from the Web

GOVERNOR MEETS WITH TRIBES IN ADVANCE OF LAND TRUST DEADLINE

<http://bit.ly/1L30X1x>

YUOK TRIBE SWINDLED OF \$250K IN CASINO PUSH

<http://bit.ly/1gS3x0y>

HO-CHUNK PLANS TO SELL FORMER BANK BUILDING

<http://bit.ly/1J1f2wW>

DOCUMENTARY EXPLORES STRUGGLE OF NEW JERSEY'S RAMAPOUGH TRIBE

<http://nyti.ms/1Luci9P>

FORMER TRIBAL CHAIRMAN, SON ARRESTED FOLLOWING APRIL DRUG RAID

<http://bit.ly/1DOautn>

MICHIGAN UNDERFUNDS NATIVE AMERICAN TUITION PROGRAM

<http://bit.ly/1WhY5UG>

Upcoming Events

TRIBAL COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONFERENCE, AUGUST 20-21

Following an opening plenary, the conference theme of "Protecting Indian Children" will be "Understanding Applicable Laws in Child Protection and Child Welfare Cases," "Judicial Responses to Child Deprivation Cases," "Preparing Lay Advocates For Court," "Updates and Reforms to the Indian Child Welfare Act" and related subjects. Conducted by the University of North Dakota School of Law.

Location: Radisson Bloomington by the Mall of America, Bloomington, Minnesota

ALASKA SUMMIT ON ARCTIC SHIPPING AND PORTS, AUGUST 23-25

The summit is designed to build partnerships to develop safe and reliable shipping through the Alaskan Arctic. Major topics will be developing safe and reliable shipping practices to protect the hunting and fishing activities of residents and environment; exploring public-private cooperation models to produce the necessary infrastructure investments; and establishing a task force to offer global shippers a

regular, safe and reliable shipping system.

Location: Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage, Alaska

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL HEALTH WEBINAR, AUGUST 25

The webinar, "Lung Infections in Indigenous American Children: A Hidden Disparity," will address the issue of how American Indian and Alaska Native children suffer from disproportionately high rates of hospitalization for lower respiratory tract infections. Dr. Rosalyn Singleton, a visiting research associate with the Arctic Investigations Program of the Centers for Disease Control and a clinical consultant for the Indian Health Service, will moderate.

Contact Information: <http://www.indianhealth@aap.org>

INDIAN RESERVED WATER RIGHTS CLAIMS SYMPOSIUM, AUGUST 25-27

Topics for this 14th biennial symposium will include "Negotiation of Indian Water Rights Claims," "Identifying Parties and Issues and How Negotiations Bind Larger Groups" and "Settlement Legislation: Getting Bills Through Congress." Gila River

Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, Indian Water Rights Director Pamela Williams of the Department of the Interior, and Assistant Montana Attorney General Jay Weiner will be among the featured speakers and participants. Conducted by the Western States Water Council and Native American Rights Fund.

Location: Peppermill Hotel and Casino, Reno, Nevada

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TRIBAL WEBINAR AUGUST 26

This webinar will show attendees how tribes have been able to identify, qualify, and develop successful facility-, community-, and utility-scale renewable energy projects that run the gamut of renewable energy technologies. Speakers will explore the keys to successful project implementation, including strategic planning, financing, overcoming barriers, reducing risks, and producing measurable results. Hosted by the Department of Energy Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, in partnership with Western Area Power Administration.

Contact Information: <http://bit.ly/1N6rE7y>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re Cynthia Dunne's plea to release Leonard Peltier (July 26):

Granting clemency to Leonard Peltier now, after he has spent nearly 40 years in prison, on the basis of restoring integrity to the American system of justice, is like putting lipstick on Uncle Sam. It is pure hubris.

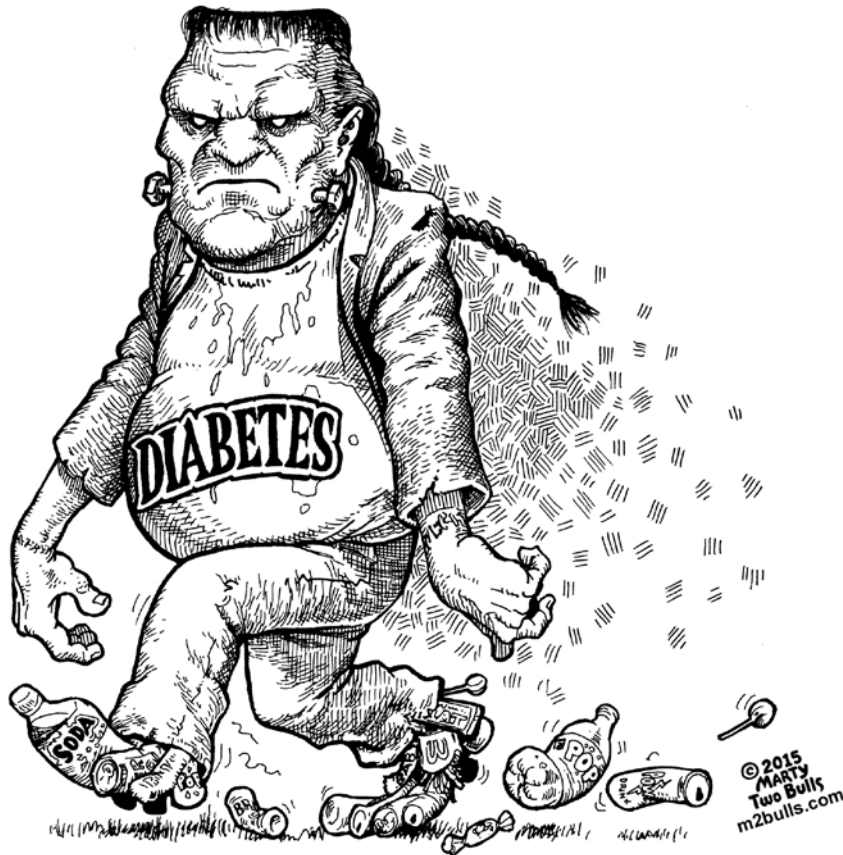
Seemingly pre-packaged and likely paid-for public relations propaganda is

