



THIS WEEK FROM Indian Country TODAY

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

A Letter from the Publisher



Shekóli. For everyone who grew up in Indian country, the chances are that someone in their family entered the military—at least one someone, that is, and most likely more than one person.

Natives enroll in the military at a higher rate than any other cross-section of volunteers today and in most cases twice as much as any other demographic. (It is worth repeating that if the rest of population volunteered at the same rate of Natives, military historians say there would have been no need for the draft in World War II.)

This Veterans Day, This Week From Indian Country Today is proud to honor all soldiers who have served under two flags. The reasons for entering the military vary from individual to individual. But it is worth noting that Native nations have proven to be worthy allies of the United States, dating from the first alliance between Americans and Oneida at the Battle of Oriskany. It is also important to remember the contributions of our veterans when they return to lend their strength and warrior spirit to battle for Native rights and sovereignty.

Several weeks ago, members of the Cherokee Nation learned of the loss of one of their most valiant contemporary soldiers, Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler. His death carried the distinction of being the first known U.S. fatality in the conflict versus ISIS. News of American troops' actions and positions are generally not broadcast, and Wheeler was a Special Ops pro—a member of the secretive Delta Force.

In a recent article for ICTMN, Cherokee contributor Steve Russell wrote that it appears that Wheeler died in action involving an operation to free ISIS-held Kurdish prisoners (who were slated to be brutally executed) in northern Iraq. He will be missed by his wife and four children, and his extended family. His sister related a story that neatly sums up the man: On returning home from boot camp, he found his siblings hungry and short of food. Wheeler promptly went out to hunt and bagged a deer.

A hero abroad, and at home.

NA Ki wa,

Ray Halbritter

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Accounting For The Disappeared

*The tally of murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Canada inches ever upward, observes **Carly McIntosh**, who suspects that a combination of prejudice and indifference is part of the problem:*

In Canada, the estimated number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is 1,750. With nothing being done every year that passes, the number keeps getting higher.

How is it possible? Canada is said to be one of the safest countries in the world.

But is it? Ottawa does not give Canadian First Nations the equalization in terms of life and the respect that they deserve.

When I see a picture of an Aboriginal woman who has gone missing, at that exact moment I feel that one of my sisters has gone. I wish I had some way to bring her back to her family. By just looking at the photo of the taken woman, you can feel the sadness coming from her family's heart. A teardrop of sadness from each of the missing women and their loved ones lands on Mother Earth every second.

I have to admit this is hitting me very deeply. To be straight up, I feel

that racism is the biggest issue in fighting this dilemma. When a case file of a missing or murdered Aboriginal woman is placed in the hands of the Canadian government or law enforcement authorities, it seems that they could care less.

If a similar case file were handed to them about a missing or murdered Aboriginal woman of any other culture, they would jump on it. You can instantly see and feel the imbalance.

The First Nations were here first. Treat them with respect. <http://bit.ly/1lbHYtB> ☞

Don't Settle For 'Settler Politics'

Mike Myers, the founder and CEO of Network for Native Futures, rejects the idea of political collaboration with colonizers:

Why would an Indigenous person get involved in settler politics? I've heard all the rationales that Indigenous folks come up with for working in settler governments. The two key ones are, "I'm doing it to make a difference for our people" and "To show we can beat the Whiteman at his own game."

After more than 30 years of hearing this,

my questions are, "How's that working out for you?" "Can you show me the change you've made?" and "Are we winning yet?"

I grasp the rationale about "making a difference" or "We can't sit on the sidelines and complain." But I'm not hearing any discussion about an agenda that is focused on nation rebuilding or strengthening our sovereignty and inherent rights. The argument is always about trying to transform or change a system that isn't ours—not about an authentic expression of our principles, values and beliefs.

Admittedly, getting elected into an alien system is easier than trying to re-

imagine it. Fourteen years ago, I worked on a contract for three years to develop a culturally based constitution and structuring of a governmental administration that would unify seven communities from the same Nation. It was extremely rewarding, mainly because of the elders with whom we worked. But except for the implementation of some minor pieces of the overall concept, the plan hasn't really advanced.

Nation rebuilding is not simply a political act. It is a matter of literally "putting our world back together" emotionally, socially, culturally and economically. <http://bit.ly/1GLOBfS> ☞

Saying 'No' To A Headdress

*Educational consultant **Christie Poitra** recalls a discomfiting encounter with an inappropriate Indian costume during her Michigan State University graduate school days:*

It was early October, and several of my fellow American Indian Studies graduate students decided to go out to dinner at a trendy bar. Loud cheers from a group of fraternity brothers interrupted our conversation.

As they poured in, we noticed one frat brother wearing a plastic headdress, receiving high-fives from other patrons and making tomahawk-chop-

ping motions with his arm.

We took a few moments to collect ourselves and then discussed what we should do. Should we engage? Should we leave? We all agreed that to say nothing felt wrong. One of us volunteered to speak with the headdress-wearing frat bro to see if she could reason with him to remove the headdress.

Unsurprisingly, he became defensive, saying something to the effect that he was Cherokee and it was therefore okay for him to wear a headdress. Another graduate student approached him. One thing led to another and the fake headdress was snatched off his head.

