

Tribes keep tradition of giving thanks

By Sid Miller
Publisher Emeritus

The American people have a Thanksgiving once a year and it happens after their harvest season ends, when they give thanks for the bountiful crops they had during the year.

The Native Americans have their Thanksgiving prior to the harvest of the crops of vegetation. This tradition has been carried out from time immemorial, when they give thanks to the Creator for the bountiful crops they are about to harvest.

Spilyay Speaks

Way back in the years when I was just "a cute little tyke," I never really understood why they went through all these rites, as they went through the seven sevens in the Longhouse. The chanting and the drums beating in harmony, and the dancers all in time jumping up and down.

Everything carried out has a special meaning of giving thanks to the Creator for the bountiful crops of vegetation that will be harvested after the service has been completed. Every song has a special meaning and after all the singing has been completed, people gather around the tables to go through more services and after the word "choosh" then everyone dips into the food.

When all the services have been completed, then it is permissible for the tribal members to go out into the field to put up the vegetation. There are several types of roots to be harvested and each one grows in certain areas. That is the reason why people go to Webster Flat for a certain type. Several travel over to Paulina or toward Shaniko. There are roots that grow in the forest.

Thanksgiving rites are observed for all the foods provided by the Great Creator. All these traditions are carried out for the fish that comes up the river for the spring run. Just like the appointed root diggers that are first to dig the roots, there are certain ones appointed to catch the fish for the feast. And so on for all the fruits that ripen during the summer months, like the time for the Huckleberry Feast held at He He each year.

At one time we used to have a rodeo on the day of the Root Feast but we could not start the rodeo until all the serves were completed. We would have stock in the bucking chutes waiting for them to complete the services.

Everything came down to the point where we shall give thanks to the Creator for what we receive before we would engage in our activities. Ahh-Nah-Chi-Toon!

Toe Ness

A professor was trying to show the effects of alcohol to his class. He had two glasses, one had water in it, the other had whiskey. He dropped a worm in the water and it wriggled and swam. Then he put it in the whiskey, and it struggled and died. He said, "Now what does that tell you?"

The class was quiet for a while and a guy in the back said, "It proves that if we drink whiskey, we won't have worms!" Yikes.

Many good ideas coming out for casino design

By Selena T. Boise
Spilyay Tymoo staff

Hi everyone. Heard some good ideas coming out about the casino design. I can hardly wait to see the actual outcome. Being placed along the Columbia is bringing out ideas surrounding the salmon and the ways of our river people of long ago.

The Gorge is very scenic and I have enjoyed taking photographs there many times.

I have heard that the casino will not have flashy lights or anything out of the ordinary for that area. We don't want the whole thing to be like the Las Vegas lights or anything like that.

Community will be able to suggest their ideas at the home-based meetings to be held. The ideas presented at the home-based meetings will all be taken into consideration for the actual construction. So watch for a meeting that you can attend.

I can certainly picture the decorations of salmon, maybe pictures of the treaty tree, if there are any. Maybe a nice picture of the treaty signers, I know that that event happened along the Columbia River somewhere.

The input from the tribal members should be good. Like Nariyo Kono said, "when times are hard, our creativity comes out."

I look forward to hearing more about the design as the meetings continue.

For now I will only imagine what the turnout will be.

Maybe a trip to the Gorge will bring many more ideas out from community members.

Have a good day.

Letters to the Editor

Special thanks

I would like to give thanks to all that had opened their hearts in our time of loss. To Richard Tohet and Sam Starr for doing the dressing.

To Big Rat for his assistance in putting all the services together. To Ellen Thompson for all her wonderful words, and songs she gave. To Fred Wallulatum for officiating the services.

To all the drummers for the beautiful songs they sang that will help Russell on his journey. To the cooks for their hard work in preparing the meal. To Ramona Starr Shuster, Solo Stewart, Jamie Watlamet for all their help in everything.

The staff of The Museum at Warm Springs for all your thoughts and prayers.

A very special thank you to Lorene Wainanwit and Glenn Brunoe for being here with us from the start to the end. The Creator will give blessing to you all, for everything was done from the heart. With nothing expected in return, as it should be. That's the way a true Native carries themselves.

