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Spilyay Tymoo

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Marine visiting from Iraq War

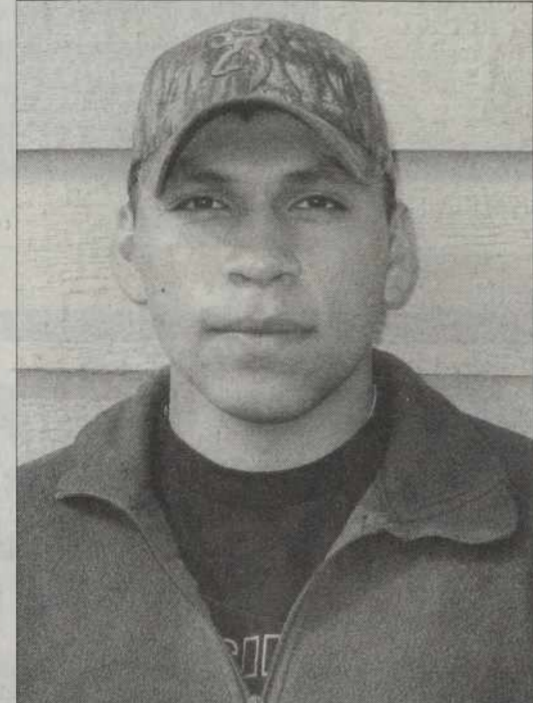
By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Austin Smith Jr. joined the U.S. Marine Corps two years ago when he graduated from Madras High School. "I'm 100 percent happy with the decision to join," Smith was saying last week.

"Some people didn't want me to go," he was saying. "But there are so many benefits in the Marines. You're held to a high standard and you learn to get the job done."

Smith has been back home in Warm Springs in recent weeks, after having just spent seven months in Iraq.

Lance Cpl. Smith is part of the Third Battalion First Marines Division. Last December during election time in Iraq, his battalion was in the city of Barwana, in a region that had seen much violence from al Qaeda. Some were thinking the election would bring more killings, so Marines were stationed at the polling places.



Austin Smith Jr.

"We were on high alert," Smith said. "But we didn't see action that day. Our presence made the people feel safe." Voter turnout was high at nearly 70 percent, and there were no reports of violence in Barwana.

Smith has served about half of his four-year enlistment in the Marines. In

two years he may re-enlist for another four years, or he might go to college. In the past he has worked at the Natural Resources Branch, and he is considering a career in that field.

Meanwhile, though, he is focusing on his work in the Marines. Smith is expecting to go soon to Camp Pendleton in California for training, and then he expects to return to Iraq.

Iraq is different from some people might think, Smith said. The people there, he said, want peace. Many of the insurgents who oppose the U.S. are from neighboring countries rather than from Iraq itself, he said.

Smith and his battalion manned a forward observation base in Barwana. Their job was to investigate and look for known insurgents, such as people who still support Saddam Hussein. When found, the insurgents are taken prisoner, Smith said.

Housing adopts drug, alcohol policy

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The Warm Springs Housing Authority has adopted a new policy to help fight against drug and alcohol abuse on the reservation.

Under the new policy a person can be evicted from housing in the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority, if the person engages in illegal drug use or alcohol abuse.

A person can become ineligible to participate in any Housing Authority program for one year, if the person is involved in illegal drug activity or alcohol abuse.

The Housing Authority will also begin inspecting housing units within its jurisdiction for the presence of methamphetamine.

If an unsafe level of methamphetamine is detected in the residence, then the unit will be deemed unsafe for human occupation. The resident must then leave while the unit is decontaminated. The occupant will pay cost of decontamination.

The Housing Authority adopted the new policy in large part because of the epidemic of methamphetamine, or crank. The policy applies, however, to all illegal drug use, and alcohol abuse.

The occupant can be evicted not only for violating the policy personally, but also for allowing some other person such as a guest to violate the policy in the Housing Authority unit.

There are nearly 400 housing units under the Housing Authority jurisdiction, so the new policy could have a large impact on the reservation. The housing units include tribal, HUD, and mutual-aid residences.

Methamphetamine on the reservation "is not just a problem for the police and the courts," said Jeff Sanders, executive director of Housing. "This is an issue that affects every family and every individual."

The inspections for the presence of methamphetamine in the residence will be part of the periodic unit inspections.