Our attempt at a rich dialogue about

cultural appropriation had devolved into a childish game of "keep away." A bouncer approached us about the commotion; we proceeded to discuss the offensiveness of the fake headdress. The bouncer agreed that the headdress was inappropriate but we were asked to return its remaining bits and leave.

The point is not that my fellow graduate students or myself handled the presence of the fake headdress in the best possible manner. If anything, I think we handled it fairly terribly (although we tried our best). But we mustered the courage to speak up instead of suffering in silence—which is half the battle. <http://bit.ly/1Q9OYmu> ☞

Tribal Gaming Yielded \$28.3 Billion In 2013

BY MARK FOGARTY

Tribal gaming industries yielded \$28.3 billion in revenue nationwide in 2013, the latest year for which figures are available. That number represents a gain from the \$28.2 billion reported in 2012, said Casino City Press in the latest edition of its *North American Gaming Almanac*.

Among states that offer tribal gaming, California led the way with \$6.995 billion, said Casino City Press. That is the best result since 2008, when the total was \$7.3 billion. The record year for Native gaming in California—the state with the most Indian gaming dollars—was 2007, with \$7.8 billion.

Oklahoma ranked second in terms of Indian gaming dollar volume, managing a tiny gain of \$3.8 billion in 2013 from \$3.7 billion the year before. Florida, at \$2.4 billion, barely edged out Washington (\$2.3 billion) for third place. Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, Connecticut and Wisconsin also showed more than \$1 billion in revenue for 2013.

Among the many other statistics that the Casino City Press reported were North American gaming machine totals; Indian casinos represent four of the top five. The biggest—with 7,487 machines—is the WinStar World Casino and Resort in Thackerville, Oklahoma, owned by the Chickasaw tribe. The second, at 5,660, is the Mashantucket Pequot Nation's Foxwoods Resort Casino, in Mashantucket, Connecticut. Third, with 5,518, is the Mohegan Tribe's Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut. Number five is the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Tampa, Florida, which offers 5,000 machines. <http://bit.ly/1MAohHZ>

Low Coho Salmon Returns Shut Down Quinault Fisheries Three Months Early

Low returns of wild coho salmon have prompted the Quinault Indian Nation of Washington state to close all its fisheries in Grays Harbor and Queets River three months before the end of the scheduled fishing season. The tribe has also declared an economic disaster because of the resulting hardship on fishermen and their families.

The Quinault attributed the low returns to the so-called "Godzilla El Niño" that is under way in the Pacific, exacerbated by a "blob of warm water off the coast."

In the Columbia River tributaries, the early run coho are at about one-third the 26,000 that were predicted, said the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "With such a low return, we need to take this step now to help us reach spawning goals and other conservation objectives," said Steve Thiesfeld, the department's regional fish program manager.

"Closing the fisheries was a tough decision," said Quinault President Fawn Sharp. "The closure will have serious consequences and substantial financial losses for our community, but it's the right thing to do as stewards for future generations. We will be seeking economic relief for our fishermen and their families, as well as providing what support we can."

The decision came just days after the WDFW closed Grays Harbor and its tributaries to salmon fishing starting on October 26. On October 28, the WDFW further announced a limit of one hatchery-reared adult coho salmon daily on several lower Columbia River tributaries. This took effect on November 1 in nearly a dozen rivers, as well as in two lakes, Mayfield and Scanewa. <http://bit.ly/1ivQFwX>

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Federal Agents Destroy Hemp Grown On Tribal Land

BY KRISTI EATON

Federal agents destroyed a Wisconsin-based tribe's hemp crop on October 24, prompting questions about their motives and methods.

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin said that federal agents seized its crop of non-psychoactive industrial hemp, which was being grown to determine which strains might work best for future economic development opportunities.

The tribe believed the project was legal under the terms of the 2014

Farm Bill, which distinguishes between marijuana and industrial hemp. Under the bill, hemp must be grown for research purposes and in conjunction with a state agriculture department or an institution of higher learning.

"We had no intent of fooling anyone or tricking anyone," said tribal chairman Gary Besaw. "I'm perplexed."

The tribe's lawyer, Timothy Purdon, said the tribal legislature had earlier legalized hemp on the reservation and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the College of the Menominee Nation.

The tribe invited Bureau of Indian

Affairs agents to observe the harvest in early fall, Purdon said. Because this was a research project, several different strains of hemp were being grown. "The DEA agents expressed some concern," Purdon said. "They said, 'Hmm, we wonder if that might have too much THC in it.'" (THC is the principal psychoactive component of marijuana.)

The tribe then agreed to destroy the portion that was under question and offered to have officials observe. But according to Purdon, "They said no. Instead they came in—federal agents—and destroyed all the crops."

The tribe is now considering its legal options. <http://bit.ly/1XLvkPT>



U.S. Department of the Interior

Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations

LAND CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS UNDERWAY

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, created to implement part of the **Cobell Settlement**, is offering fair market value to landowners for voluntarily restoring fractional land interests to tribes, which helps ensure that Indian lands **stay in trust**.

- Many landowners have already been paid.
- The Program has successfully concluded transactions worth more than \$500 million, restoring the equivalent of more than 975,000 acres of land to tribal governments.
- All sales are voluntary, but landowners will only have 45 days to accept.

