

Merle Holmes, leader of Grand Ronde, passes away

GRAND RONDE (AP) — Merle Holmes, whose knowledge of tribal history helped restore federal recognition for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, has died. He was 70.

Holmes died May 17 at home of natural causes, and was buried in a family cemetery at the base of Spirit Mountain, said tribal spokesman Brent Merrill.

"We wouldn't be restored as a people if it wasn't for Merle Holmes, and the work he did with Marvin Kimsey, and Margaret Provost," Merrill said.

"He was the chief historian of the tribe. It was based on his knowledge and his research that we were able to prove our continual existence as a tribe to anthropologists and different people in the federal government responsible for making that decision."

Holmes descended from the Kalapuya people, one of the 25 tribes rounded up by soldiers in Western Oregon in 1856 and marched to the Grand Ronde and Siletz reservations in the northern Coast Range to make way for covered wagons and gold miners migrating west over the Oregon Trail.

An Army veteran, Holmes was known for his collection of written histories of the Trail of Tears, including a copy of a journal kept by an Indian agent that tribal members used to recreate a march from outside Medford to Grand Ronde in 2002 to raise money for a veterans memorial, Merrill said.

The federal government terminated tribal status for the Grande Ronde in 1954. The tribe was terminated after nearly all of their reservation land had been sold off.

A log truck driver living in Salem, Holmes was among the people who met at the tribal cemetery in the 1970s to press state and federal governments for restoration of tribal status.

Stephen Dow Beckham, a professor of history at Lewis & Clark College specializing in the history of Indians in Oregon, said Holmes had a great love of his heritage and served as an eloquent voice for restoring the rights of his people.

"He was a man who deeply cared and was willing to give his time and energies to try to change the course of history," Beckham said.

"Ultimately the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde prevailed, but it was because of the hard work of men like Merle Holmes and the longtime tribal chair, Kathryn Harrison, that Congress righted a wrong."

Congress restored tribal status for the Grand Ronde in 1983 and five years later returned 9,811 acres of timberland once part of the reservation.

The tribes went on to build the Spirit Mountain Casino, the biggest casino in Oregon and the state's top tourist attraction.

Holmes is survived by two sons, James Holmes of Seattle and David Holmes of Los Angeles.

Trial spurs debate over how to protect artifacts

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The trial of two men accused of stealing ancient artwork from an American Indian site has sparked a discussion about the best way to protect artifacts — by keeping them secret or posting signs that welcome visitors and would-be vandals alike.

The two men said they were innocent because they never saw any official signs marking the ancient petroglyphs on national forest land. Land managers said such signs would only invite trouble. "Putting up a sign at an archaeological site is almost like saying, 'Dig here for buried treasure,'" said Fred Frampton, the U.S. Forest Service's chief archaeologist for the Humboldt-

Toiyabe National Forest, where the works were taken.

With few exceptions, Frampton's opinion is the prevailing view among federal land managers and most tribal leaders faced with a choice between trumpeting precious archaeological sites or keeping them under wraps.

"If it's in a well-traveled area and people know about, then putting up signs is fine," said Pat Barker, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's state archaeologist for Nevada. "But if you put up signs when people don't already know about it, you can lose the resource."

John Ligon, 40, of Reno, and Carrol Mizell, 44, of Van Nuys,

Calif., stood trial for stealing three boulders in August 2003 with artwork etchings that tribal leaders say are priceless and more than 1,000 years old.

They were charged with unlawful excavation of archaeological resources and theft of government property. A jury found them guilty of stealing government property, but not guilty of violating the archaeological protection law.

The men claimed they were trying to protect the rock art from an encroaching subdivision and they didn't know it was illegal to remove the boulders because there were no signs marking the site.

Terry Birk, a Forest Service

archaeologist, testified against the use of guideposts to label such sites. "It is my contention that signing or fencing would draw increased visitation and potential vandalism to the petroglyphs," Birk said.

But, as a lawyer for one of the defendants was quick to point out during opening statements, keeping the site unmarked didn't work either.

"There is this theory, this amazing theory, that if you don't sign and label the site, people won't go there and it will be kept a secret," said Scott Freeman, Ligon's lawyer. "And that that is the only way to keep it safe because we, as the government, don't trust you as citizens."

David Whitley, a world-renowned expert on dating of ancient rock art who testified on behalf of the defense, said the case is a good example of why signs should be posted.

"Sticking your head in the sand and saying that if you pretend it doesn't exist, no one will damage it is unrealistic," said Whitley, an archaeologist who has authored 12 books.

Whitley acknowledged there is a history of sites being damaged by vandals. "But that's really tailed off the last decade or so because people are more aware and concerned about cultural resources. Today, your average person is going to respond favorably," he said.



Gerald Cook of Warm Springs carried in the colors during opening ceremonies of the recent Collage of Culture.

Artifact amnesty begins slowly in New Mexico

SANTA FE (AP) — One Navajo pot has been turned in under an amnesty program allowing anyone who illegally possesses American Indian cultural or religious objects to return them without prosecution.

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico is serving as a middle man between the U.S. attorney's office and anyone wishing to return an object.

Museum curator David Phillips said the Navajo pot is believed to have been found on U.S. Bureau of Land Management property. It is the first and only object returned since U.S. Attorney David C. Iglesias announced the 90-day amnesty nearly two weeks ago.

"So far the response has been limited," Phillips said.

Eric Blinman, the assistant director of archaeological studies at the Museum of New Mexico, said people who find such objects do not realize their short-lived wonder at the find comes at a high price to the public.

