

Piece of Tomanowos unsold at New York auction

Future of 29.5-pound piece still undetermined

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The auctioning off of a 29.5-pound piece of Tomanowos on Sunday in New York City failed to attract the minimum bid sought by a meteorite collector and was withdrawn from sale.

The crown section of Tomanowos — also known as the Willamette meteorite — drew a high bid of \$300,000, far less than the \$1.1 million price sought by its owner, Darryl Pitt.

It was withdrawn rather than be sold for less than the minimum

estimated price. However, the sale of another piece of Tomanowos — a 1.1-pound sample — went for \$29,875. It also originated from Pitt's collection.

The reluctance of meteorite collectors to buy the larger chunk of Tomanowos was good news to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Tomanowos is considered a sacred object and was venerated by the Clackamas Chinook before it was "discovered" in 1902 by a part-time miner.

"We were thrilled to see that our message of not trafficking in sacred and cultural Native artifacts is resonating throughout the United States," said Siobhan Taylor, public

affairs director for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Taylor said she thinks the controversy surrounding the sale of the crown section of Tomanowos made potential buyers stop and think, which quelled interest in purchasing the item.

Pitt said via e-mail that "false statements" made by *The Oregonian* in an Oct. 17 editorial that the Grand Ronde might sue the piece's new owner put a damper on the sale. *The Oregonian* printed a correction several days later regarding the threat of a lawsuit by the Tribe.

Pitt obtained the crown section of Tomanowos in 1998 from the American Museum of Natural His-

tory in exchange for a half-ounce piece of a Martian meteorite.

The following year, the Tribe sought return of Tomanowos from the museum, which has housed it since 1906, citing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

In 2000, the Tribe and museum reached an accord that keeps Tomanowos in New York City and provides for annual ceremonial access to Tribal members, as well as acknowledgement of the meteorite's religious importance.

Pitt said also via e-mail that he plans on retaining the 29.5-pound piece of Tomanowos and perhaps offering it at auction again in the future. ■

First conference held since 1993

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◆ And diversification of Tribal business pursuits.

What made the formula a winner, many believe, was less the ideas and more the effect of bringing together so many different communities.

Chemeketa Community College and Portland State University were represented. State and county police and the West Valley Fire District were there. Lawyers and financial wizards, pastors and bureaucrats, nonprofits and legislative representatives all showed up. Tribal Council members, Tribal employees, Tribal Elders and younger Tribal members were involved.

It was a group that Tribal Human Resources Director Walter Kalinowski called a tremendous mixture of different folks.

Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor said it was an opportunity for people with differing views to sit down and hear why others think they way they do.

Even the tables were planned for diversity, said Vicki Willis, who, with Connie Green of Salem-based Willis, Green & Associates, facilitated the two-day Future Search Conference held Oct. 9-10 in the Tribal gym. (Willis's husband, Jim, served as the Tribe's general manager from 1986-96.)

The program, an update of a similar future forum held in 1993, started with Tribal history.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy guided the group through thousands of years of history up to the time that Spirit Mountain Casino was built in 1995.

Tribal member and General Manager Chris Leno brought the group up to the present, describing buildings and programs the Tribe has developed since building the casino.

Table by table, participants talked in general about values it found important for the Tribe to hold. Later, they voiced hopes and fears for the Tribe, and described outcomes they would like to see come to fruition in the next 10 years.

Settlement of the enrollment

issue, total Tribal sovereignty, a sustainable comprehensive health plan and a healthy community were among those outcomes.

On Day Two, participants created action areas that will move the Tribe toward its vision. Among those, participants suggested holding continuous community meetings regarding enrollment issues, assessing education needs and expanding the Tribal library, as well as developing a comprehensive plan including finding funding sources for a heritage center.

After the conference, members of the event's planning committee and other Tribal leaders will "move into a more formal strategic planning process," said John Mercier, director of Programs and Services.

The 1993 process, for example, led to a full land-use plan, but Mercier emphasized that it is still too early to see where last month's process will lead.

Tom Fox, Oregon Economic Development Department's Business Development officer for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties, attended to see where the state and Tribe's interests in developing environmentally sound energy sources might converge.

"The governor would like to lead the nation in the research and application of alternative fuels as economic development, and I wanted to see where our interests might intersect," Fox said after the meeting.

"We're kind of challenging everybody to become more sustainable. I think people were talking about a lot of interesting stuff and we probably do have some intersecting interests."

"I was glad to see that a lot of the things that I was concerned about everybody is concerned about,"



Photo by Toby McClary

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy

said recently elected Tribal Council member Steve Bobb.

Bobb said he saw some new directions or changes in emphasis. "We've kind of developed a few problems because of the money," he said. "Members have been pretty relaxed about taking care of themselves. You can't have the privileges and not the responsibilities."

At the last similar session 14 years ago, "We decided that a social services recipient should have to pay back to the Tribe for what he received," Bobb said. "What happened to that? It looked good on paper, but what about implementing it?"

"As time changes, our values change," said Tribal member Perri McDaniel. "It's not so much about the money anymore. We're concerned

about what people do with it."

"Hopefully, we'll see a continuation of what we've been doing," said Tribal member Dan Stroebel. "This was a reaffirmation. Obviously, it's been working well."

"It's good we're getting to talk together in this atmosphere," said Tribal member Monty Parazoo, who drove up from Eugene to attend. "A little bit of a negative: when we're talking about the Tribe's future, I'm reluctant to have so many outsiders. It's better to do it among Tribal members."

"This will be some help for the Tribe going into new businesses. We've talked about it for years but not much has been done."

"Hopefully, it will get people excited about (planning) again and remind them of issues they have forgotten about that we can now move forward with," said Tribal mentee Angie Sears.

As if to prove Sears right, Tribal member Leroy Good said he traveled all the way from Michigan for the meeting.

"It's a great learning experience from my point of view," Good said. "I see how it functions, how different ideas are thrown around. Just to be a part of it, I'm totally amazed by the process."

"It shows the willingness of the Tribe to commit to long-term planning," said Tribal member and Culture Department Manager David Lewis. "I'm kind of hopeful that so many care about participating. My ultimate hope is that we can continue working in a collaborative manner. If the Tribal community sees everybody working toward a goal, we'll start to see more banding behind that issue."

"I'm a great believer in planning," said Kennedy. "It's a necessary tool." ■

Planning to send out survey

In a related process, the Tribe's Planning Office will soon send out a socio-economic assessment survey to the membership.

According to Planning and Grants Manager Kim Rogers, this will allow the rest of the membership input into the Tribal planning process of which the Future Search Conference was an ongoing part.

The survey will be mailed soon.

Tribal members may contact Rogers at 503-879-2250 for more information.