Landowners are encouraged to contact the U.S. Department of the Interior to learn about eligibility and to ensure that their contact information is up to date.

Please call the Trust Beneficiary Call Center Today:

1-888-678-6836

More information is available from your local Fiduciary Trust Officer, or on the web: www.doi.gov/buybackprogram

California Tribes Sue Over Alleged Highway Threat To Artifacts And Sites

Two California tribes are suing state and federal authorities over a highway project that is allegedly destroying cultural resources and Native American sites in Mendocino County.

The Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians and the Round Valley Indian Tribe filed suit against the California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) in U.S. District Court on October 29, citing a six-mile bypass that Caltrans is building around the city of Willits on Highway 101.

The “Willits Bypass” cuts through the heart of Little Lake Valley, lush wetlands and the ancestral home of many Pomo tribal members. The suit, which also names the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, claims that Caltrans is violating the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

“Caltrans must not be allowed to demolish cultural resources and sacred sites simply to build a highway bypass,” said the tribes’ attorney, Phil Gregory. “Caltrans’ ground-disturbing activities are devastating.”

Caltrans denies the charges. “We have been working closely with state and federal agencies,” Caltrans spokesman Phil Frisbie told ABC 7 News. “We have not destroyed any villages or cultural areas on this project.”

“There was a complete lack of tribal consultation, as well as no planning or preparedness to address tribal concerns, prior to starting construction of this project,” responded Round Valley Tribal Council President James Russ. “Our tribe does not take lightly the disrespect to our sacred sites and our tribal people.”

The suit seeks a halt to construction, a means of addressing the alleged damages, and compensation. The bypass is scheduled to open late next year. <http://bit.ly/1HsVdL6> ☞

Senate Legislation Would Fund Tribal Healing To Wellness Courts

A bill to establish and fund treatment courts in Indian country has been introduced by Sen. John Tester (D-Montana), vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, joined by his colleague on the committee, Sen. Al Franken (D-Minnesota).

The legislation, the “Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts” Act, introduced on October 22, would hold alcohol and drug offenders accountable while rehabilitating them through treatment, counseling and community support under extensive supervision.

“This bill will establish more treatment courts so we can decrease the number of repeat offenders and save taxpayers’ money,” said Tester. “Treatment courts have worked successfully across the nation and it is time to expand this success throughout Indian country.”

According to a 2009 Indian Health Service report, 20 percent of Native American adults required treatment for drug or alcohol abuse, and there has been a 206 percent increase in drug-related deaths since 1979. In that period, alcohol and drugs were involved in 35 percent of violent crimes in Indian country.

“Indian country has been deprived of the resources they need to adequately address the drug and alcohol abuse problem in their communities,” said Franken. “Our legislation would support tribes as they establish treatment courts and help move Native Americans struggling with addiction from the criminal justice system to the road to recovery.”

According to Tester and Franken, there are currently about 70 Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts operating throughout Indian country that lack a steady source of funding. The bill would allocate \$10 million annually for the Justice Department to administer grants to establish and maintain them.

<http://bit.ly/1NgpMFy> ☞

Native One-Stop Portal Makes Finding Benefits Easier BY TANYA H. LEE

The federal government has added a feature to its benefits.gov website that makes it easier for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) tribes, organizations and individuals to find federal benefits and services for which they may be eligible.

Clicking on the title of a federal program at the Native One Stop portal (www.nativeonestop.gov) now leads to a page that gives a brief description of the program, general program requirements, and next steps to follow—including a description of the application

process and program contact information. The program contact may be a phone number or website; in many cases, the customer can be directed to an online application.

The Native One Stop portal lists 32 programs available to AIAN tribes and individuals. These include Direct Home Loans for Native Americans; the Health Professions Pregraduate Scholarship Program for Indians; the Housing Improvement Program; and the Weatherization Assistance Program for Low-Income Persons.

Among these 32 programs, the portal also selects 14 from which AIAN youth may benefit. Among them are

Assistance for Indian Children With Severe Disabilities; the Indian Health Service (IHS) Preparatory Scholarship Program; the Indian Higher Education Grant Program; and Native American Congressional Internships.

Most of these opportunities are open to tribes and tribal agencies and organizations, but some, most notably the scholarship and grant programs, are open to individuals.

The site is not a one-stop portal for all benefits available to AIAN tribes, agencies or individuals. Rather, with a few exceptions, it lists only those programs that are restricted to AIAN recipients.

<http://bit.ly/1LTNo5a> ☞

The Healing Process

A Native pursuit of lost innocence follows sexual abuse BY MARY ANNETTE PEMBER



The ceremonial rediscovery of her Cheyenne River Sioux roots has helped Sunny Red Bear recover.

Bottom Line: Sunny Red Bear, damaged beyond description as a child, is standing tall and inspiring others.

At 28, Sunny Red Bear has overcome years of sexual and emotional abuse by her adoptive white father. She has persevered through his trial and guilty plea, as well as her own alcoholism and recovery.

In the meantime, this member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has borne a son.

It was only recently that Red Bear moved beyond mere survival. She realized that to truly heal, she needed to call back her innocence—the spirit that had been chased away by her abuser and all that followed.

“I can’t really see you when I look at you,” a medicine man told Red Bear.

