

Editorial E COOSH EEWA:

(The way it is)



Letters To The Editor: Tygh Valley Mishap

To the Editor:

With your encouragement, I'm writing regarding selection of this year's 3-member queen & court for the Tygh Valley All-Indian Rodeo. My daughter, Vesta age 14, was disqualified from participating in the contest because of the age requirement of 16. Because she was disqualified, earlier last week she asked that her picture which Spilyay took for the paper not be included. This week Spilyay said it would be printed, so both Vesta and I felt an explanation was due all the people who supported her during and after the try-outs.

As an Executive Board member of the Western States Indian Rodeo Association, I had other occasions to meet with the Tywama Saddle Club at Tygh Valley within the last two months. They informed me there was no age requirement to be a candidate. Based on this, I gave Vesta permission to enter the contest during Root Feast, which she did. She had a choice of going to Albuquerque with me or staying home. She chose to stay to enter the contest, along with keeping her school work current. I made arrangements for her to stay with family during my absence.

On Sunday she had her horse hauled 20 miles to the rodeo grounds, and readied her Indian regalia. With the help of family members, she was ready to compete. She then went through the judging criteria of horsemanship, completeness of regalia, personality. After she had gone through these before the audience, the court selection was announced. There were 3 contestants - herself and 2 others. To her embarrassment, she was not selected, as only two were chosen publicly. As I understand it, one who was later added to the

court was not required to be judged or to make known her qualification. She was added on the basis of a written application.

Vesta was told afterward during unsaddling "we're sorry we didn't choose you, but you are too young" by a Tywama judge and was asked if she would come back next year and try out again. She asked the judge "how can I, when I'll be only 15 next year." At this age children are very impressionable. No doubt she will think twice before considering entering any future contests. We would like to save future candidates the ordeal of public humiliation.

I know the past Tygh Valley royalty who did not meet age requirements, myself being one of these. I know of one other who was 14. Since Tygh Valley is an annual event, I feel that if candidates are to be chosen from only our reservation, a local committee of three or more needs to be established. The candidates should not be contacted individually or hand-picked by merely one person. The contest needs to be advertised publicly so more candidates will be aware of it. If advertised earlier, there will be more time to brush up on riding skills or add items to complete their regalia.

I have no qualms about who was selected this year to promote Tygh Valley, but I do feel there's room for improving the manner and criteria under which they are selected. I did see the contest by movie film. I'm sure this year's court will reflect an incomparable public image of our reservation with their commendable skills and regalia. Good luck to them throughout their reign.

Sincerely,
Ginger Johnson



Tygh Valley Court Minus One, Plus One

This year's Tygh Valley Queen Trudee Clements (left) and princess Marla Patt (right) are joined by candidate Vesta Johnson, who was told after the judging that she was too young and was encouraged to run again next year. Second princess Martina Heath was selected through the mail and could not make it to the April 14 judging because she was away at school.

Spilyay Tymoos Photo by CDS

Interior Files Water Rights Suits to Fulfill Trust Responsibility

Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus said that he had reluctantly requested Attorney General Griffin Bell to take legal action to protect the water rights of Indian tribes on five reservations in northern Montana. The suits were filed by the U.S. Department of Justice April 5 in the Federal District Court for Montana.

Andrus said that he asked the Justice Department to file stream adjudication suits in the Federal courts because the Montana legislature was proposing to pass legislation which would give state courts jurisdiction over Indian water rights issues.

"I recommended the action very reluctantly," Andrus said, "since it has been and continues to be my hope that the matter could be settled by negotiation. I want to stress that negotiation is not precluded by the suits and is still possible. While President Carter's water policy supports negotiated agreements for settlement of water disputes, it also supports the position that any litigation of Indian claims should take place in Federal courts."

Andrus said that it was part of his fiduciary responsibility as trustee for the Indians to keep Indian water rights issues in Federal courts "when and if they had to be settled in court." He

said that the United States Constitution initiated the tradition that Indian affairs be handled by the Federal Government rather than state or local governments.

Andrus said the Department's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Forrest Gerard and Interior Solicitor Leo Krulitz discussed the proposed legislation with Montana Lt. Governor Ted Schwinden, Attorney General Mike Greeley and other Montana officials in January following a meeting with tribal leaders of the state.

Gerard, who is himself a Blackfoot Indian from Montana, said that members of his staff have worked closely with the tribal leaders and with state representatives, beginning last fall, to explore possibilities for handling conflicting water claims through negotiation. He said he had been hopeful that such a process would be developed and Indian water rights issues would not be included in the state legislation.

He also noted that tribal leaders generally accept the Federal courts as neutral forums for issues that involve a large proportion of a local community but are concerned that "state judges who are elected by a local community are sometimes subjected to political pressures."

Gerard said that his office had suggested amendment of the state bill to provide, in lieu of including tribes within the Montana State jurisdiction process, a resolution of Indian-non-Indian water questions through a state-tribal compact. He said, "I am disappointed that this was not done. I still think it is very important for all of us to try to build on points of agreement toward negotiated settlements, rather than adopt attitudes of confrontation and dissension."

Defendants in the suits are the State of Montana and various persons and entities claiming rights in the water systems.

The four suits filed by the Department of Justice ask for a declaration of the Indian water rights on the Marias, Milk, Poplar and Flathead river systems. The five reservations involved are Flathead, Blackfoot, Rocky Boy, Fort Peck and Fort Belknap.

The other two Montana reservations, Crow and Northern Cheyenne, already are in litigation in Federal court about water rights on the Tongue and Bighorn River systems.

The Montana bill, SB76, would establish a system to adjudicate all water rights issues in the state.

Thanks from Indian Club

Dear Spilyay:

I am writing this letter of thanks on behalf of the Madras High School Indian Club. The club in the last month has been sponsoring numerous amounts of fund raising activities and I would like to take this space to thank specific people in the community.

The students in the Club even though small in number have put such effort in to making enough money to attend a Youth Leadership Conference in Tacoma next week. I would like to thank those members that have put a lot of effort into this project.

If any names are forgotten please forgive us but we'd like to thank you also.

THANK YOU,
Ray Moody

Indian Club Member

Indian Club Members:

Jacob Frank, Jr.
Chuck Dick
Carrol Johnson
Floyd Frank
Shari Sampson
Cinda Heath
Trudee Clements
Melissa Johnson

Devearl Winishut
Robert Heath
Lorraine Suppah
Leslie Charley
Yahteen Frank
Kimiko Danzuka
Dixon Davis
Shari Macy
Henry Stwyer

Buckaroo Breakfast:
Charlotte Herkshan
Anson Begay
Enos Herkshan III (Guy)

Bottle Drive:
Grant Wahlenaka
Spilyay Tymoos
Beans Greene
Tribal Group Home
Harrison Davis Sr.
Police Station

Basketball Game:
Satch Miller
Everett Miller
Carlos Northrup
Lyle Rhoad
George Danzuka
Delson Suppah
Mike Clements
Fred Ross
Tommy Smith

Tribal Council Agenda

April 30.. Tribal Council Meeting, 9:00 a.m.

1. 10:00 a.m. Court System Task Force - Report - Recommendations
2. 2:00 p.m. Management Reports
Revenue Forecast

Unfinished Business

Renovation of Council Room
Self-Insurance Program Report

May 1 General Council Meeting - Agency Longhouse 7:00 p.m.
Hearing on proposed hydroelectric project.