

New Hatfield Fellow Has A World of Experience

■ Tribal member Bryan Mercier had a great time in Washington, D.C. earlier this year under a Morris K. Udall Internship and now he has a ticket back.

By Ron Karten

Tribal member Bryan Mercier, 29, started working for the Tribe in his junior year in high school. In all, he put in seven years working in the Tribes' Natural Resources Department.

"I was with the first youth crew. I worked with Butch LaBonte. Cliff Adams was my first boss," he said.

Now, he has been named recipient of the Tribes' 2003 Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship. Having just finished a very successful three-month Morris K. Udall Internship at Senator Gordon Smith's office in Washington, D.C., Mercier is hoping the Hatfield program will allow him to return to Smith's office.

"I was very nervous about going to work for Senator Smith," said Mercier. Smith, of course, is a Republican, and Mercier has long held progressive views. But he developed unexpected admiration for Smith. "He's a good man. He's not afraid to stand up to his party. He's not a lap dog for the Republican party. He does what he thinks is right. He voted against the ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska) drilling. He voted against withdrawing from the Test Ban Treaty."

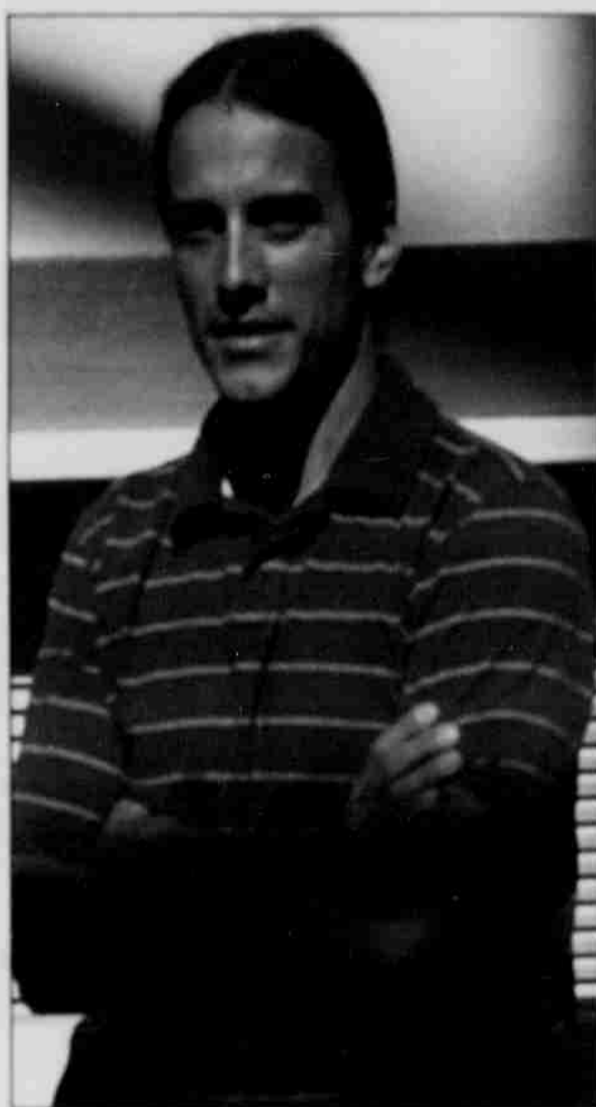
In recent months Smith was appointed to a seat on the Indian Affairs subcommittee. That allowed Mercier to follow legislation going through Congress affecting Indian Country, to research issues, to report to Smith and to have a sense that he was making a difference.

Mercier brought a lot to the internship. He started his education at the University of Oregon, took advantage of an exchange program with Cologne, Germany for a few months, and from Cologne, he hopped across Europe, to Prague, Munich, Barcelona and Amsterdam.

"That's where I really started to enjoy travel," he said.

He graduated from UO in 1997 with a degree in Business Administration and German and went right back to the city of Freiberg in Germany. He took a Masters Degree in Economics at the University of Freiburg.

"That's where I fell in love with economics," he said. It was not just the theory of economics that grabbed him but how it also both explains and affects human behavior. If you have the time, he'll also tell you the difference between the economic neo-liberals and the Keynesians.



Bryan Mercier

While in Germany, Mercier also played semi-professional soccer.

