

News from around Indian Country

Yakama veteran finally receives medals

TOPPENISH, Wash. (AP) — Arthur Shilow remembers waking up in a French field, surrounded by farmers, and unable to move his legs after his B-17 bomber was shot down during World War II.

The farmers gave the ball-turret gunner, who was on his first mission, a bottle of wine and took him to a home. German soldiers discovered him, though, and Shilow was taken to a prison camp in Krems, Austria, where he remained until the end of the war.

Shilow never received medical attention for his wounds, and it wasn't until just recently that he received recognition for his valor.

The Yakama Warriors Association presented Shilow with seven medals recently at a special breakfast.

The medals include the

Purple Heart and POW Medal. A Bronze Star is expected to arrive in the mail.

"Boy, I'm glad I made it. I didn't expect this much attention," Shilow said to the crowd, many of them his relatives. The enrolled Yakama Nation member now lives in Cascade Locks, Ore.

Shilow was honorably discharged from the Army on Oct. 6, 1945, as staff sergeant. He was awarded the Purple Heart upon his discharge, but had to return it months later because his wounds were not documented.

Documented or not, his injuries left their mark. Shilow battled chronic pain for years from bone splinters and chips in his knees and ankles, as well as damaged vertebrae.

"The doctors would just write it up as bursitis," he said. "They

"I know I'm darn lucky to have gotten back. I'm lucky to be alive."

Arthur Shilow

didn't even connect it with my military service."

In 1991, Shilow suffered a heart attack and then was encouraged to apply for veterans disability.

It took him years to get his military and medical records together to document his injuries, a paper trail that not only led to Shilow receiving full disability benefits, but also the Purple Heart and other medals.

"It's a relief," he said. "It's a relief because everyone I talked to said I'll help you and nothing."

Robert Harcum, a representative of the Yakima Valley Vet-

erans Coalition, pinned the Purple Heart on Shilow.

"There's only a few of you left as far as World War II veterans," Harcum said.

"If it weren't for you, youngsters like us wouldn't have been able to serve. Us younger veterans really honor our older veterans."

Reflecting on his military experience, Shilow said only three members of the 10-man crew survived when the bomber went down May 29, 1943.

He spent 23 months in a POW camp with his tail gunner, Harry Boegahloz, who died in 1962. Shilow's not sure what happened to his navigator, Edwin Martin, the other survivor.

"I know I'm darn lucky to have gotten back," he said. "I'm lucky to be alive."

'Trail trees' may have been native guideposts

NORCROSS, Ga. (AP) — Unusually shaped trees found around the state may be more than just an interesting photograph subject or child's hobbyhorse.

Some say the trunks — some bending at 90-degree angles or with knobs pointing out in the distance — are remnants of a time when American Indians would use them as guideposts to navigate through the continent.

Members of woodlands tribes, including the Cherokee, Creek and Algonquin, are believed to have traveled through a series of paths, using the specially formed hardwoods to keep them headed in the right direction.

"They had their own interstate system in place, with signs directing the way," said Judy Dyer, who has photographed more than 30 trail trees, as they're called, near her Norcross home.

But skeptics say many of the unusual trees are too young to have formed more than a century ago. They also question whether American Indians, renowned for their woodland skills, needed signs to tell them where to go.

Gaming talks at a standstill

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A conflict between the Cherokee and Choctaw nations over the purchase of Blue Ribbon Downs racetrack might endanger an Indian gaming compact that could pump as much as \$80 million into Oklahoma's budget.

The proposal would allow limited use of Las Vegas-style slot machines at race tracks and Indian casinos, otherwise known as Class III gaming.

But the compact is in danger of dying before it reaches the Legislature because of the rift, said state Finance Director Scott Meacham, the governor's point man for compact negotiations.

"I don't see how you can move forward with the gaming compact without the state's two largest tribes," Meacham said.

Meacham, along with negotiators for Oklahoma's American Indian tribes, racetracks and horsemen's groups, has been working since May to make a compact more palatable than the one that failed at the end of the last legislative session.

Casino reopening delayed

TAMA, Iowa (AP) — Officials with the Meskwaki tribe have scuttled plans to reopen their casino by Christmas, and now say a February opening date is more realistic.

The casino, one of Tama County's biggest employers, has been shut down since May when federal regulators closed it for violating federal tribal gaming rules.

Tribal attorneys say the National Indian Gaming Commission is not expected to allow the casino to reopen until the Bureau of Indian Affairs rules on the legitimacy of tribal elections held in October and November.

A review of the elections now underway is expected to take four months, officials say.

The elections were held to resolve a leadership dispute that began in March when the elected tribal council was ousted by a new group of leaders hand picked by the tribe's hereditary chief.

