

Obama signs law for pay to Native Americans

Black farmers also will receive compensation for past discrimination

By Matthew Daly
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama signed landmark legislation last week that will pay American Indians and black farmers \$4.6 billion to deal with claims of government mistreatment over many decades.

Obama promised during his campaign to work toward resolving disputes over the government's past discrimination against minorities. The measure he signed Wednesday settles a pair of long-standing class-action lawsuits.

The measure also settles four long-standing disputes over Native American water rights in Arizona, New Mexico and Montana.

At a signing ceremony at the White House the president declared, "It's finally time to make things right."

Elouise Cobell, a member of the Blackfeet Tribe from Browning, Montana, the lead plaintiff in the Indian case,

called the signing ceremony "breathtaking," adding that she did not expect it to happen in her lifetime. Cobell filed the suit almost 15 years ago and led efforts to reach the \$3.4 billion settlement a year ago and then push it through the House of Representatives and the Senate.

At least 300,000 Native Americans who say they were swindled out of royalties overseen by the Interior Department since 1887 for oil, gas, grazing and timber rights. The plaintiffs will share the settlement.

Cobell said she was driving her car in Montana when she learned the Senate had approved the measure last month. "I pulled over and I cried," she said.

Even with Obama's signature, the settlement still must go through a gauntlet of court hearings, a media campaign to notify beneficiaries, waiting periods for comments and appeals. The first check is not expected to reach tribal plaintiffs until August.

Even so, Cobell said the day was historic.

"This day means a lot to the elders, because it basically means they receive justice," she said. "The money is secondary. They got justice. The United States government gave them justice."

Democratic Sen. Blanche Lincoln used similar language to describe the black farmers case, which marks the second round of funding from a class-action lawsuit originally settled in 1999. The case, which involves allegations of widespread discrimination by local Agriculture Department offices in awarding loans and other aid, is named after Timothy Pigford, a black farmer from North Carolina who was an original plaintiff.

The new settlement, totaling nearly \$1.2 billion, is intended for people who were denied payments in the earlier settlement because they missed deadlines for filing. Individual amounts depend on how many claims are successfully filed.

Some Republicans have warned that black farmers might make up stories of discrimination that are hard to prove. Republican Rep. Steve King likened the program to "modern-day reparations" for African-Americans and argued that the claims process is rife with fraud.

The bill includes new safeguards to prevent fraud, including an extended court approval process and government audits.

Briefly

Dorgan prepares to leave Senate

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota Sen. Byron Dorgan said goodbye to the Senate last week, saying he'll be a cheerleader for the chamber from the outside.

The 68-year-old Democrat didn't run for re-election. He's leaving Congress after 18 years in the Senate and 12 years in the House.

Among his duties: chairing the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

He says the nation must keep its promises to American Indians and advocate trade policies that help preserve American manufacturing.

Calif. affirmative action ban

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge has rejected a lawsuit challenging California's voter-approved ban on affirmative action in public university admissions.

U.S. District Court Judge Samuel Conti last week ruled against the challenge to Proposition 209, which banned the consideration of race and

ethnicity in public education, employment and contracting.

The lawsuit was filed by the several pro-affirmative action groups that argued the law violated the civil rights of black, Latino and Native American students who are underrepresented at the state's most prestigious campuses.

Group supports Internet poker bill

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The commercial casino industry's top trade group said that it supports efforts by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to fully legalize Internet poker.

The American Gaming Association said the bill Reid's pushing includes solid oversight and consumer protections.

"Current online gambling laws do not provide these safeguards, leaving players and the system open to fraud, cheating and other illegal acts," Frank Fahrenkopf, the group's chief executive, said in a statement.

The association, based in Washington, D.C., represents the interests of the nation's more than 440 commercial casinos, which account for more than half the gambling revenue

generated in the United States.

The bill already faces opposition from some Republican leaders.

Analyst Bill Lerner of Union Gaming Group told investors this week that the measure would have to pass before the current Congress ends its session next week and Republicans take control.

Custer's flag worth \$2.2 million

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — After spending much of the last century in storage, the only U.S. flag not captured or lost during Custer's Last Stand at the Battle of Little Bighorn sold at auction for \$2.2 million.

The buyer was identified by the New York auction house Sotheby's as an American private collector.

Frayed, torn, and with possible bloodstains, the flag from one of America's hallmark military engagements had been valued before its sale at up to \$5 million.

The 7th U.S. Cavalry flag — known as a "guidon" and with a distinctive swallow-tailed shape—had been the property of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Questions remain after slaying verdict

By Nomaan Merchant
Associated Press

RAPID CITY, S.D. — The daughters of a slain American Indian Movement activist said Saturday they are pleased with the latest conviction in the 35-year-old murder case but remain convinced there are others who haven't been charged.

