

Letters to the editor

Seniors checks

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Finance department reports a formatting issue with the most recently cut senior citizen pension checks for February, 2023. Tribal members who have not yet cashed their check should return them to the Vital Statistics Department, and they will be reissued. If you did cash your check, there is no need to take any action.

Regarding covid

All Covid-19 policies and protocols, as outlined in Tribal Council resolutions 12,696, 12,697 and 12,710 are suspended until further notices, as stated in the recent Council action resolution no. 13,026.

Mandatory vaccination for employment is no longer required. Proof of vaccination, boosters and exemption forms are no longer required.

All administrative leave for covid is no longer in effect. If you are exposed or contract Covid-19, please contact Community Health, 541-553-2460; or follow the instructions provided to you by your respective health care provider. Personal time off, or leave without pay will need to be utilities during a covid-related absence. Should you have any questions, please contact Human Resources.

Storytelling

Listen to traditional Nez Perce Storytelling from Harry Slickpoo Jr., followed by con-

versation exploring the art, history, and science embedded in traditional stories and their ability to hold and perpetuate living culture.

Harry Slickpoo Jr. is an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe. A Language Instructor for Northwest Indian College and Lewiston High School teaching nimiiputimt (Nez Perce language), Harry is also the Collections Specialist for the Nez Perce Tribe's hitéemenwees Research Library.

He is a Cultural consultant to Nez Perce Tourism, a Nimiipuu owned company enriching Nimiipuu cultural identity and providing a bridge for non-Native people to think more deeply about our connection to the Land.

You can join Harry at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 17 on Zoom. To register, see the website:

confluenceproject.org

Also coming up: Join Confluence and filmmaker Woodrow Hunt, of Tule Films, for the premiere of his most recent collaboration with Confluence, a documentary short called *Stories from the Canoe*. The film centers on Pacific Northwest tribal canoe culture.

The program includes a panel talk with representatives from Native canoe families featured in *Stories from the Canoe*. This event will be on March 19 at 2 p.m. at the Whitsell Auditorium at the Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park Avenue in Portland. Admission is free.

YouthBuild project at West Hills neighborhood

The West Hills neighborhood has had quite a bit of construction work happening over the past several months, as renovation of units is done by the local Housing Authority, contractors and other programs.

The Heart of Oregon Corps was doing some demolition work last week. The YouthBuild crew is made up of young people from Central Oregon, including the reservation.

Shelly Bronson is the Construction and Safety Manager for Heart of Oregon Corps YouthBuild. Ms. Bronson and the crew were in Warm Springs doing de-construction on three houses.

YouthBuild had a team of youth who come out

on a daily basis. Their work included taking out flooring, taking out walls, and working their hearts out.

The team loves working on the reservation. For youth who are interested, the YouthBuild Spring Cohort will begin in April with information session starting in March. All of the information is available at heartoforegon.org

Heart of Oregon and YouthBuild programs are designed for young people, ages 16-24, who are ready to make positive changes in their lives through a job, education, and community service.

Youth in the programs work at hands-on outdoor projects that improve the community. This includes activities like maintaining trails, reducing wildfire fu-



els, and even building an entire house.

Youth earn a weekly stipend or minimum wage for full-time work and can also earn college scholarships.

Finally, the young people learn everything from math and writing skills to career planning and resume writing, all while gaining high school credits, preparing for the GED, or taking their first college class. 2023 Spring Cohort Information Session Dates

All interested applicants must attend one pre-enrollment information session before he or she can be invited for an interview.

Interviews will take place on Thursday, April 6. Each information session is from 5 to 6 p.m. at YouthBuild office, located at 68797 George Cyrus Rd, Sisters.

Upcoming YouthBuild pre-enrollment Information sessions are:

Thursday March 9. Thursday March 16. Thursday March 23. And Tuesday April 4.

Applications for the April Cohort are due by Monday, April 3. Mental Toughness orientation begins Monday, April 10.

Tribes caught in food safety dilemma

Eat fish; it's healthy. Except when it isn't.

That's the quandary that many Pacific Northwest and Columbia River tribal members face as they try to balance their strong historic and cultural ties to salmon with modern studies that show salmon in their area can be polluted by contaminants—among them mercury and a host of other toxic chemicals.

The quandary arises because many tribal members eat more than what health officials suggest is the safe amount of salmon each month—eight 8-ounce servings. Because of that, they are particularly vulnerable to

the contaminants that can be in the fish.

Why do the tribes eat so much salmon? To begin with, salmon has always been an important part of the Native diet. For many, it's medicine. Like other natural foods they've always eaten—berries and roots, for example—it keeps them not only well-fed but also healthy.

"All of our foods were medicine because there were no chemicals," said Wilbur Slockish, who serves on the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission.

That approach to healthy eating is no different from modern-day medical experts

who advise people to stick to a natural diet and avoid processed foods. But it's more than health.

For many tribal members, fish, especially salmon, is an important part of their identity and their values. Tribes have annual ceremonies welcoming the fish back to their "native rivers," and tribal members make sure their elder members get some of that fish. Not surprisingly, salmon is considered a source of strength and medicine—the most important of all foods on the table.