“You are blurry as though standing in a cloud.” She and the medicine man agreed that she needed to go through the Lakota Calling Your Spirit Back ceremony, which she did in 2012.

“Everything fell together for me after the ceremony,” Red Bear said. “I was led to the work I am currently doing, helping others to heal the way that I did.”

Red Bear has recently begun publicly sharing her story in writing and poetry, as well as through presentations. She describes her work as the pursuit of lost innocence and the solace that its reclamation brings. Her goal is to offer hope, courage and direction to other survivors of sexual assault and abuse.

Red Bear’s personal history, although painful, is filled with unusual twists. Unexpectedly, the law worked in her favor in

the prosecution of her childhood sexual abuser.

She has requested that only his initial “G.” be used here to identify her adoptive father.

* * *

Soon after her son was born in 2008, Red Bear began recalling the long repressed abuse she had suffered at the hands of G. “It all came back to me in a flood of memories,” she said, “like a bad dream.”

After working up the courage to share her memories with her two adoptive sisters—G.’s biological daughters—she was amazed to find that they, too, had been experiencing painful recollections of their father’s abuse.

“My older sister started piecing her memories of abuse together around the same time,” Red Bear said. “It was so validating to hear them say that they too did not feel safe in our home growing up.”

Several women joined Red Bear and her sisters after they came forward to publicly accuse G. in 2008. However, the South Dakota statute of limitations for the prosecution of sexual abuse of children had elapsed.

But there was a loophole. The family of G., who was non-Indian, had lived on the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation when he began abusing Red Bear in 1995. Therefore, G was under federal jurisdiction because Indian reservations are subject to federal laws for all residents.

And there is no federal statute of limitations for sexual assault or abuse of a child.

Red Bear became the only hope for G.’s many victims to receive justice. “My sisters encouraged me to stand up,” Red Bear recalled. “They said, ‘There are all these women who won’t get any justice without you.’”

Since the South Dakota state statute of limitations of three years for prosecution of sex abuse had elapsed for the crimes, G. committed against the non-Native women, he was only liable in federal court for the abuse he committed against Red Bear.

G.’s other victims claimed he had sexually molested them as children too. G. was a well known and respected educator who also served as a girl’s basketball coach and deacon of the Baptist church, all providing him with access to children.

“It was hard at first,” Red Bear said. “He had me so brainwashed! I didn’t want my dad to go to jail.”

All at once, however, a light came on for her. “It broke for me, I realized that they were right; I had to tell my story,” she said.

In 2008, G. was charged in federal court with the abuse of Red Bear. She was overwhelmed by the support she

received from family, friends and members of the community.

“My adoptive mother, family, members of our church and advocates for the sexually assaulted showed up in court to support me,” she recalled. Eleven women claimed G. had also abused them; five shared their stories at G.’s hands during the court proceedings.

G. pled guilty to one count each of

‘I had to find that little fire that burns inside of me and make it burn brighter. That is the thing that kept me here and alive.’

aggravated sexual abuse of a child and sexual contact of a child under the age of 12. (The crimes were committed in 1994 and 1995, when Red Bear was less than seven years old). He was sentenced to 36 months in prison, fined \$36,000, and ordered to register as a sex offender.

G. has served his sentence and is living as a free man. Red Bear does not feel, however, that the judicial system provided true justice for her and the others.

“The judge kept asking me if I forgave my father,” she said. “I said yes but that doesn’t make his actions any less of a crime. G. was still able to make others feel sorry for him. He complained in court about losing everything because of the charges. The judge cut the fine in half.”

* * *

It was Lakota culture and spirituality that brought true vindication for Red Bear. “Ceremony helped me find a way of helping other women,” she said. “It gave me the peace I needed to start sharing my healing process.”

Before reconnecting to her Lakota ways, Red Bear saw softness as weakness. “I used to think I had to be stern in order to live life as a single mom and make good decisions,” she observed.

Now, she said, ceremony and healing have modified that attitude: “I’ve realized I can be resilient and soft at the same time. Ceremony has taught me a different way to be.”


In addition to raising her son, attending college, working as a fashion model for Native designers, and writing magazine articles and poetry, Red Bear does advocacy work for others who have been abused and assaulted. She recently spoke to attendees at the Clothed in Strength, Honor and Beauty Conference on Human Trafficking Fashion Show in Sioux Falls.

In describing her healing, she told her audience, “I had to find that little fire that burns inside of me and make it burn brighter; that is the thing that kept me here and alive.”

In addition to traditional Lakota healing, Red Bear has also sought help and guidance through mainstream counseling. “We can’t count on others to feel things for us,” she said. “In order to heal we have to take our pain in our own hands and do it for ourselves.”

Today, young girls who have also been abused often seek Red Bear’s guidance. “I tell them to take time to heal themselves before embarking on any activism. I tell them they don’t owe anybody anything on that score,” she said.

She describes her own experience leading up to her current activism as a “bittersweet kind of thing. I’m happy to have found a way to help other women.”

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

Are Oil Rigs Fouling A Navajo School?

A collision between energy and education BY LAURA PASKUS



From oil wells to classrooms is a matter of less than half a mile along Highway 550.