The elected leaders were accused of ignoring valid recall petitions and tribal members grew frustrated with the council's leadership.

The appointed council, led by chairman Homer Bear Jr., took control of government and casino operations until a federal judge upheld an NIGC order to close the casino, which employs about 1,300 workers and earns about \$3 million a week in revenue.

Donation to protect mounds

JEFFERSON, Wis. (AP) — A 40-acre plot of southern Wisconsin woodland containing Indian mounds is destined to become a nature preserve after being donated to Jefferson County in a move that left some officials sounding stunned.

Theo Garman of Waterloo is donating the land in honor of her late husband, Dr. J.S. Garman.

"I don't even want to guess at what the Garman family could make selling this property on the real estate market," said County Board member Kathleen Groskopf, a former real estate agent. "This piece of property is just gorgeous and it's an extraordinarily generous offer."

"This is a magnificent piece

of land that's never been farmed and Mrs. Garman's offer is just amazing," said Parks Director Joe Nehmer just before the County Board accepted the donation Tuesday.

The property near Waterloo, at an elevation of 950 feet, is at one of the highest points in the county.

Nehmer described the property as a classic glacial drumlin — a type of hill formed by the movement of glaciers that once covered parts of the state.

Personnel from the Wisconsin Historical Society visited the parcel Oct. 30 and surveyed the Garman Mound Group, a group of 22 Indian burial mounds on the site.

All the mounds have been looted, Deputy State Archaeologist John Broihahn said in a letter to Nehmer.

But he said the looting has been limited, and it is not unusual to find undisturbed human burials and other cultural deposits under looted areas.

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Kickapoo women take over headquarters in protest

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A sit-in at the Kickapoo tribal headquarters stretched into its second day Saturday, as a handful of female tribe members protested a recent election ruling and practices of the tribe's chairman.

Coming in through an unlocked back door at the McCloud headquarters, the women began their protest at about 4 a.m. Friday, said protester Glenda Deer from inside the tribal headquarters.

Protesters say they plan to stay in the tribal headquarters through the weekend or until the Bureau of Indian Affairs decides if it will mediate the dispute.

The women, most of them

grandmothers, say the Kickapoo tribe is being poorly run and its leaders are corrupt. They have spent the past day pouring over tribal documents, that they say show questionable practices, said Auchee Wahpepah, a tribal elder participating in the protest.

Before the fax line to the building was cut at about 3:30 p.m. Friday, the women sent out voluminous faxes of tribal documents to various media organizations and the BIA.

"I would love for the BIA to come in and seize this building and go through everything," Wahpepah said. "They would see what's going on."

Wahpepah said some of the supporters would meet with community members at 2 p.m.

Saturday in front of the tribal offices.

When they began their protest, the women piled desks and filing cabinets up against doors and held at bay tribal police who tried to enter the building at about 8:30 a.m. Friday.

The women said they received a letter promising no charges would be filed against them if the vacated the premises by 5 p.m. Friday.

The group ignored the letter because it was from tribal Chairman Tony Salazar's administration, Deer said.

Late Friday, the FBI arrived at tribal headquarters but the protesters weren't arrested. Deer said federal agents told the women they wouldn't be

harmed.

The women want results from a Dec. 13 recall election to be certified and for Salazar to be removed from his position.

Salazar lost the election 168-150 but challenged the results, claiming 20 percent of the tribal membership had not voted as required by the Kickapoo constitution.

Members of the tribal election board voted in favor of Salazar's protest, 2 to 1.

Two of the voting members of the election board are related to Salazar, and Wahpepah said those challenging Salazar can't get a fair chance in tribal court, or with the election board.

Highway plan opposed

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Federal officials have given final approval to the route of a new highway that will carry commuters around southern Lawrence — and directly through wetlands prized by environmentalists and American Indians.

Word that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has granted a permit for the South Lawrence Trafficway brought an immediate pledge from opponents that lawsuits will be filed.

As approved by the Corps of Engineers, the highway would be built along a 32nd Street alignment and cross ground that officials of Haskell Indian Nations

University say is considered spiritually, culturally and historically significant.

But even with the federal action, state officials said Friday they could not afford to build the \$110.2 million road now.

"Given the fact that the budget continues to be extremely tight, we do not anticipate funding this project for quite some time," said Sally Howard, chief counsel for the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Maine casino campaign expensive

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — The contentious fight over whether to allow a casino in Maine was the most expensive campaign ever waged in Maine, according to new finance reports released Tuesday.

Think About It, a political action committee that promoted the casino, spent nearly \$7 million on the campaign through Dec. 9. Casinos Nol, the leading opposition group, reported spending more than \$3.1 million.

By a 2-1 margin, voters on Nov. 4 rejected a referendum that would have allowed the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Indian tribes to build a casino in Maine.

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