

Tribal Members in New York

■ Interns, chaperones find the Big Apple an "eye-opening" experience.



By Chris Mercier

Muslims make the arduous Haj to Mecca. Elvis disciples move many miles to Graceland. And hopefully more Tribal members will follow in the footsteps of Cristina Lara and Teresa Henry. The two Willamina High School Seniors made their own pilgrimage of sorts in July to New York as interns for the American Museum of Natural History.

"Pilgrimage" might be an awkward term for the three-week internship, but given that an ancient Tribal relic rests at the heart of the story, one that required countless other journeys on its behalf, a more fitting word might not exist.

The internship evolved following the Tribe's legal negotiation with the museum for ownership of the Willamette Meteorite or "Tomanowos."

In November of 1999, the Tribe filed its claim to Tomanowos under the Native American Graves Protec-

tion and Repatriation Act of 1990. This timely venture came only months before the Museum planned on opening its new \$210 million Rose Center for Earth and Space, in which the 15 ton meteorite is housed. The two sides reached an agreement in June of 2000 — one that allowed Tribal members special access to the meteorite, which before being shipped to the Museum nearly one century ago had long been an object of reverence for the Clackamas Tribe. The Clackamas people were one of the many Tribes forced onto the Grand Ronde Reservation.

A dialog was struck during the eventual signing of the agreement last year and the Inside View Internship Program, which for years had extended its opportunities to many New York based students, created two slots for Native Americans, the same two that went to Lara and Henry.

The major hope of the internship is to enrich the participants. They could understand and better appreciate their own cultures and traditions, increase the awareness of Native American ideas and matters to more museums and the general public, and through research be introduced to the sciences of archaeology and anthropology.

Lara certainly received her fair share of that — she was assigned to work in the Museum's Discovery Room, a section for kids that featured fossils, bones and a model excavation site. The fit was nearly perfect as the experience renewed her interest in history, a subject she gives much consideration to studying in college.

"It has given me some direction, that's for sure," Lara said.

The experience for Henry was similarly fitting. She toiled away in the Communications Department, researching for press releases and working in the IMAX Theater. Yet ironically, Henry developed a slightly contrasting opinion from Lara over the internship.

"I learned I don't want to work in an office," Henry recalled.

Then what precisely would she like to work in?

"Law, no.

"Psychology, no.

"Would I like to study to be a doctor? Yes."

Not that Henry is in any way knocking the internship, but rather, she pointed out, it was the experience as a whole that affected her, not her particular assignment. The two girls shared similar opinions on that. Notably, both of them became good friends with other interns, as the



Cristina Lara



Teresa Henry

Big City Girls — Getting to see the sites of New York City was an education for Cristina Lara and Teresa Henry — both Seniors at Willamina High School in Little Willamina, Oregon. A typical street scene in New York, not to mention the height of the surrounding landscape, is a bit different than what they were used to. After living and working in the big city, both Tribal members said they learned from the experience.

Museum had provided internships for students of all backgrounds.

"There were 16 of us total," Lara recalled. "We had African-American interns, Korean interns..."

Yet they were the only Native-Americans, as well as the sole non-New Yorkers, a situation that evidently conferred minor celebrity status.

"People were very interested in Native ways," Lara reflected. "They were so open to everything."

"They don't care about the color of your skin," she continued. "It's what's inside that they like."

Henry agreed.

"There are so many kinds of people there (in New York)."

Few places on Earth can compare with New York City in terms of diversity and it would surprise nobody that visiting the Big Apple was the highlight for both young ladies, and for their chaperones, Richard Sohapp and Dustin Harmon, who also attended, though for only half the three-week duration.

"When you walk down the street, you hear so many different languages," said Sohapp. "You don't hear much English."

To say that the four of them didn't enjoy themselves would be blatantly false. But they, like most people, were overwhelmed by what New York had to offer: The world. Volumes have been written on the "City that Never Sleeps," from fiction to

"I appreciate now where I live, what I have. I grew up a lot."

~ Teresa Henry



Photos by Brent Merrill

Like a Movie Script, Tomanowos has a Great Story

■ Young Tribal members look into the future, wonder how the story will end.

By Chris Mercier

The story of the 'Tomanowos' meteorite plays out like a movie script, lending an aura to an object not lacking mystique.

The meteorite fell to Earth thousands of years ago, in fact predating human settlement. Originally lodged near Idaho's Pend d'Oreille region, a combination of glacial shifts and the Great Missoula Flood thousands of years ago deposited it on the previous spot near Willamette Falls, according to the American Local History Network (www.usgennet.org/ah/norus).