Bottom Line: *In New Mexico, oil development is enriching state coffers. It could also be posing a threat to young students.*

Tanker trucks tear past a yellow school zone sign. Five oil wells are clustered around a pad on one side of the road.

On the other side of the road, less than half a mile away, 83 students—most of them Navajo—sit in their classrooms, trying to learn amid the din and the odor.

Early morning fog lifts from the valley to reveal the scene at Highway 550 and Lybrook Elementary School on the eastern Navajo Nation in New Mexico. The five oil wells sit on both federal and state land less than a half-mile from the

school, where students attend kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Gas drilling started to take off in the San Juan Basin in the 1950s. Thanks to evolving technologies, by 2008 the basin was producing more natural gas than anywhere else in the United States. Today, companies are also trying to figure out how to reach oil trapped within tight shale formations underground.

The drilling industry pumps money into New Mexico's statewide budget and many of the communities where people rely on the jobs or cash from leasing their lands.

Here on the eastern Navajo Nation, shale oil wells have popped up alongside

homes and roadsides, surrounding communities like Lybrook, Counselor and Ojo Encino. All told, the federal government has approved about 240 new shale oil wells for the San Juan Basin.

In March, a coalition of Diné and environmental groups filed suit against the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in an attempt to force the federal agency to complete more environmental studies and incorporate more planning into its approval process. But in August, Judge James O. Browning of the U.S. District Court for New Mexico declined to grant a temporary halt to the drilling.

Many residents are becoming increasingly worried by this industrial develop-

ment—especially now that new plans are in the works. Just over the hill from Lybrook Elementary, a patch of federal land has been cleared down to dirt so that wastewater from oil and gas drilling can be treated and recycled.

“They’re drilling less than a mile from the school,” said Etta Arviso, who lives nearby in Counselor Chapter, “and they’re also building a fracking wastewater plant right over the hill, less than a mile that way.”

The new wastewater facility will reduce the amount of fresh water being used in the area. It will also use above-ground storage tanks and containment ponds with synthetic liners, said Beth Wojahn, a spokesperson with New Mexico’s Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, which approved the application.

The company, Basin Water Recycling, did not respond to requests from ICTMN for information. However, WPX Energy, which operates the five area oil wells, said that it recognizes that this is a sensitive location and that it works hard to control emissions and truck traffic.

“We work very closely with the school,” said WPX spokesperson Susan Avillar.

Revenue from the wells boosts New Mexico’s educational coffers. The state’s cut from the five wells’ production generated \$822,491 for the state’s common school fund between June 2013 and June 2015, according to Patrick Padilla, assistant commissioner for oil, gas, minerals and royalties at the New Mexico State Land Office.

Nonetheless, local residents like Etta Arviso fear the effects of the facilities on local water resources, wildlife and, especially, themselves and their children. In Lybrook Elementary’s parking lot, she translates for Rose Yazzie, a Diné elder from Counselor Chapter. Yazzie speaks in Navajo, occasionally dropping in a few words of English.

“You can smell it when you drive in on the highway,” says Yazzie. Two of her grandchildren, ages 7 and 11, attend school here, and she worries about how the wells could affect their health. Any effects might not appear today, she says.

But they may in the future.

Even when they are not flaring, the wells release methane, benzene, butane,

ethanol and propylene. There are no air quality monitors nearby. According to the New Mexico Environment Department, the closest such monitor is in Bloomfield, 50 miles up the highway.

Until 2006, Lybrook Elementary School was across the highway from the Williams Four Corners Lybrook Gas Processing Plant. That facility processes raw natural gas into pure methane, ethane, butane, propane and other natural gas liquids that can then be transported via pipeline and truck. The school’s current location—built in 2006 and just down the road—was con-

*‘I don’t see why
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sidered safer for the children.

Now, some denizens are wondering why these wells were allowed to be drilled in the first place.

“This isn’t right,” Arviso said. “I don’t see why the state doesn’t have a law or anything in place, because it’s hazardous to the children’s health. There are a lot of things that come off these wells which they should have highlighted, but of course they won’t do that.”

Local environmental groups also oppose the area’s lack of regulation and increasing industrialization.

“For them to pick this location, right across from Lybrook Elementary, is misguided,” said Mike Eisenfeld, the New Mexico Energy Coordinator for the San Juan Citizens Alliance. “They should be siting the well pads in the least sensitive areas and then horizontal drilling.”

New Mexico does, in fact, have siting requirements. Temporary drilling pits

may not be placed within 300 feet of an occupied permanent residence, school, hospital, institution or church. Produced water recycling facilities cannot be within 1,000 feet.

According to WPX Energy spokesperson Susan Avillar, the company has rights to lease about 100,000 acres of federal, state and Navajo allottee lands in the San Juan Basin. She also said that WPX, which has drilled 112 horizontal oil wells in the past three years along the Highway 550 corridor, has taken adequate safety measures.


She added that vapor recovery units atop the wells capture hydrocarbons and burn them off so that nothing is emitted into the atmosphere.

“The other thing we’ve done is [that] we pipe everything,” Avillar said. “We pipe the gas, we pipe the oil, and we pipe the water. That eliminates a lot of the larger trucks and the truck traffic.” WPX has also reached out to emergency responders in the area, said Avillar, so that if there is an accident, people will be prepared.