Inspections may be conducted outside of the periodic inspection time, if

the Housing Authority has probable cause to believe that meth is being used or made in a particular residence. In such cases the occupant will be given notice that the inspection is going to take place.

Sanders said the methamphetamine inspection policy is mainly one of safety. Use of methamphetamine in a residence can leave a residue in the carpet, the furniture and curtains.

"If there are children in the house, they can breathe in the meth residue, and this creates health problems," said Sanders. "This is one of the main reasons why I wanted the Housing board to adopt this policy."

A similar policy has been adopted on other reservations, said Sanders. Some tribes have gone farther in fighting against methamphetamine, including the banishment of offenders from tribal land.

He said he does not believe that anyone is making methamphetamine in a Housing Authority unit, but people are using it and selling it in the units.

People should be aware of the new policies, as the consequences for a family could be serious. As an example, if one parent is using meth in the residence, then the family may be evicted.

"It is unfortunate that these things have to happen," said Sanders. "But we are looking toward zero-tolerance of meth."

The new policy is also intended to deter underage drinking. On a weekly basis in some neighborhoods, Sanders said, there are teenage drinking parties that often result in further criminal, sometimes violent activity.

"We're saying enough is enough to criminal activity that is happening in these units," he said.

Parents of young people need to be aware of the policies, as the family can face eviction if the children violate the policies.

"I realize parents can have a hard time keeping control of their teenage children, but if there is more pressure, then maybe the parents will take more of a part," said Sanders.

Great turnout for history exhibition

Hundreds of people visited the traveling history exhibition, Corps of Discovery II, at the Museum at Warm Springs.

On Monday of this week 20 busloads of students arrived for the exhibition. The same number arrived again on Tuesday. Along with the many young people who enjoyed the exhibit, many adults did the same.

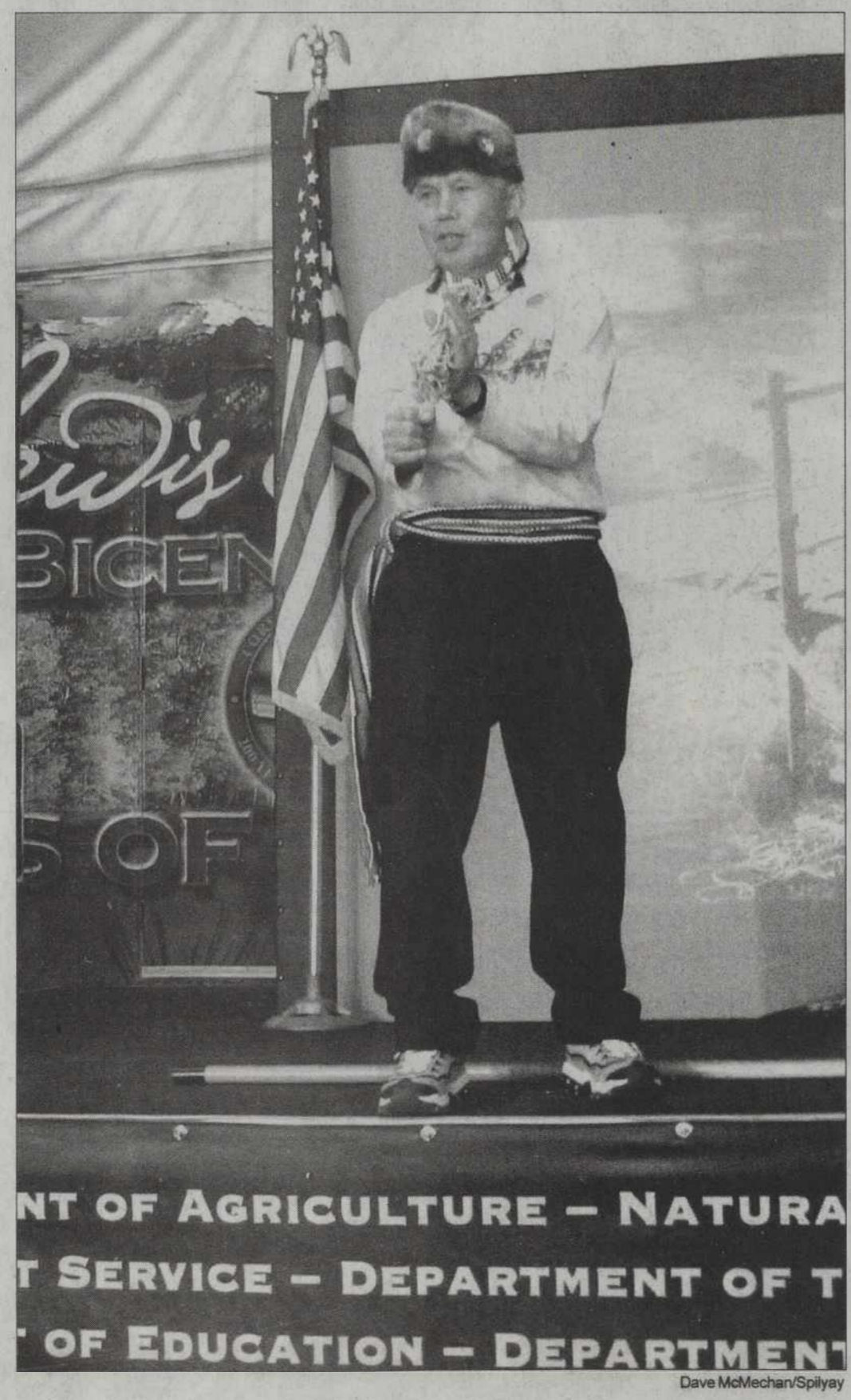
During the four days that the exhibition was at the museum, several tribal members gave presentations on a variety of topics in the Tent of Many Voices. Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath, Fred Wallulatum and Wilson Wewa made the opening welcome on Sunday. The Warm Springs VFW Color Guard presented the colors.