Listen to your heart, give from the heart, follow your heart. As it is said, you find out who your true friends and family are when times are hard. They're right there at your side to help you through it all.

My father-in-law really enjoyed living here. He enjoyed the people and country, and he held our traditions with the highest respect.

Again, I can't give enough thanks to all who have helped us. If I have left anyone out here, I apologize. May the Creator be with you all.

Deborah J. George,
Milward Tall Bull, Mary

Hoptowit, Gerald Hoptowit Jr., Antoinette Tall Bull, Levi Tall Bull, Lil' Russell Tall Bull, and Isaac Tall Bull.

Only me

What fear I have of being released. What scary thoughts I have from not being accepted. These are only a few of many thoughts that seem to constantly race through my mind. Now I'm a convicted felon with a strike over my head - two more and I'm in for life. How can a man come out of prison a better man, if there's nothing but negativity in here? How can a man stay out long enough, if all he learned in prison was another trade in crime?

Are these questions to be answered or is it for that man to fail and come back to prison in that same position and predicament? I imagine a better life I could've had for myself. Now I'm literally and physically caught up in the system. There is nothing to offer in "the joint" or "slammer" or whatever you prefer to call it. Because the institutionalization of men would rather come back to this place. You see, my only fear at this point is getting out. And what madmen this place creates for a generation that means nothing. People, I only say this because there are so many individuals lost in a world of deception and no remorse.

And as I sit in this cell with nothing but my thoughts, I can't seem to wonder what will happen to me if I'm so used to being here. It's sad, people. I wish I never adapted to this place, because now my mentality is stuck between this world. But however my determination of

preserving this harsh environment has made my mind mentally capable of accomplishing goals which I would have never accomplished in my entire lifetime.

We're on lockdown once again, but as soon as those doors open it's just another day in the struggle and another day to fight to stay sane from all this craziness. My capabilities go beyond and I will use them to my best interest and I will proceed to move forward. My love is to those who love me. Indian Pride,
Big Nate

Let God in

There was a time in my life when God called me and I could hear him but I didn't listen. I knew I was turning my back on the Lord. Closed doors for me, but I lived in darkness, blinded by alcohol, drugs and money. This left me no room for God, but he never left my side and I felt him there, watching me fall. But I never went to the Lord, pride made me fall. Shame kept me down. I knew I was on my way to jail, as I lived in my manmade hell. So when I tried to sleep at night, there stood Jesus with open arms. Once again, I didn't let him in. I was on my way to prison and felt my life was at its end. Once in my cell, I cried to God, "How could you let this be!" But he only answered with "Child, you never turned to me."

And now after nine years in prison, I'm on my way home in two years. Every night I turn to God and he tells me, "See, my child, this isn't the end. For now with God is where your life begins."

I encourage those locked up in the tribal jail to let God do

his work, and we do ours. Remember, he has paid it all for us at Calvary. Jesus loves us in spite of our faults. People without Christ are people without wisdom. With respect,
Rayfield Jeff Mitchell

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Hello, from Pastor Rick

To me, it is always a good time to talk about Easter. But now with war a part of our news, it is even a better time to talk about the great celebration of the Christian festival called Easter.

For the Christian faithful this is the day to be reminded of how far our God will go to keep us close and in a relationship with Him. Not an image of God. Not a relative of God. But God who in love allows death to come to Him so that death will not come to us. A gift of God to God in our name.

Wow, doesn't that sound weird? It is me emptying my savings account and buying a car and then walking up to a person and handing the title to them. Nothing in return. No thank-you required.

It is a festival of what seems to be on the surface worshipping a crazy God. Yet real love does make us a little crazy. It causes us to act weird. To give without receiving. To hope when there should be no hope. To believe when all the numbers add up and say do not believe.

Easter is coming; come and worship God.
Rev. Rick R. Ribeiro

Drug use can lead to housing eviction

(Note: The following article was submitted to the Spilyay by the Warm Springs Housing Authority. The article first appeared in The Oregonian newspaper, and is reprinted here with their permission.)

