

ETSKA NAV AH PAI THE NEWS CARRIER

QUECHAN NEWS

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**Items Of Special Interest
To Tribe Members**



Look For This Symbol

ETSKA NAV AH PAI THE NEWS CARRIER
QUECHAN NEWS

is published by

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Senior Nutrition Center To Open This Month



Troy Feeney of Arizona Restaurant Supply (above, on right) spent the better part of a morning going over all of the features and equipment in the new industrial kitchen. Dino Jackson, Robert Jones and Joshua Golding are checking out the huge new dining area in the photo on the right. QUECHAN NEWS Photos by William Isbell



One of the most eagerly anticipated improvements to the area between the Paradise Casinos and the Old Subdivision at Fort Yuma is about to open for business, as the new Senior Nutrition Building prepares to begin operations after almost a year under construction.

Emmett Hartt, Sr., Manager of the Quechan Senior Nutrition Program, joined a number of his staff and Brian Golding, Sr., of the Economic Development Agency for a tour of the facility and a final inspection on Halloween Day.

Together they got a demonstration of the built-in fire suppression and alarm system that covers the entire building, and received a thorough explanation of the equipment and systems in the new state-of-the-art industrial kitchen area.

With fully equipped restrooms (that even have sit-down showers!), a cavernous new craft room, exercise facilities and a dining hall that opens out onto a patio to the east, plus large-screen High Definition TVs and billiards, there will be plenty of things to keep the

Quechan elders involved all day, every day.

Emmett says that things are on-schedule for the entire staff to be moved in and ready for an official ribbon-cutting and grand opening tour soon. Right now, they expect to have their Grand Opening Shindig on Friday, the 16th. That could change, so give them a call at 572-0748 for the latest information. The ribbon-cutting will feature native music and dancers, possibly a Pot Luck Meal, and a few short speeches by Tribal Council

members. The whole thing will get underway at 9 AM, so you'll want to be there early if you're looking forward to some of the cake!

The ladies at Senior Nutrition would also like to remind everyone that there will be quite a few elderly people on hand, some of whom need assistance in getting around. Since the first days events will be a bit crowded, please leave any small children at home. That way, everybody there will have the chance to take the whole tour without distractions.



THE ANNUAL QUECHAN COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER

WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH
AT THE QUECHAN COMMUNITY CENTER

Everyone Is Welcome! See You There!



Learned Too Late In Life: Prison a Painful Lesson

My name is Richard Lopez, and I am an enrolled Quechan Tribe member, 24 years old. I'm currently serving a five-year sentence for felony criminal endangerment (which began in January of 2005) in a Montana State Prison.

I am writing this to reach out to my people, mainly the youth of the Kwat'san Nation.

I've been off the reservation since December of 2003, with two-and-a-half of those years spent in prison.

I want to reach out to my people, especially those who are starting out on their path in life. If I could speak with you now, face-to-face, brother-to-brother, I would be telling you how important it is to stay in school and stay away from drugs and alcohol! I have been down that road, and I know first-hand that it is the path to self-destruction.

I understand how hard it is to grow up on the reservation. We all face many obstacles in trying to achieve success. It seemed when I was there growing up, that everyone around me was drinking or getting high. Many people in such an environment want to follow the path of least resistance, or what seems to be the easy road. I know I did. It may seem perfectly harmless at first, but it soon becomes a vise, with a grip you cannot escape.

To those of you who have never tried drugs, I would say: DON'T EVER START! Don't try it even once! To those of you who are using: SOPT! Stop and clean up before your life is ruined, and you find yourself in prison like me, or even worse, dead.

I was like many of my people who grew up on the reservation. I went to San Pasqual Elementary

School. I got into a little trouble as class clown, but my real problems began when I started to smoke weed in the fifth grade.

At first, I just wanted to see what smoking pot was like, to fit into what I thought was the "in crowd". I didn't see any harm in it, so I started smoking more and more. I even started smoking pot with family members. They didn't seem to see any harm in it, either. But, the more pot I smoked, the less I cared about school or my grades. Finally, after so many write-ups, fighting, ditching school and just plain not listening to my teachers, I became the youngest student ever to be kicked out of San Pasqual Middle School.

I was sent to Bill Manes Continuation School in Bard. There, I met a lot of older people who liked to smoke pot, and I felt cool, like I belonged. It was then that I first tried alcohol, and I got drunk when I was only twelve years old.