Evaline Patt, Louie Pitt, Pat Courtney Gold, Val Switzler, Robert Miller, and George Aguilar Sr. were featured speakers that day. Liz Woody, Ed Edmo, Roberta Kirk, Joseph Sheppard, Clay Penhollow, Adeline Miller, Terry Courtney Jr., Briget Whipple, Arlita Rhoan, Rose Charley, Mary Schlick, and tribal elders spoke in the Tent of Many Voices during the exhibition.

Wasco Chief Nelson Wallulatum on Sunday brought his regalia and artifacts for display. "We were honored that he and his family did that," said Carol Leone, museum director.

The National Park Service provides major funding, exhibit design and production, transportation, and support staff through the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, based in Omaha, Neb.

Leander Williams, Douglas Williams Sr., and Roberta Williams (photo above right) speak with Steve Morehouse, a Lewis and Clark expert, at the Corps II traveling exhibit. Terry Courtney (photo at right) was among the tribal members who made presentations to the audiences who visited the Corps of Discovery II exhibits.



For second straight year, salmon staying away

For the second straight year, the spring chinook salmon that normally leap by the thousands up the fish ladders of Bonneville Dam toward spawning grounds are virtually absent.

Fishery experts say the run has been late before, but it's off to such a weak start that the tribes had to haul some of last year's salmon out of the freezer for the "First Foods" ceremony that marks the return of the fish.

As of earlier this week, only 488 adult chinook had been counted at the dam. The ten-year average at this point, which includes a couple of bumper years, is about 73,088.

The tribal share of this spring run has been calculated at 6,188 fish. By the recent weekend ceremony at Celilo Village near The Dalles, tribal fishermen had caught only 20.

A late surge remains possible and more should be known in early May, when about half of the run normally would have passed the dam.

Sport fishermen below the dam have told scientists the fish are in the river, but they have not moved over the dam.

For reasons not well understood, salmon don't spawn until they return to the places where they were hatched. Then they die. Some spawn below the dam but most spawning grounds extend as far as Idaho and into numerous Columbia River tributaries above Bonneville Dam.

Preseason estimates for last year were for 254,100 salmon to make it past Bonneville Dam. Only 106,900 did so.

This year's prediction is 88,400 - still a fairly healthy run if it shows up. In recent years, the run has been as low 42,000 in 1999 and as high as 438,000 in 2001. As with last year, the salmon are apparently waiting for some biological trigger to send them up the stairstep-like ladders, past a counting window and on their way upriver.

The spring run is described as famously finicky about water conditions and other factors.

Data from the count are used to predict future runs and have been fairly accurate until last year. (By AP and Spilyay staff.)