commonplace whenever Leonard Peltier is discussed. The intent is to persuade people that Peltier is guilty. But it does not explain why the FBI and the federal government are still withholding perhaps six to ten thousand pages of information from Peltier's attorneys that in all probability would clear him of murder—or at the very least condemn the FBI for illegal behavior.

Freeing Leonard Peltier, along with an

apology, an admission of wrongdoing, and extended prison sentences for those responsible for his wrongful imprisonment, might help balance the scales of justice. I doubt, however, that even that would wipe the darkness from government officials. They are seemingly dark to the bone.

—Sammy Snake
St. Charles, Missouri



TOP NEWS ALERTS

From IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com

FIRST FEMALE CHAIR OF SPOKANE TRIBE

The Spokane Tribe of Washington has selected Carol Evans as its first female chair. Evans has made history with the Spokane Tribe previously: In 2013, she became the first woman to be sworn in as a member of the tribal council since her mother, Pauline Stearns, 25 years before. "When you look at our history," she said, "the chiefs were men, but women were movers even without the title." Evans had previously served as vice chair of the council.

TRIBES CALL FOR HOSPITAL RESIGNATIONS

The Omaha and Winnebago tribes have called upon top Indian Health Service officials

connected with their tribal hospital in Winnebago, Nebraska to resign, following a loss of federal funding. The *Sioux City Journal* reported that the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services terminated funding for the Winnebago Service Unit on July 23. This means that the facility "is no longer eligible for reimbursement from the federal government for caring for patients covered by the insurance programs for the elderly, disabled and low-income."

MORONGO BAND SCHOLARS NAMED

Four college students have received this year's Rodney T. Mathews Jr. Scholarship, awarded by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and available to any enrolled members of Cali-

fornia's more than 100 federally recognized tribes. The recipients are Shanice Britton (Round Valle), Shayna McCullough (Yurok), Cara Owings (Tolowa De-ni') and Ish-Kaysh Tripp (Yurok and Karuk). Britton attends UC Davis; the other three recipients are enrolled at Humboldt State University.

TWO NEW MEXICO CASINO COMPACTS

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has approved two additional Class III gaming compacts in New Mexico. One is with the Ohway Owingeh Pueblo; the other is with the Zuni Pueblo. The decision brings the number of Class III gaming compacts in New Mexico up to nine. The other tribes that are currently licensed are the Navajo Nation, the Mescalero Apache

Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the Acoma Pueblo, the Isleto Pueblo, the Jemez Pueblo and the Taos Pueblo.

INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN ALASKA

For what is believed to be the first time in its history, the Senate Indian Affairs Committee will conduct a field hearing in Alaska. On August 20, the committee will meet at the Alaska Native Heritage Center to discuss tribal justice issues, including tribal courts and recidivism. Former committee vice chair Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) will conduct the hearing; witnesses will include Alaska State Sen. Jon Coghill. Although there will be no webcast, written testimony will be made available online.

How Did I Miss That?

Elk watching, the Free Syrian Army and Rush Limbaugh's pants BY STEVE RUSSELL

KXAN aired a report sourced from Cass County, Texas Sheriff Larry Rowe. A man who did not wish to be identified spotted a vagrant armadillo on his property in a suburb of Texarkana. Defending his home with a .38 revolver, he squeezed off three shots. One round was apparently deflected by the armadillo's shell and struck the man in the jaw. He was airlifted to a hospital, where his jaw was wired shut.

"I can't imagine," my Cousin Ray Sixkiller snickered, "why that guy didn't wish to be identified."

* * *

A smarter guy named hitchBOT was born in Canada at Ryerson University and became an ingenious experiment to reverse the usual question, "Can humans trust robots?" Because the silicon-based hitchBOT depended upon the kindness of strangers to travel, it became a test of the opposite question, "Can robots trust humans?"

The answer appeared to be yes, as hitchBOT crossed Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands. Two weeks after attempting to invade the U.S.A., vandals attacked hitchBOT in Philadelphia and decapitated him.

