

McGee: a student living for history

JANOS J. PLESKO
Staff Writer

Ryan McGee, a 19-year-old Clackamas student, is a member of the 4th Virginia Infantry Regiment, "The Grayson Daredevils", which is the sub-group of the North West Civil War Council.

This club's main purpose is the reenactment of historical events, and the actual battle scenes of the Civil War. This hobby isn't cheap it costs close to \$1,000 for the complete Confederation impression.

Imagine 28,000 soldiers (members) gathered last July at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to re-enact the 1863 battle between the Union Army and the Confederate Army. All the soldiers had rifles, they wore authentic blue and red lavish army uniforms, and horses were used to pull the cannons. The guns were fired, using blanks, and the whole area was filled with smoke.

"It was the most magnificent and breathtaking experience I ever had," McGee recalled. "Ever since I was six years old, I played with guns, but this gave me a real, blood-curling feeling of what a military battle could be [like]."

The Civil War was a very tragic event, 530,000 men died in the course of the conflict. "In one day, at Antietam, 23,000 men fell in six hours. Those men died for that they believed in," McGee said.

"I study the history of the Civil War in connection with my club's activities, but I was always interested in history," McGee said. "One day I would like to become a history teacher. The last six years I have been a member of this club, I have learned a lot about our traditions and our history."

The 11 Southern States, the Confederates, broke away from the Union, because they wanted to protect the individual states' rights to govern themselves, and reduce the power of the Central Government.



TIMOTHY A. BELL / Clackamas Print

Ryan McGee displays some of his civil war uniforms and weapons for Instructor Loren Ford.

"I don't think that slavery was the big issue: it would have gone away, just like in France. About 1830 they had done away with slavery," McGee reflected. "I am glad that the Union won, because if it hadn't we would have three or four smaller countries, instead of the united, strong America we have now."

The Civil War Council welcomes the public to see the drills and battle scenes. The next event will be held April 24 at McIver Park, involving about four or five hundred soldiers with cannons and horses.

"Working with this club, I have developed a great sense of appreciation for my heritage, and for the

history of this country" McGee concluded. "You can read a lot of books about it, but if you carry that heavy rifle around, than you get a lot closer to feeling what is going on."

Anyone who seeks more information, or wishes to join, should call Chairman Donny Cameron at 654-4184.

Worm in the Hand



TIMOTHY A. BELL / Clackamas Print

Julie Higgins, instructor, explains the process of decomposition with a compost pile for the Jan. 27 Worm in the Hand workshop. Over 16 people attended, including children and parents.



TIMOTHY A. BELL / Clackamas Print

Bobby and Michael Binder construct a homemade worm compost pile out of hay and old newspaper. Actual worms weren't given out at the workshop, but the children learned much about their habitats and biological uses.

Western Red Cedar: a tree of many uses

SLADE SAPORA
Contributing Writer

Native Americans showed a deep respect for, and intricate understanding of, the land on which they lived. They knew all the plants and animals, and they understood the changing seasons, the patterns of the earth.

Plants, as we might suspect, played a major role in the daily life of Native Americans. They used them for everything, including food, clothing, tools, housing, weapons, art, baby cradles and transportation. Yet, it may surprise some of us to know that, for many Native Americans living west of the Cascade Mountains, there was one plant that supplied almost all of these daily needs.

Western Red Cedar, *Thuja plicata*, was often referred to as the "tree of life" by many early Native American peoples in the Pacific Northwest. Many of its uses come from its fibrous and stringy bark that peels off in long, narrow strips. The rough outer bark was separated from the smoother inner bark, and was used for weaving into sleeping mats, skirts, rain cloaks, and for canoe mats.

The inner bark of the Western Red Cedar is a much stronger fiber, and was used almost exclusively as a rope or basket-making fiber. This rope ranged in size and strength from that of sewing twine, to that of whaling rope, literally used to harpoon and pull in whales. Baskets fashioned from Redcedar's inner bark were exceptionally sturdy. Some were so well crafted that they could hold up to 30 gallons of water without leaking a drop.

The wood of the Red Cedar had a variety of uses. Planks were carefully split from standing trees (without actually killing the tree)



Graphic from *Western Forest Trees* by James Berthold Berry.

and used in the construction of houses. Canoes were carved out of Red Cedars. Boxes, totem poles, eating utensils, bow and spear shafts, ceremonial masks, and many other daily implements were also crafted from the wood of this remarkable tree.

Western Red Cedar typically grows in shady and moist areas within the Pacific Northwest. Here on campus, we have a few Red Cedars growing in the small forested area located between the Barlow parking lot and the Pauling Science Center. Cedars are easily identified, because instead of having the characteristic pointy needles of other conifers, cedars have tiny "leaves" that are overlapping and scaly in appearance. These form sprays that hang from the branches and look like tiny, compressed green braids.

Living up to 1000 years, old growth Red Cedars can attain heights of 200 feet or more. According to Stephen Arno's book,

Northwest Trees, a Red Cedar found growing on the Olympic Peninsula was measured at 178 feet tall and nearly 19 feet thick!

Sadly, though, these trees are disappearing, and they are not being allowed back under present forest management practices. Western Red Cedars will only sprout and grow in the shade of an already established forest; they do not and cannot grow in areas that have been clear-cut. Also, their wood is highly prized and profitable. It is for the latter reason that most of the old growth Western Red Cedars have been logged, and for the former that new Red Cedars are not being replanted.

Still, there are many young Red Cedars popping up here and there where areas are left undisturbed, and we are lucky enough to have a few good-sized representatives located right here on campus. Go back behind the Pauling Center sometime and take a look at these majestic beings.