

News from Indian Country

Young Indians strive to keep culture

EAGLE BUTTE, S.D. (AP) — When Emanuel Red Bear and his friends wanted to learn the traditional songs of the Lakota Sioux, they turned to 76-year-old Burdell Blue Arm and his extensive knowledge of Lakota culture.

"We were thinking about singing some songs, and Burdell said, 'Let's sing some old songs, traditional songs,'" said Red Bear, who lives in Eagle Butte on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

Along with Blue Arm and his nephews, Red Bear began a traditional drum group called "Wakpa Waste," pronounced WALK-pah WASH-tay, Lakota for "Good River." That is also how the tribe refers to its namesake, the Cheyenne River.

"We try to sing the older songs (so) that the people will hear," Red Bear said.

But preserving those songs,

and American Indian culture in general, is becoming increasingly difficult as tribal elders pass away. For example, Blue Arm lives in a nursing home in Mobridge, more than 80 miles from Eagle Butte. He is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and is beginning to lose his memory.

"That's the way my mind is — I forget now and then," Blue Arm said. As his memory fades, the tribe loses one of its most important resources.

"Burdell is a living library of Lakota music," said his nephew, Steve Emery, a member of Wakpa Waste and a lawyer for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

For Red Bear, who teaches Lakota language and culture to students in Eagle Butte, keeping younger Indians interested in the ways of their people is a challenge. Many just don't care to learn the ways of their an-

cestors because of the allure of contemporary American culture, he said.

"We have more influences of the modern society. Gangs, television, alcohol and drugs — everything's right here," Red Bear said.

"We live in two worlds, the Lakota world and the non-Indian world."

The Cheyenne River tribe passed an ordinance in 1993 requiring that Lakota language and culture be taught in reservation classrooms. But it is a struggle to capture students' interest, Red Bear said.

"We have people, our own tribal members, who are ashamed to be (Lakota), and they don't want to learn the language," he said. "It's sad to see."

Another problem are the differences in dialects between tribes, Red Bear said. The Rosebud, Pine Ridge, Standing Rock

and Cheyenne River tribes all have different ways of referring to things and there are specific endings indicating the gender of the speaker. That means it's nearly impossible to reach a consensus on what needs to be taught, he said.

"We're standing in one place spinning our wheels, arguing about who's right and who's wrong, and in the meantime we're losing our language," Red Bear said.

But there is hope. Red Bear grew up speaking Lakota at home, and said learning such everyday phrases as "brush your teeth" and "go play" is crucial to saving the language. In outlying areas of the reservation, away from towns such as Eagle Butte, there are still families that speak Lakota at home, he said. Encouraging them to keep that up will help preserve the Lakota way, Red Bear said.



Dave McMecham/Spilyay

Raymond Shike Jr. bowled a perfect 300-point game on Monday, April 11, at Madras Bowl, during the Blue Monday Mixers league games. This was Shike's seventh perfect game, but his first since 1999. "I was having a dry spell for a while," he said. A perfect game in bowling is 12 strikes in a row. Shike said that as the game progresses, and it appears that a perfect game is possible, he tries not to think about it. If you concentrate too much you're more likely to make a mistake, he said.

Finance classes rescheduled

The Financial Skills for Families classes have been rescheduled to start May 24 and to continue for seven weeks. Classes will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Family Resource Center.

Bruce Engle will be the lead instructor and will present guest speakers for some of the sessions. Engle is a loan officer with Warm Springs Credit Enterprise and a member of the Klamath Tribes. The guest speakers will be from the world of business and finance.

Some of the class topics are:

credit repair; qualifying to purchase a home, car, furniture; predatory lending practices — how to spot them and protect yourself from them; checking and savings accounts; budget and spending plans; savings plans; how to read your credit report; planning for retirement.

The classes are free. All course materials are supplied at no cost to the class members.

Class size is limited. Please register by calling Warm Springs Credit Enterprise at 553-3201.

Art contest deadline extended

The deadline for an art contest during a pow-wow and gathering of veterans has been extended to June 31. Contest winners are selected July 3.

Each entry must include an address and telephone number for all contestants. Entries are submitted to Rene Sohappyy-Heath in Pendleton, at 541-325-

2463.

In addition, tickets for the postponed raffle from the December pow-wow in Pendleton are valid until the upcoming pow-wow Aug. 28-30. The prize for the raffle is a newer vehicle than was offered originally. Tickets are \$1 each and can be purchased through Sohappyy-Heath.

Plans developed to chase sea lions away from fish ladders

BONNEVILLE DAM (AP) — Sea lions making a nuisance of themselves by indulging in a fish ladder feast at Bonneville Dam may find their dining interrupted soon.

They may face bombardment with noisy fireworks, high-pressure water hoses and irritating sounds broadcast underwater as biologists try to keep them from damaging fish runs.

Until recently, the marine mammals had not climbed the fish ladders. But one sea lion this year has made repeated runs up and down both of the fishways, eating a steelhead or two in front of visitors and the workers who count salmon.

The new behavior presents a significant problem because the presence of sea lions within the narrow fish passageways could deter large numbers of salmon from entering and heading upstream to spawning grounds. The Army Corps of Engineers

met last Friday with state and federal wildlife officials to decide how to stop the incursions.

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Correction

The telephone number for the Warm Springs Victims of Crime Services was misprinted in a story on its events on Sexual Abuse Awareness Month this month in the March 31 issue. The Victims of Crime Services telephone number is 553-2293. We regret this error.

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