Former AIM member John Graham was convicted Friday in the murder of Annie Mae Aquash in 1975 on South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation. Her death remains synonymous with AIM and its often-violent clashes with federal agents in the 1970s.

Marty Jackley, the state attorney general who

prosecuted the case, wouldn't say if anyone else might face charges.

"We want to take an opportunity to look back at what the evidence showed and make an informed decision," Jackley said.

Aquash's daughters, Denise Maloney Pictou and Debbie Maloney Pictou, still don't believe the full story is known about their mother's death.

"I want people to take responsibility for their involvement," Denise Maloney Pictou said. "People now know who the main players are."

Debbie Maloney Pictou, a corporal in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said she thought Graham's case was "just a step forward" in finding justice. "There's still a lot of work that needs to be done," she said.

Graham was acquitted of premeditated murder, but found guilty of felony murder in connection with a kidnapping, which carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison. One juror said afterward there was swift agreement that Graham was culpable but disagreement during jury deliberations about whether he actually fired the fatal shot.

Another activist Arlo Looking Cloud, was also convicted in Aquash's slaying six years ago and is serving a life sentence.

Prosecutors did not address at trial who ordered Aquash's death. Several former leaders of the group—which gained prominence in the 1970s but has since faded from public view—have denied being involved.

Heartbreak in suicide rate

By Rachel D'Oro
Associated Press

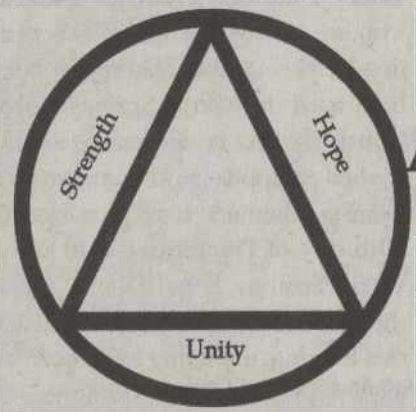
ANCHORAGE, Alaska — She's trying to be cool, even when she's not, she says. Then Natasha Singh issues a blunt announcement: She suffers from depression.

It's a taboo subject in Native communities. She believes many suicides among her peers are the result of this silence of young people denying their pain or numbing it with alcohol and drugs to take the only way out they know.

Singh, who also suffers from anxiety, wants to remove the stigma of seeking help in Alaska Native communities. That's why she decided to speak at a "listening session" being held by federal agencies.

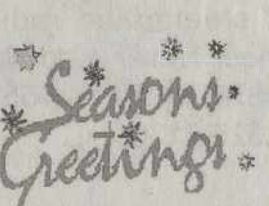
Federal officials say the sessions aim to explore ways to better address the disproportionate rate of suicides in Alaska Native and American Indian communities, most notably among the young.

The rate of suicides among indigenous Americans ages of 15 and 29 was nearly double the national rate in 2006-2007, according to the latest figures available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Alcoholics Anonymous

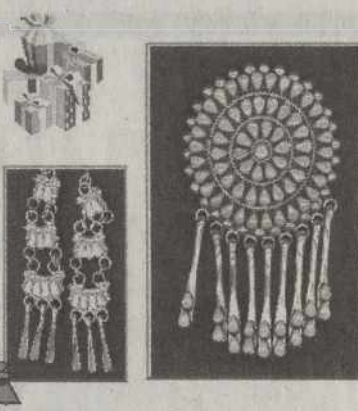
Warm Springs Community Counseling
Wednesday - 12-Noon & 7:00 p.m.
Saturday - 10 a.m.



DECEMBER SALE!

Searching for that perfect gift? Come visit the Museums' gift shop. We are featuring our annual Holiday Gift Baskets!

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Gift Shop Sale: 20% off all silver jewelry!

COUPON: Bring this in and receive \$3 off any gift basket valued at \$20 or more!

Expires 12/31/10

Tribal Jobs

This is a partial listing of job opening within the Warm Springs Tribes. See Amelia Tewee in the Personnel Department to submit an application, or call 541-553-3262. View full descriptions and apply online at www.ctws.org

Comp and Benefits Compensation and Benefits Coordinator
Annual salary: \$22,026-\$27,055. Contact Lupe Katchia, 541-553-3498.

High Lookee Lodge Bus Driver on call
Hourly Salary: \$10-\$12. Contact Lawrence Macy, 541-553-1182.

Community Health Programs Secretary
Annual Salary: \$20,132-\$22,980. Contact Elizabeth Johnson, 541-553-1196. Deadline to apply is Dec 30.

Forestry Forest Planner
Annual Salary: \$60,000-\$75,000.

Contact Deepak Sehgal, 541-553-2022.

Public Safety Sergeant of Corrections
Annual Salary: \$32,977-\$42,199. Contact Lt. Priscilla Whittenburg, 541-553-3272.

Public Safety Corrections Officers
One for males; two for females. Annual Salary: \$24,037. Contact Lt. P. Whittenburg, 541-553-3309.

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