"The article pertains to all tribal, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Mutual Help homesbuyers," according to a statement from the Housing Authority.)

A home that becomes a safe haven for drug dealers can ruin a neighborhood. This is as true in public housing as it is in suburban cul-de-sacs and on leafy city blocks, and it's the reason behind the U.S. Supreme Court's wise ruling on drug-related evictions.

In a unanimous 8-0 decision, the high court has ruled that

landlords can evict entire families from federally subsidized housing if anyone - including a family member, friend or guest - has a drug problem.

This power to evict can make innocent people lose their homes, which is terrible.

But it's not as bad as the alternative: public housing where other families live in fear of their drug-abusing neighbors, and where landlords have little ability to fight the crime happening under their noses.

In the case before the Supreme Court, four senior citizens from California appealed the eviction notices they received for drug use by relatives or caregivers.

They argued that the 1988

federal drug law which authorizes such evictions is unfair, because it penalizes innocent people for the behavior of others.

They said it is unfair and discriminatory to punish low-income tenants who may not even know about the drug use of their visiting relatives or friends.

Too bad, said the court. Landlords should not be forced to prove who knew what, and when, in order to crack down on drug abuse.

Landlords need the ability to kick out drug dealers before they become drug pushers, and illegal drug users before they become violent addicts.

It is important for landlords and housing authorities to tread

carefully in this arena.

People in subsidized housing live under the same Constitution as people in mansions, and deserve the same protections from invasive questioning and warrantless searches.

This is a matter of basic dignity as well as the law.

The public has an interest in the safety of such housing. A federally subsidized apartment that enables drug use helps no one. Not the tenants themselves, not the other low-income neighbors stuck living next door, not the drug users getting a free ride.

Housing is not a right in this country. Safety in public housing, however, must be a top priority and responsibility for everyone involved.

Further commentary on the water right agreement

By Randy Smith

Through wisdom and foresight our elders recognized early on that a water shortage would eventually materialize within the Deschutes Basin. Our treaty secures Warm Springs' right to as much water as we need for our future. I read in The Water Rights Survival Guide that the working group met monthly for a period of three years. I recall no more than one meeting within the boundaries of Warm Springs to document our concerns...Why? After all, we are the senior water rights constituency. Were we discriminated against?

Our advisors warned us it was time to use it or lose it, rather than establish the historic amount of the water right that existed before any and all of the districts were allowed by the Oregon Department of Water

Resources. Contradicting what the advisors would have us believe, our beneficial use of water has never actually stopped. It is still being applied to the same crops our ancestors preferred, water purity, salmon, steelhead and other fisheries. This use has always been recognized as beneficial to our people. So in all actuality it never was use it or lose it time for Warm Springs.

Federal water quality standards haven't been formally adopted in the mitigation agreement, so they have taken a back seat to demand. How does the Oregon Department of Water Resources intend to administer water use to meet the language of the Clean Water Act? That's quite convenient for the following industries: agribusiness, farmers, real estate and municipi-

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palities. Which have all to some extent contributed to the degradation of the limited water resources in the basin. Ultimately, taxpayers will again have to foot the bill to pay for Oregon's poor management and oversight of a public resource.

All applications of Warm Springs' inherent water right must maximize the economic benefit to Warm Springs. The Warm Springs Comprehensive Plan doesn't completely do this. No one sees more than one resort, golf course or additional business developing in Warm Springs' economic future, which is totally absurd. The Comprehensive Plan doesn't recognize the importance and practicality of converting juniper stands to pasture, or the development of high-valued home sites. None of

these practical and beneficial water applications allowed outside our boundaries is even considered. Warm Springs certainly has the potential to evolve and develop housing lots that bring in six figures if not more. If the water application is legitimate outside the reservation, why not within the reservation?

The Water Rights Survival Guide states that water permits are issued only for beneficial use. Within the same document I read where irrigation units lose approximately 46 percent of their water right in the transportation process alone, that's what I call a "special right." The state can now buy back or lease water from certified water rights holders. Ironically, those individuals in position to reap a huge cash crop from this probably all fall within the pre 1992 era.