The seemingly simple solution for health officials is to recommend that tribal members eat less salmon.

Whereas that solution, at first glance, appears to be a practical one, it isn't one that meets tribal customs and cultural needs.

"Absolutely not," said Fran Wilshusen, Habitat Services director at Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. "It's a precious resource. From a health standpoint, it's one of the best foods you can eat."

"The long-term solution to this problem isn't keeping people from eating contaminated fish—it's keeping it from being contaminated in the first place," said Aja DeCoteau, executive director of the Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

Finding a way through sadness

by Dr. Shilo Shaw Tippett for KWSO

This is the third article in a four-part series on coping with grief and loss.

It is normal to have good and unbelievably bad days during periods of deep sadness. You might want to isolate and stay in bed all day and feel like you never want to see the light of day again.

You are the only person that knows for sure what you need, but it is important that you stay connected to people you trust who are closest to you.

Some friends and family might pull away, but remember that is because of their process, not because of you. It is best to remember to

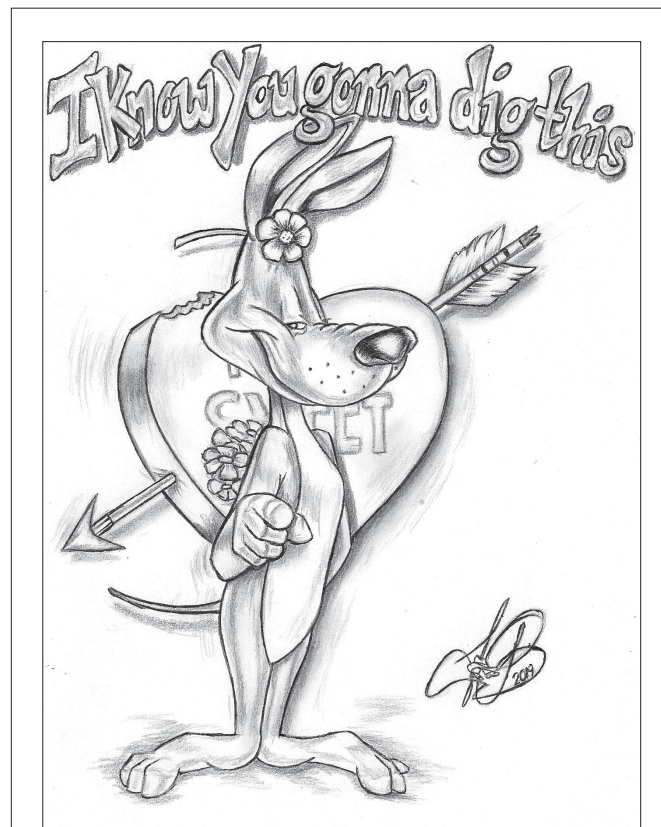
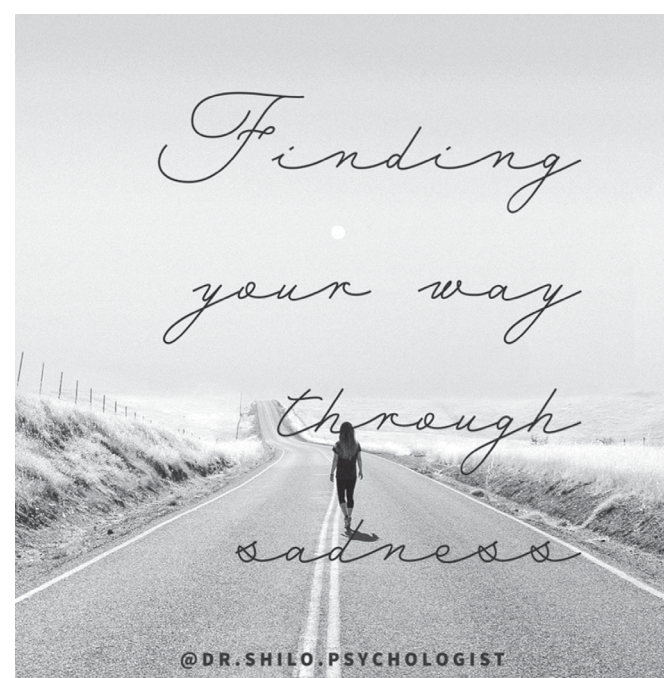
engage in self-care as much as possible during times of intense sadness.

Keeping hydrated, eating fruits and vegetables, and trying to keep a good wake-sleep balance is very important to relieving sadness.

Try to be patient with yourself every day. As time goes on, try to balance your sadness with getting back to some more routine activities.

That will be very difficult but is important to the healing process. There are medications and some cognitive behavioral therapies that may help, you can talk to a primary care provider for more information.

Remember, you are not alone. Text 741741 or call 988 for support.



~ A couple of Valentine's Day Wishes for the people of the Confederated Tribes ~
From Warm Springs artist Travis Bobb ~



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