By that time, I was smoking weed almost daily, and I would go out of my way to get it. I did many things that I would later regret and be ashamed of. I stole stuff from around the house to sell for week money. I even stole some of my brothers' CDs to sell. I convinced myself that I was just bored, and with nothing to do the only way to have fun was to get high. But the truth is, I had lots of productive things to accomplish. I was just too blind from all the pot to see it.

I made sure that everyone I surrounded myself with smoked weed, friends, family, cousins, and classmates. I would walk clear across the reservation just to see someone I knew who had beer or weed. I would run away from home for

days on end.

My grandparents did all they could to help me. They tried to discipline me for running away, but I would rather smoke pot than listen to the lessons they were trying to teach me from experience.

I would often hook up with classmates at school, riding the bus to their stops with them, and get off together to end the day getting drunk and high, rather than going home. My rebellious, disobedient attitude finally landed me in juvenile hall. While trying to stagger home late one night, I was picked up for public intoxication and curfew violation. I was taken to juvie in El Centro. When I was released, I got probation. I ended up going back to juvenile hall in El Centro eight more times, and four times in Yuma. Sometimes for probation violations, some for public intoxication or other alcohol-related crimes, like shoplifting liquor or disorderly conduct.

I began to periodically smoke meth at the age of 16. After another instance of probation violation, my Probation Officer threatened to place me in a Group Home until I turned 18. By that time, I was averaging between 30 and 45 days, each time I went to juvenile hall, and the thought of going away for two whole years scared me. The problem was, it didn't scare me enough to straighten my life out. I just learned to be more careful, and became sneakier. I hid my drug and alcohol problems, and so avoided any more time in juvenile detention.

At that point, I was in another alternative education school for students on probation. But this school was right next to a regular

high school, so I soon fell back into my old ways of getting high and drunk after school. Somehow, I managed to join the school football and baseball teams, and stay on them in spite of my partying ways. I loved playing sports, but I also loved getting high. I sometimes showed up for class, high or hung over, but my position on the team provided me cover, and I could pretend I was just tired from all the practice. I still wonder how I managed to pass and play sports, all while still drinking and getting high.

I did have a few good relationships in high school, but I treated them like all of the other things that should have been important in my life. Getting high and partying was more important than family, friends, grades or sports. Looking back as a man, I regret failing to nurture those relationships, which were all far more valuable than a momentary high. I threw away all of my opportunities to excel in football and basketball just to smoke meth and pot, and drink alcohol. Because of my constant need to be high, I was unable to play the sports I loved at my full potential.

I wanted to feel normal. I remember having a real desire inside to live drug- and alcohol-free. The problems I have caused for my family, those who loved me the most, really rides my conscience.

Finally, only three months from completing high school, I turned 18 and got my first Per Capita payment: \$21,000. I did one of the dumbest things I've ever done in my life, dropping out of school, blowing my money on drink, drugs and partying. In less than four months, my entire \$21,000 was gone!

I bought a car with some of the money, but I lost it when it was impounded. I was renting an apartment in Yuma until the money was gone. I turned 18 in March of 2001,



Author Richard Lopez wants Kwat'san youth to profit from his mistakes, and avoid prison.

Photo Courtesy of Richard Lopez

but by November I was back in jail for public intoxication and disorderly conduct. Thirty days later, I was released with no job, assets or money, and no goals in life. I went back to what I had been doing before my arrest, mooching off friends and cousins who still had money, drinking and doing drugs like before.

From 18 to 20, it is all a blur. I was drinking, smoking weed and meth on a daily basis. Because of my focus on getting high all the time, I never committed to any serious relationships. One of my greatest regrets in life is the opportunity I lost with a very special lady who was going to college at that time, because I was too busy drinking and drugging. She had dreams, goals and aspirations, while I was so self-centered and self-serving that I neglected that possible relationship without thinking twice.

I was a full-blown alcohol and meth addict by 20, living with two of my friends and their parents. I had thrown my life away before I even had a chance to get started, and I was at rock-bottom. Everything about my life depressed me.

In December of 2003, my three half-sisters came down from Montana with my Dad to pay us a

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QUECHAN NEWS

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Have a story idea, or an event you want covered?

QUECHAN NEWS is here to cover the special events and everyday lives of Quechan Tribe Members, and the issues that affect you in the world today. This newsletter is here to keep the lines of communication open, to expand opportunities, and uplift the Native Spirit of the San Pasqual Valley. Your ideas and input are welcome!

