



Bing Bingham/Spilyay

Lucinda Green cooks up some beans at the Collage of Culture. It was a windy day during the Collage.

Labor ruling could open casinos to union organizers

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A federal labor ruling could open the door to unions trying to organize workers at Connecticut's two Indian-owned casinos.

The National Labor Relations Board last week issued a decision in a California case that ends a longstanding precedent that excluded American Indian employers from federal labor law. The decision concerned a California Indian tribe's refusal to allow a particular union to organize at its casino and bingo hall. Indian reservations, which have limited self-government, have been exempt from federal labor law until now.

"It could mean sweeping, profoundly significant safeguards for tens of thousands of Connecticut residents who work at the casinos," Attorney General

Richard Blumenthal said Monday. "It ensures that working men and women at Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods have the same protections as employees anywhere else in the state under the National Labor Relations Act."

The decision could clear the way for the 20,000 employees who work at Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun the right to join unions, engage in collective bargaining and take their workplace complaints to a federal agency.

The decision involved a dispute between the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians, a California gaming tribe, and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, which is attempting to organize casino workers throughout the country.

Kah-Nee-Ta offers safety tip

Our safety topic for June is water safety.

All children should learn how to swim. They can have a responsible adult teach them to swim. They can take lessons at Kah-Nee-Ta.

When families are swimming in creeks, rivers or lakes, there needs to be a responsible adult along who knows how to swim. They should know rescue breathing and CPR (This would be an ideal situation.)

When you are swimming in a creek or river, you should wear shoes to protect your feet from rocks or other sharp objects.

The area should be checked to see if the water is deep enough for diving. Check the water for submerged logs or other debris.

Wear a life jacket anytime that you are in a boat.

Children should always have a buddy to swim with.

Never go swimming alone.



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Peltier, journalist settle lawsuit out of court

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Leonard Peltier has agreed to dismiss a libel lawsuit over accusations that he was involved in the 1975 killing of fellow American Indian Movement member Anna Mae Pictou Aquash, according to a court document.

Peltier sued editor Paul DeMain of Wisconsin-based News From Indian Country in May 2003 in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis.

Aquash's frozen body was found in February 1976 on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The 30-year-old woman from Canada had been shot in the head in December 1975 after being taken from Denver. Two men were charged in the killing last year; one is serving a life sentence for the killing, the other is fighting extradition from Vancouver, British Columbia to South Dakota.

Peltier's lawsuit took issue with an editor's note published in March 2003 in which DeMain wrote, "The primary motive for the murder of Annie Mae Pictou Aquash by other members of the American Indian Movement in mid-December 1975, allegedly was her knowledge that Leonard Peltier had shot the two agents as he was convicted."

The lawsuit also challenged DeMain's statement that Peltier was actually convicted.

Peltier was convicted in 1977 of two counts of first-degree murder, and courts have rejected his appeals. He is serving two back-to-back life sentences in

"Justice is possible for both Anna Mae and Leonard Peltier, but justice won't be done in either case by people falsely pointing fingers."

Barry Bachrach, lawyer

Leavenworth, Kan., for the 1975 killing of FBI agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler on the Pine Ridge reservation. Both were shot in the head at point-blank range after they were injured in a shootout.

DeMain would not comment Monday on the dismissal but referred to a May 28 statement in which he said he did not agree to retract the statements he made about Peltier. He wrote "the lawsuit was frivolous and without merit" and was intended to limit free speech and the search for truth in the Aquash case.

But in a letter submitted to the court and included in DeMain's release, he wrote that he does not believe Peltier received a fair trial nor did he have anything to do with Aquash's murder.

In a news release, Peltier lawyer Barry Bachrach said DeMain's statement was the only issue in the settlement and money was not a part of it.

"Justice is possible for both Anna Mae and Leonard Peltier, but justice won't be done in either case by people falsely pointing fingers," Bachrach wrote.

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