The Clackamas people seemed somehow aware of its celestial origins, hence its moniker which translates to various meanings such as "Heavenly Visitor" or "Visitor from the Moon."

The meteorite was deemed supernatural and rainwater collected in its cavities supposedly had medicinal value, as did arrows anointed in it before battle or hunts. Indians seeking strength and courage and children during puberty also made pilgrimages to the site for spiritual power.

The Treaty of 1855 that effectively created the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, to which the Clackamas belonged, also ceded the land on which Tomanowos was located and for nearly half a century it lay forgotten. But in 1902, a Welsh coalminer — Ellis Hughes — dis-



"I touched it. It was a trip. I mean this thing is from outer space."

~ Cristina Lara

covered the meteorite nearly a mile away from his property. He and a neighbor hatched a plan to buy the land where it lay, which technically belonged to the Oregon Iron and Steel Company. That scheme fell through and Hughes opted to steal it.

The theft consumed three whole months as Hughes and his son, equipped with an old horse, gradually dragged the 15-ton meteorite home.

After building a shack around it, Hughes began charging 25 cents for people to see it. Unfortunately Hughes inept heist left a rather obvious trail and in 1904 the Oregon Iron

"Tomanowos" — At the center of the American Museum of Natural History's Rose Center for Earth and Space is Tomanowos. The 15-ton meteorite educates the 8 million visitors a year to the connection between this unique gift from outer space and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. Recently, two young Tribal members had a chance to experience the meteorite's current surroundings and bring the stories home.

and Steel Company sued him over ownership. The case was an eventful one and went the company's way. Hughes appealed the case while a team of horses was sent to his property to haul the meteorite off. An injunction stopped the repossession and the company hired a 24-hour guard to sit atop Tomanowos with a shotgun.

In 1905, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled the company the rightful owner and thus the first legal hassle over Tomanowos ended. A year later, however, a certain New Yorker — Mrs. William Dodge — bought the meteorite for \$20,600 and promptly donated it to the American Museum of Natural History, where it has been ever since.

Fitting, given the history of Tomanowos, that Tribal members must now make their own journey just to see it. Fitting that an ancient Tribal relic now rests in the epitome of modernity. No wonder nobody returns from the trip the same.

"I appreciate now where I live, what I have," Henry said. "I grew up a lot."

Lara would offer similar sentiments.

"It opened my eyes to the world," she said. "I found it good preparation for college...for real life."

Sohapp hopes more Tribal members get the opportunity to participate in the internship. In concurrence with the two interns he said it "teaches them that there's a world outside of Grand Ronde."

And so finally, what about Tomanowos? How was it to travel across the continent and see the unearthly hunk of ore — enigma in so many lives?

"I touched it," Lara said. "It was a trip. I mean this thing is from outer space."

But nobody said there was a universal effect.

"There were kids crawling over it," Henry said, somewhat disappointed. "I didn't understand...it felt awkward."

"It was out of place," she added. "It should be here."

Some artifacts, Henry said, don't belong in a museum. And if her sentiments are shared with any more Tribal members, then one wonders how many pilgrimages are left, and if the eternal Tomanowos saga will ever be finished at all.

Job Opportunity for High School Student

The Tribal Education department is seeking applications for a high school intern at the Tribal Preschool Head Start beginning in September running through mid-August 2002. Interviews will be held the first week in September.

Qualifications: Must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member; currently enrolled and attending high

school; able to work well with children and staff; dependable and willing to participate in additional training and pass a criminal background check.

For more information please call Vikki Bishop at 503-879-2287. To request an application call the Human Resources department at 503-879-2109.



Circus Day at Preschool — Preschool Supervisor Danis Bazzy-Bucknell paints the face of Kallie Kellogg during "Circus Day 2001." The children played games, ate snow cones and just "played."



Photo courtesy of Education staff

This Could Be the Start of Something Great....

The lilu (wolf) classroom at Twax San-chaku Head Start and Preschool have begun to develop quite a name for themselves as singers and dancers. The class was recently invited to sing in Chinuk at the grand opening of the Earth's Fury exhibit at the A.C. Gilbert Children's museum in Salem. Since this was an evening event, only five of the children's families were able to attend, but we wanted to recognize those families who went out of their way to make sure their children shared in the experience — those who attended (pictured above from left) were Leann Rogers, Halee Eltrich, Mykal Stewart, Codie Haller and Abby Bobb (not pictured).

The "lilu singers" also had the honor of singing and drumming in Dallas on August 3 to help raise money for the American Cancer Society.