

Archaeologists await next big dig

COULEE CITY, Wash. (AP) — As Eastern Washington University archaeologists begin to sift through the more than 100,000 artifacts they collected this summer at the Salishan Mesa, others are looking forward to their next big dig.

"Once you get it in your blood, you can't get it out," said Jim Lynch, a retired Wenatchee resident who spent a month this summer as a volunteer at the excavation.

The dig began in July as a centennial event and attracted nearly 2,000 people to the site, about seven miles north of here along Banks Lake.

Lynch, a self-styled student of archaeology and veteran of many digs, was one of nearly 150 volunteers who worked alongside eight archaeologists at the site. The excavation ended Sept. 15.

The project was a different sort of dig because of the large number of visitors and volunteers and because the site was so diverse, said Jerry Galm, an Eastern Washington University archaeologist and excavation director.

The archaeologists and volunteers uncovered at least one pit house and rare prehistoric upland tepees, which usually are found in river bottoms, said Galm's colleague, Becky Stevens.

The large number of artifacts — mostly chip stone for making and maintaining tools, pieces of bone used as cooking utensils, and quartzite fragments used for filleting fish — are not usually found in upland temporary homesites, Ms. Stevens said.

vens said.

A test dig in 1987 tentatively put the age of the pit house at 2,300 years old, and "all the artifacts, so far, agree with that," Ms. Stevens said.

Galm said some of the artifacts found on the mesa were of a style that has been dated at 4,000 years ago.

However, more recent styles also have been uncovered, indicating that the mesa site was used time and time again over thousands of years.

Galm said the mesa intrigues him because data he and his colleagues collected there do not agree with their previous assumptions. Many different types of tools were found there, and "if you look at that mesa, you've got to wonder why," he said. "Everything they worked on had to be dragged up there."

As the archaeologists peer into the past, others involved in the project are planning for the future. Nat Washington of Ephrata, who discovered the site in 1967, would like to see it preserved, with a visitors center.

The Bureau of Reclamation's plans for the site call for revegetating it with the help of the state Department of Wildlife and Eastern Washington University, said Cline Sweet, a Bureau manager. But it is possible the site could later be developed into a visitor center, he said.

Galm said the long-term goal is to protect the site. That means returning it to its natural state.

Jury finds helmet corporation at fault

PORTLAND (AP) — A former high school football player has been awarded \$11.2 million from a jury that concluded a defective football helmet caused him to suffer a severe brain injury four years ago.

A helmet made by the Bike Athletic Co. was unreasonably dangerous, leading to acute bleeding within the brain of Richard Austria, then 16, a Multnomah County Circuit Court jury decided Monday in an 11-1 vote.

The damage award is the largest in Multnomah County court history and apparently marks the first time that an injury case involving a Bike helmet has been presented to a jury. Bike has been in the helmet business since 1976.

Mark R. Bocci, an attorney for Richard Austria and his parents, John and Perla Austria, said several other cases around the nation against Bike had been settled out of court without disclosure of payments.

"We knew we were right," he said after jurors returned the verdict. "We weren't sure it would come out that way, but we thought we were right."

Perla Austria began sobbing openly as soon as Judge Richard L. Unis read from the verdict form that jurors had concluded that the helmet was an unreasonably dangerous product, causing the injury to her son.

Jurors also concluded that the youth, a reserve defensive back at Gresham Union High School, was 2 percent at fault, thus reducing the total award of damages from \$11.40 million to \$11.19 million. Bocci said Richard Austria would need \$5.2 million to provide for daily care the rest of his life.

Austria, now 20, has severe, irreversible mental and physical impairments after

suffering an acute subdural hematoma Oct. 1, 1985. He has been living with his parents but requires 24-hour care.

William Mitchell, a Portland lawyer representing Bike, declined to comment on the outcome other than to say, "It was an emotional case." He said there was a strong chance of an appeal.

Bocci and James M. Pippin, representing the Austrias, contended that the Bike Air Power model helmet worn by Austria had not been adequately tested before the company marketed it.

Jurors hurried from the courtroom after the verdict. The presiding juror, Stephen Treick, said jurors found "a couple things" wrong with the helmet, but he declined to describe them.

A companion defendant, Dr. Renato Pizarro, a family friend who first examined the youth after he complained of headaches, was cleared of an allegation of medical negligence. Jurors unanimously concluded that the examination given by Pizarro did not fall below the standard of medical care in the community.

Bike and the Kendall Research Center, which tested helmets for Bike, are liable for damages found by the jury. Both are subsidiaries of Colgate-Palmolive Corp.

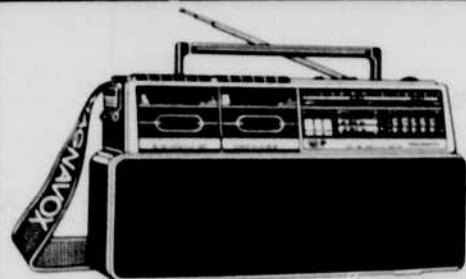
Charles Peery, a Seattle lawyer for Bike, told jurors last week that helmets similar to the one worn by Austria are used by 80 percent of the players in the Northwest and Alaska, from junior high school teams to professionals.

The Air Power model contains a bladder and a patented valve at the crown of the helmet that is inflated with air. Other padding includes foam strips, called sizers, that come in various sizes.

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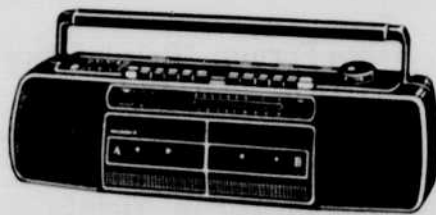


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