Irrespective of the oil activity, Lybrook Elementary faces plenty of challenges. On its 2014 New Mexico Public Education Department scorecard, the school earned an “F” on the basis of low performance in a number of areas. For example, out of a possible 40 points for current standing, e.g. how well students met targets for their grade level, the school received only 2.21 points.

On the other hand, the school has rated an “Opportunity To Learn” designation on New Mexico’s Public Education Department scorecard. The school earned an “A” on the scorecard—meaning that it fosters an environment that facilitates learning, that teachers are using recognized teaching methods, and that students want to attend school.

Ivan Tsosie, the new principal of Lybrook Elementary School, said that he is unaware of any concerns with the wells. And the district’s superintendent, Dr. Manuel Medrano, said he has not heard complaints either. Still, he has misgivings.

“That activity is probably incompatible with being close to where people live and work and go to school,” said Mike Eisenfeld. “It just seems so sad that that risk is accepted. Why do we accept that risk for our children?” <http://bit.ly/1Sk5saX> 

First Peoples Fund

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT – Program Director

First Peoples Fund, a national Native nonprofit organization who supports the advancement of native arts and culture is seeking to fill the following position, Program Director.

Program Director - The Program Director is responsible for the overall strategy and operations for all First Peoples Fund program areas. This involves a variety of significant responsibilities including the development of programs supportive of strategic goals and the organization's theory of change, excellent program administration with a focus on strong outcomes, oversight of regular program evaluation, and strategic relationship development and outreach to communities. This position manages the communication of program results to internal and external audiences, which facilitates program planning and our ongoing fundraising effort. The Program Director is responsible for the continuous development and consistent use of systems that support efficient and effective operations, while respecting and retaining the cultural values that are the heart of First Peoples Fund.

The ideal candidate should have a Master's degree or equivalent demonstrated experience in programmatic operations leadership. Minimum five years staff supervision experience in the nonprofit sector and minimum three years of experience with Native non-profit organization and/or other community / economic development organization.

EOE Employer

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume and supporting documentation via email to: info@firstpeoplesfund.org or it can be mailed to: First Peoples Fund, PO Box 2977, Rapid City, SD 57709. EOE Employer.



Clearwater Casino & Lodge (Lewiston, ID) is currently accepting applications for:

Marketing Director

The purpose of this class is to accomplish the marketing departmental objectives by planning, organizing, and directing all functions required to promote the Nez Perce Tribal Enterprises marketability and promotional value and increase sales of products and services offered by the Nez Perce Tribal Enterprise's. Ensure the Marketing Department operates in accordance with contractual requirements and applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Requires Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Business, or closely related field. Must be able to obtain a Nez Perce Tribal Gaming License (subject to complete background check). Requires a valid driver's license with the ability to be insured under the Tribe's policy (must provide copy of driver's license and a motor vehicle report of ENTIRE driving record (MVR)). CPA credential preferred.

Requires five (5) years of direct marketing experience, three (3) years supervisory experience; three (3) years of strong database skills to include extensive knowledge in data-mining, data extraction, and data analysis; and a minimum of two (2) years as top level Marketing Executive dealing with other management officials and/or Tribal Councils, Gaming Commissions, committees, and State/Federal agencies.

Tribal Preference will apply. For qualification requirements you may e-mail us at hr@crcasino.com. Applications are available on-line at www.crcasino.com.



UTE INDIAN TRIBALLY DESIGNATED HOUSING ENTITY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR REVISION OF OPERATING POLICIES and T/TA SERVICES AS NEEDED

The Ute Indian Tribally Designated Housing Entity (UITDHE) located at Fort Duchesne, Utah is requesting proposals from qualified firms or individuals to review existing operational policies and revise if necessary, develop new policies as requested, and provide training and technical assistance on an as needed basis. The firms or individuals must be knowledgeable of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination (NAHASDA) Act of 1996.

For a complete description of this RFP interested parties may call the UITDHE at 435-722-4656. Proposals will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on November 30, 2015. Proposals received after this time will be considered non-responsive.

Advertise in the next edition of

This Week From Indian Country Today eNewsletter!



Call (315) 447-6145



Tom Goldtooth, of Diné and Dakota ancestry, received the Gandhi Peace Award from the national organization Promoting Enduring Peace.



Debora Juarez (Blackfeet) was elected by an overwhelming margin to the Seattle City Council.



Pawnee screenwriter/director Randi LeClair's film Bridge explores the dark side of small-town America.



Oscar-nominated actor Ethan Hawke (second from left) recently helped First Nations protest oil drilling in the St. Lawrence Gulf.