Cousin Ray claimed that W.C. Fields did not really put on his tombstone that he'd rather be in the City of Brotherly Love and reminded me of the time Eagles fans booed Santa Claus.

"But if you think it's over for hitchBOT," he said, "remember it didn't stop C3PO."

* * *

A TV station I grew up with—Tulsa Channel 6—reported that planners with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission had the amazing luck to come upon a herd of about 20 elk crossing the Illinois River near Tahlequah. Elk were commonly thought to be long gone

from Oklahoma.

Some locals claim there are as many as 500 elk roaming the Cookson Hills around the Oklahoma-Arkansas border. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, to my surprise, allows limited hunting. For the entire northeastern quadrant of the state, the quota is 20 a year and the limit is one per license.

Cousin Ray suggested that if Oklahoma wants to be a hunting destination, it should introduce lions.

* * *

The top four candidates in Republican primary polling remained the same going into last week's debate. Cousin Ray was not happy.

"Donald Trump, Scott Walker, Jeb Bush, and Ben Carson," he said. "Two of the four are not serious."

* * *

Back in March, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) drew a crowd of 11,000 students at Liberty University when he announced his candidacy for the presidency. It helped attendance that failure to show up was punishable by a \$10 fine. Other offenses at Liberty include seeing an R-rated movie (\$50 fine) and participating in a séance, witchcraft or other demonic activity (\$500).

While I can't prove this, I would bet that several tribal sacred ceremonies come under the "demonic activity" rubric.

On September 14, it would appear there might be demonic activity at the university's convocation, when the speaker will be Socialist Bernie Sanders.

* * *

Foreign Policy reported that we, the U.S. taxpayers, have spent about \$500 million to train 60 rebels from the Free Syrian Army.

After Cousin Ray regained his breath, he rasped, "I hope they were trained like ISIS and not like the Iraqi Army."

* * *

Rush Limbaugh reported that the crazy liberal city of Austin, the blue belly button on red Texas, enacted limitations on smoke emission that will shut down the production of good old Texas BBQ. PolitiFact, after investigation, rated Limbaugh's report as "pants on fire."

Finishing his brisket sandwich, Cousin Ray commented, "Limbaugh must go through a lot of pants."

* * *

Speaking of pants, Lenny Kravitz had a wardrobe malfunction during a concert in Sweden when his tight leather pants split on stage, exposing his junk. Jim Morrison once got arrested for the same thing during a Doors concert, but it is said that Morrison did it on purpose.


"Look at the bright side," Cousin Ray said. "At least the pants weren't on fire."

* * *

Former police officer Darren Wilson, who shot Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, has broken his silence by cooperating with a Profile in *The New Yorker*.

Indians will recognize Wilson's attitude toward history—that it has nothing to do with him. If he's not a racist, then racism could not possibly inform any of his actions. He floats free of any social matrix, particularly if he's ignorant of it.

This is the mirror image of the Indian with the blood memory of genocide. Or the Jewish kid who remembers the number tattooed on his grandmother's wrist. Or the descendant of lynching victims.

We don't choose that any more than he did. But Darren Wilson can't and we can't wish away the history that binds us together. <http://bit.ly/1OWQSDW> 

UPCOMING POW WOWS

UTE MOUNTAIN CASINO POW WOW

8/21/15—8/23/15

Ute Mountain Casino

Towaoc, CO

800-258-8007, ext.6116

UteMountainCasino.com

ROSEBUD POW WOW CELEBRATION

8/21/15—8/23/15

Rosebud Casino Grounds

Rosebud, SD

KLAMATH TRIBES RESTORATION CELEBRATION

8/21/15—8/23/15

501 Chiloquin Boulevard

Chiloquin, OR

800-524-9787 ext. 147

KlamathTribes.org

METIS OF MAINE FALL GATHERING AND POW WOW

8/22/15—8/23/15

105 Gould Road

Dayton, ME

207-793-4801

HONORING OUR VETERANS POW WOW

8/22/15—8/23/15

700 Fair Avenue

Sidney, OH

419-233-1605

george_J_reiter@yahoo.com

35TH ANNUAL ROASTING EARS OF CORN FESTIVAL

8/22/15—8/23/15

Museum of Indian Culture

2825 Fish Hatchery Road

Allentown, PA

610-797-2121

info@museumofindianculture.org

MuseumofIndianCulture.org

29TH ANNUAL THREE FIRES HOMECOMING POW WOW AND TRADITIONAL GATHERING

8/22/15—8/23/15

Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation

2789 Mississauga Road, R.R.# 6

N0A 1H0 Hagersville

United States Minor Outlying Islands

905-768-5686

info@newcreditpowwow.com

NewCreditPowWow.com

ADAMSTOWN POW WOW

8/22/15—8/23/15

Adamstown Rod & Gun Club

Adamstown, PA

717-940-8048

SPIRIT OF THE CLOUDS POW WOW

8/22/15—8/23/15

Autumn Hills Campground

Weare, NH

603-654-2900



*“Meditates For a Good Life”
is one of many works by Carlis Chee.*

CARLIS CHEE

THE BIG PICTURE