From Germany, he moved to Madrid where he took more degrees at the University of Charles III, and specialized in law for indigenous peoples, now his focus for the future.

"I want to work in economic development of indigenous communities," he said. He cited indigenous communities in Mexico, who are "out of the system."

The same thing that happened to Indians in America 100-150 years ago now is being repeated among the indigenous peoples of Mexico, he said: "The displacement of the indigenous peoples for the resources that the land has," said Mercier.

But the communal nature of people in Mexico,

and in nations across Central and South America, are enabling them to fight government and corporate efforts to steal their resources, according to Mercier. Privatizing property is much more lucrative than allowing communal ownership, but the people of Mexico, like those in Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador, are extending their communal view of the world to include voting as a block, and thus, amassing political power.

The Hatfield Fellowship, a nine-month program from November through August, will enable Mercier to continue his work on behalf of indigenous peoples.

Mercier's mom — "the most amazing woman," he said — Patricia Mercier, a former Chief Financial Officer for the Tribe, now serves as a financial consultant for Tribes across the country. His brother, Chris, former staff writer for *Smoke Signals*, also is a world traveler.

"We've crossed paths many times," he said, "once in Turkey. I knew he was in Turkey but I didn't know where." Bryan was on a bus with a girlfriend, a blond haired German girl who stood out in Turkey, and it was this girl that Chris recognized from the street. "Yelling and screaming, he stopped the bus."

"Since I moved out," said Bryan, "we've become very good friends."

The Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship is given each year by the Spirit Mountain Community Fund to a member of a recognized Tribe in the Northwest. It honors the man, who as governor and senator played an important role in the restoration of Oregon Tribes, and beyond that, "The Hatfield Fellowship will ensure that Mark Hatfield's legacy of integrity, strength and effectiveness in public service will endure," according to the Fellowship's statement of purpose. "Each year, it will enable a Native American to serve as a member of the staff of one of Oregon's congressional delegation."

The Hatfield Fellow serves as a liaison between a congressional member and the Tribes on issues that affect Native Americans, and as a resource for the entire Oregon delegation.

College Bandstanding

■ Tribal member Rowan Phillips plays a marching trombone.

By Ron Karten

Tribal member Rowan Phillips has been pushing wind through his trombone pretty much regularly since the sixth grade. Those days, he's putting in a half-hour practice three times a day.

With just the right combination of purpose and teenage-inspired independence, he said that he practices "whenever I'm not doing something, I do it. I don't schedule it or anything."

He will be joining the "Reddies," the marching band for Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, when he enters as a freshman in the fall.

He starts at Henderson State as Cove High School's (Malvern, AR) John Philip Souza Award winner, given each year to the school's best band student.

"If I start on a piece and I figure it out by the time I'm finished practicing, that usually gives me a sense of accomplishment," Phillips said by phone from Malvern, Arkansas, where he lives.

"As we are a family of musicians, it is exciting having him carry on the legacy in the spirit of the traveling show band," wrote his grandmother,

Tribal Elder Patsy Pullin. Phillips is the great grandson of Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison.

"I don't think I really got serious until the beginning of senior year," said Phillips. He was playing football, too, nose guard, for a team that hadn't done particularly well on the field since his sophomore year, but "I knew I wouldn't get a scholarship playing football..." so the renewed effort in music seemed like a smart effort to make.

Like many Tribal members who live far afield, Phillips has missed a lot of Tribal activities. "I've never been to a pow-wow," he said, but last summer he visited and met many family members.

"I thought it was nice up there," he said. "About as green as down here but without the humidity."

He will enter college with a Social Science major, he said, "because I enjoyed history and civics and geography. My global studies class my senior year was probably my favorite, except band."

On the other hand, he is keeping his options



Rowan Phillips

open. "I went up there on Freshman Day, when you pick your majors, but I don't know if I'll stay with it."

Phillips is another beneficiary of the Tribes' college scholarship program. He has a \$3,000 a year Education Trust Fund Scholarship automatically renewable for four years as long as he keeps his grades up and takes a full class load; plus a \$2,200 renewable Higher Education Grant from the Tribes, to cover unmet educational needs. In addition, Henderson State is providing him with a band scholarship worth \$400 per semester.

The Cove High School band had four trombones. At Henderson State, he will be playing in a band with 21 trombones.

"I'm still practicing," he said.