"The sad thing is that when objects are found, that person is motivated by the excitement of discovery," Blinman said. "It's inevitable that the next generation doesn't have that connection. With the loss of that,

there's the tremendous possibility that things are going to be thrown away."

The program gives people the chance not only to turn in objects, but also to share the story of their find with others, Blinman said.

Phillip Young, an archaeologist with the state Historic Preservation Division and a retired investigator with the U.S. Department of the Interior, said the program might appeal to people who are unsure whether the objects they own should be turned in.

"They have an arena to divest themselves of questionable objects," Young said. "If nothing else, we've increased public knowledge. It's public recognition of the priceless nature of our heritage."

The amnesty program pertains only to sacred objects obtained and possessed illegally, but officials say the issue of finding objects on private land and keeping them, which is not illegal under current laws, is also important.

The program, which ends Aug. 18, was prompted by an increase in the number of criminal prosecutions related to the illegal possession of American Indian objects, assistant U.S. attorney Norman Cairns said.

Grave-looting trial pushed back

MEDFORD (AP) — The trial for a convicted Indian grave-looter charged with orchestrating a plot to kill a judge, police officers and his former business partners was to begin last week, but instead will open in October.

The case was continued on a motion submitted by Jack Lee Harelson's defense attorney, Bob Abel. The nine-day trial is now

scheduled to start Oct. 19.

Harelson is accused of plotting to kill retired Josephine County Judge Loyd O'Neal, who presided over a 1996 trial that ended in Harelson's conviction for looting Indian graves. Federal authorities in 2002 fined Harelson \$2.5 million for looting American Indian graves in Nevada's Black Rock Desert. Prosecutors said Harelson,

63, of Grants Pass, also sought to kill an ex-wife, former business associate Lloyd Olds, Curry County resident Richard Ledger and Oregon State Police Sgt. Walt Markee.

State police arrested Harelson in January 2003 and charged him with paying an undercover police informant \$10,000 in opals to murder Olds.

Mescalero Apache has gaming compact

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Gov. Bill Richardson on Tuesday signed a gaming compact with the Mescalero Apache Tribe, formally ending years of litigation over gambling on the southern New Mexico reservation.

Mescalero President Mark Chino and Attorney General Patricia Madrid this spring agreed on a settlement that ended a long-standing feud over the tribe's objections to the state's Indian gambling compacts and their revenue-sharing requirements.

The Mescaleros have agreed to pay \$25 million in back payments. The compact also calls for the tribe to share with the state 8 percent of revenues from its Casino Apache in southern New Mexico.

"While the state and the Mescalero Apache Tribe have had our differences, I believe our shared goal of a strong economy in New Mexico and our mutual respect for each other's sovereignty has brought us together instead of further apart," Richardson said.

The gaming compact will be sent to the Interior Department for approval.

Tribe: governor hypocritical for allowing casino job fair

WEST WARWICK, R.I. (AP) — Narragansett Indian Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas said Rhode Island's governor was hypocritical for not protesting casino job fairs at state-run employment centers.

Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Connecticut sent a recruiter to an employment center in Providence to find cashiers, cooks, servers and security officers, The Providence Journal reported.

"The governor, in front of the House Finance Committee, talked about how casinos didn't offer 'real' jobs, how casinos are not 'real' economic development and how casinos will rob our hospitality venues of valuable workers," Thomas said at a news conference at the tribe's Casino Volunteer Headquarters on Main Street.

"Yet his administration turns around and offers a job fair to Foxwoods casino."

The state, however, said Foxwoods' employee search has nothing to do with the casino debate.

"This is about getting unemployed people jobs," said Adelita Orefice, the acting director of the Rhode Island Department Labor and Training.

The recruiting events will be held at two of the state's six NetworkRI centers, which are staffed by state workers and operated by the state Department of Labor and Training. They are funded in large part by federal dollars. Since \$7-million worth of federal funds flow into the centers annually, the state cannot discriminate against employers wanting to use the centers to recruit employees, said Orefice.

She said the six centers are part of a national program called America's One Stop Career Center System.

Thomas questioned why Governor Donald Carcieri is supporting the job fair if he's opposed to casinos.

The tribe is partnering with Harrah's Entertainment to build a destination casino in West Warwick and seeks to have a casino referendum on the November ballot. The governor has publicly come out against both the referendum and the casino.

The governor's office, however, said that the job fairs are run by the Department of Labor and Training and not approved by the administration.

Discover Mortgage

Specializing in first time homebuyers, refinancing and debt consolidation

Featherstone Mortgage, a Portland area firm specializing in creative lending, has positioned itself as a resource for Native American Indian Housing Authorities.

Liz Hamilton, herself a Native American Indian, will focus on working with first time homebuyers utilizing down payment assistance programs when available, and current homebuyers wanting to refinance and do debt consolidation or lower their current interest rate.

Credit is no problem; we can work with challenged credit or good credit, bankruptcies, foreclosures, unemployment, self-employed, etc. Properties can be owner occupied, non-owner investment or commercial. We have no income/no asset programs and no appraisal options available.

Most pre-qualifications are done in 24 hours and there is no charge for the initial call. Featherstone Mortgage is an equal opportunity lender and can originate home loans in any state where licensing laws allow. Getting started is easy! You can contact Liz Hamilton at (503) 397-9769, or (503) 437-2549.

Coming soon we will be teaching a no cost seminar on how to repair credit, start getting credit and how to set yourself up for home ownership. *If you have a qualified Good Faith Estimate from another lender, bring*

Please support businesses you see in the Spilyay.