FLICKR/DEBORAH JUAREZ; ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA AP IMAGES

Headlines from the Web

SENECA NATION APPROVES MEDICAL MARIJUANA MEASURE

<http://on.wgrz.com/1RQrYXS>

AARP OKLAHOMA HONORS INDIAN ELDERS

<http://bit.ly/1Hr2wmv>

MASHANTUCKET TRIBE RE-ELECTS BUTLER TO COUNCIL

<http://bit.ly/1k4WiE1>

NEW TV SERIES FOCUSES ON TRIBAL POLICE

<http://bit.ly/1NsXf4l>

TRIBAL CLINIC DEPLOYS A GYM TO FIGHT OFF DIABETES

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

TWO HOPI TRADITIONS: RUNNING AND WINNING

<http://nyti.ms/1RTvOj1>

UPCOMING EVENTS

INAUGURAL TRIBAL ACCOUNTING CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 16-17

Panels and discussions will educate and inform tribal accounting management and staff personnel about the latest changes and developments in their field. These will include grant management, the Employment Tax & Procurement Card ("P-Card") Program, Tribal Gaming Title 31, the Affordable Care Act, audit preparation, new Class II Management Information Control and Anti-Money Laundering Programs, and the new "Super Circular" released by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Location: Linq Hotel & Casino, Caesars Entertainment, Las Vegas, Nevada

RESERVATION ECONOMIC SUMMIT NEW MEXICO

NOVEMBER 16-19

"RES," conducted by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Develop-

ment, is a multifaceted forum that will address Native success in business techniques and approaches. Training sessions and workshops will address tribal enterprise, human resources, workforce and agribusiness development, corporate and federal contracting, and Native youth entrepreneurship. There will be access to tribal leaders, members of Congress, federal agency representatives, state and local elected officials, and top executives.

Location: Buffalo Thunderbird Resort and Casino, Santa Fe, New Mexico

NATIONAL TRIBAL GIS CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 16-20

The principle goal of the Tribal GIS (Geographic Information System) conference is the exchange of information through interdisciplinary dialogues among participants who represent industry, academia and federal agencies. This year's emphasis will be on geospatial awareness within Indian country. Organized by the National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

Location: Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

NOVEMBER 17-19

"Establishing a Support Framework for First Nations Education" will focus on future steps associated with narrowing the options that have been developed on systems and funding for First Nations education in Ontario. The symposium will bring together First Nations education directors, managers and counselors. Best practices, language concerns, governance and sovereignty will be emphasized.

Location: Victoria Inn, Thunder Bay, Ontario

TRIBAL ENROLLMENT CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 17-19

Participants at this 21st annual gathering will explore the complexities of tribal enrollment and learn how to better manage, plan, lead and succeed that enrollment, with a view toward achieving tribal sovereignty. Constitutions, ordinances, fraudulent documents, audits and DNA identification will be among the topics.

Location: Royal Sonesta, New Orleans, Louisiana

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re Terese Marie Mailhot's column about her "drunk savant" father (October 23):

This piece testifies to the relationship that all Native women have with their fathers. I can relate to what the author conveyed; my father died a few months ago.

—Amie Hammond
Towaoc, Colorado

Teresa Marie Mailhot's piece was very powerful and well written.

I tell my grown son that sometimes we have people in our lives to remind us of the parts and pieces we don't want to be—because, unfortunately, good and bad behavior in the same person are not mutually exclusive

In her writing, the writer respectfully carries the best pieces of her father forward. Thank you, Ms. Mailhot, for sharing something so personal.

—Anna Krause
North Freedom, Wisconsin



TOP NEWS ALERTS

From IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com

CHARGES IN NATIVE ARTS SCHEME

Federal authorities have charged three New Mexico residents with violating the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, which prohibits the fraudulent marketing and selling of inauthentic Native American jewelry and similar items. Following a three-year investigation, the Justice Department charged Nael Ali, Mohammad Abed Manasra and Christina Bowen with importing, selling and purveying Filipino-made jewelry as authentic Native American-made work. If convicted, the accused face up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

GAMING FOR TEXAS TRIBES IS APPROVED

The National Indian Gaming Commission, in conjunction

with the Interior Department, has approved Class II gaming ordinances for the Alabama-Coushatta and Tigua tribes, both of Texas. Both tribes had previously operated casinos on their reservations. But following state litigation, both facilities were forced to shut down. Since 2002, the only tribal casino facility in Texas has been the Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino Hotel, located near the town of Eagle Pass close to the Mexican border.

WILSON-RAYBOULD JOINS CANADA'S CABINET

Jody Wilson-Raybould of the We Wai Kai Nation has taken office as Canada's first-ever indigenous Justice Minister and Attorney General. Wilson-Raybould, who was formerly the British Columbia regional

chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), was one of 10 indigenous candidates to win in the October 19 election, which toppled a nine-year Conservative Party hold on the government. A member of the Liberal Party, she was elected as a Member of Parliament in a newly created district.

FOND DU LAC CHIPPEWA CHAIR JOINS WHITE HOUSE

Karen Diver, chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Minnesota, will step down to serve as special assistant to President Barack Obama on Native American affairs. Diver, a noted advocate for self-sufficiency, began working for the tribe in 2003 and was elected in 2007 as its first female leader. Diver's last day as chairwoman

will be November 13; vice chairman Wally Dupuis will likely serve as interim chair.

JOHNS HOPKINS INDIAN HEALTH INITIATIVE

The Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health has announced a "500 Scholars Initiative" that will raise \$3 million over three years to promote education and training for 500 American Indian and Alaska Natives. Initiatives can include programs to help youth finish their high school, college, and graduate education, and offer work-training opportunities at John Hopkins. "The most effective way to eliminate health disparities is through education that allows tribes to take ownership and control," said Dr. Mathuram Santosham, founding director of the center.

How Did I Miss That?

Silver bullets, a surge in Norwegian ghostbusting and what's in your hot dogs

BY STEVE RUSSELL

Last year about this time, Live Science carried a roundup of vampire news. The new item to me was that when pursued by a vampire, you may escape or at least get a head start by throwing a handful of salt behind you. That's because the vampire is required to count the salt crystals before continuing the pursuit. It did not say why the vampire is so required.

Just in case readers have a problem with bloodsuckers, Vol. 65, No. 5 of *Archaeology* magazine contains instructions about "Vampire-Proofing Your Village."

"I presume it was coincidence," my cousin Ray Sixkiller concluded, "that the sponsored content on the Live Science website below the vampire news was headed 'Top 10 Banks in the USA 2015?'"

As anybody who follows Glenn Beck knows, the political right is always forecasting that the economy is going to blow up and so we keep getting ads touting gold and silver as the only safe assets to hold.

The latest ad is from an outfit called International Coins and Currency, and they are selling silver bullets for \$29 each. Each bullet is molded to look like .45 caliber ammunition that they associate with the Colt semi-automatic pistol, which was the military sidearm before 9 mm took over the world.

My Republican Cousin Ray was more interested in protection from vampires and werewolves, so I didn't have the heart to tell him there is no primer or gunpowder in these items. They are just solid silver. But they look so realistic that if any burglar gets into your treasure chest, he may be scared off by thinking he's about to steal from The Lone Ranger.

Clear Food is an outfit that is trying

to bring DNA analysis to bear on our food supply. Their first report is about hot dogs—which, in terms of food impurities, are probably low-hanging fruit. Clear Food tested 345 samples of 75 brands bought at 10 retailers. The takeaway that is easiest to stomach is that purity was unrelated to price. It was all downhill from there.

Clear Food found human DNA in two percent of the hot dog samples, but two-thirds of the hot dogs containing

found pork substitution in 3 percent of the samples, usually substituted for chicken or turkey. That may not sound like much, but it's too much if you think eating pork will put you on God's bad side.

On the other hand, kosher hot dogs came up looking good.

"So," Cousin Ray asked with a sly smile, "observant Muslims should buy only Hebrew Nationals?"

*'The Cherokees
killed Spearfinger
before the Trail
of Tears and all
that's left of her is
a rock formation
in the homelands.'*

human DNA were vegetarian. In all, 10 percent of the vegetarian samples contained meat, but it was not all human meat.

Vegetarian samples also accounted for 67 percent of what they politely called "hygienic issues." In addition, some labels on vegetarian sausages exaggerated the protein content by as much as two and one-half times.

Cousin Ray said he always wondered about the nutritional value of long pig. But before he starts in with long pig recipes, I need to warn Jews and Muslims about ordinary pig. Clear Food


The New York Times reported that ghostbusters are in high demand in the secular nation of Norway, and that this month there will be an "Alternative Expo" in Oslo where professionals can hawk their wares, "a jamboree of the occult featuring Tibetan eye-readers, New Age crystal collectors and hundreds of other practitioners of alternative faiths."

This kind of thing is fertile soil for fake Indians, so Cousin Ray figured being a real Indian would give him a leg up in the market. While waiting for a return call from his nephew at the travel office over in Tulsa about the cheapest airfare to Oslo, Ray was asking for advice.

"You know and I know," he said, "that the Cherokees killed Spearfinger before the Trail of Tears and all that's left of her is a rock formation in the homelands.

"But she's such a scary supernatural being," he continued, "and nobody in Norway will know she's dead. It should be real easy to ghost-bust a spirit who was busted before I was born, right?"

I started to try talking Cousin Ray out of stealing from gullible people, but he is a Republican, and I figured the cost of a plane ticket to Oslo would put a stop to this fandango.

<http://bit.ly/1Mq1SH3> 

UPCOMING POW WOWS

**Cheorenhaka (Nottoway) Corn
Harvest Pow Wow and School Day**

11/13/15—11/15/15
Tribal Land, Cattashowrock Town
27345 Aquia Path
Courtland, VA
757-562-7760
wdbrowniii@aol.com
Cheroenhaka-Nottoway.org

**26th Annual Texas Championship
Native American Pow Wow**

11/14/15—11/15/15
Traders Village Houston
7979 North Eldridge Road
Houston, TX
281-890-5500
TradersVillage.com/houston/events/26th-annual-native-american-championship-pow-wow

**Oklahoma State University
Native American Student
Association Pow Wow**

11/14/15
Payne County Expo Center
4518 Expo Circle East
Stillwater, OK
405-744-0401
ahunnic@okstate.edu

**National Native American
Heritage Day Pow Wow**

11/15/15
Bridgewater State University
34 Park Avenue
Bridgewater, MA
617-642-1683
mcnaa@aol.com
MCNAA.org

**48th Annual Louisiana Indian
Heritage Association's Pow Wow**

11/21/15—11/22/15
Lamar-Dixon Expo Center
9039 Saint Landry Road
Gonzales, LA
504-837-6085
djpm2@cox.net
liha.Webs.com

**41st Annual Baltimore American
Indian Center Pow Wow**

11/21/15—11/22/15
Baltimore, MD



The National Museum of the American Indian recently screened an episode of MTV World's Rebel Music series.