Just call the QUECHAN NEWS office Monday through Friday at (760) 572-3912, or email your stories and story ideas to w.isbell@quechantribe.com. I'm looking forward to hearing from you!



Heritage & Culture

On The First of Two Out-of-State Trips This Fall: Quechan Tribe Seniors See The Sights in Tennessee



The Nashville portion of the trip included a boat ride down the Tennessee River to view the city skyline (above left) along with a trip to Dollywood. The elders also spent the most of an afternoon at the Tennessee World War II Memorial. A truly amazing and educational stop on the Nashville tour was getting to see the full scale recreation of the Acropolis of Athens, complete with a full size gilded statue of Athena inside, just like the original once had. After Nashville, they were off to see Memphis and the mighty Mississippi River to the west.

Senior Center Photos by Gene Moore



The first of two Senior Trips this fall took place from October 12th to the 19th, with over 30 Seniors leaving from Sky Harbor Airport after an overnight stay in Phoenix. Flying first into Nashville for a whirlwind tour of the three areas of the state, Western, Middle and Eastern (represented by the three stars on the state flag), the first order of business was getting settled at the hotel and having dinner at the Cock o' the Walk. Next stop, the Grand ol' Opry!

Sunday began with a city tour fol-

lowed by a river cruise and lunch on the General Jackson tour boat, followed by entertainment. The afternoon included a tour of the Country Music Hall of Fame, a welcome rest break, then off to the Nashville Night Life Dinner Theatre.

Back on the bus, the next stop was Pigeon Forge arriving in time for dinner at the Apple Barn Restaurant, then off to a special show at Country Tonight.

The next day they headed to the Dollywood Theme Park for a fun day of rides, food and shopping.

After a hotel rest and freshen up stop, it was off to a special dinner and show at the Dixie Stampede. On the bus again they headed to Memphis and a tour of the many interesting spots where country music is generated and the blues are heard on Beale Street. Graceland was next on the tour along with a great dinner at Corky's Bar-B-Que.

The last day it was back on the bus for the flight home. It was a fast moving and sometimes tiring trip, but everyone says they had a great time and learned alot!



Once in Memphis, the whole group toured Graceland where they viewed the final resting place of Elvis Presley (top left photo) next to the pool in the backyard of his Plantation style home. They also bunched up together at the Graceland Visitors Center (above left) for a group photo, trying hard to get everybody's head into the the picture. Look carefully and you may see your favorite auntie or grandpa in there somewhere! Of course, the visit to Memphis also meant standing in more lines all over again, and Ressie Watts (in the center) took the time to mug for the camera, lightening the mood in one line for a moment. While on Beale Street, near the Mississippi River, a stop at B.B. King's store and Blues Club was also on the itenary.

Senior Center Photos by Gene Moore

HALLOWEEN SCARES UP FUN AT QUECHAN HEAD START!



The annual Head Start Halloween Party at the Quechan Education Complex brought out the kid in everybody as staff and parents joined in with the kids to indulge their need to play dress-up!



There were outdoor tables full of goodies, and goblins and ghosts roaming from room-to-room in search of the best treats. A favorite theme for the girls this year seemed to be "Disney Prin-



cess", followed closely by "Kitty Kat". The boys favored Super Heroes and animals, while all the kids said they were still looking forward to going on the prowl for even more treats that night!



NATIVE AMERICAN ARTISITS SOUGHT FOR 2008 ARIZONA INDIAN FESTIVAL

Three-day event an opportunity to promote work to over 50,000 attendees

PHOENIX — The Arizona American Indian Tourism Association (AAITA) is still looking for qualified artisans to participate in the 2008 Arizona Indian Festival, January 18-20, 2008 at Steele Indian School Park in downtown Phoenix. A celebration of the state's unique and diverse tribal cultures, the Festival will include an Arts & Crafts Market where visitors can purchase authentic handcrafted items by American Indian artists from Arizona. Up to 300 artisans will be given the unprecedented opportunity to showcase their talents to interested parties from around the world.

The 2008 Arizona Indian Festival is expected to draw over 50,000 people over three days. All of the state's 22 American Indian tribes and nations will be represented, making the event a truly unique experience. AAITA has taken care to ensure that all elements of the Arizona Indian Festival stay true to the Native

cultures that are found in the state. This guarantee of authenticity prompted the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee to include the 2008 Arizona Indian Festival in their Super Celebration Series, a series of special events leading up to Super Bowl XLII in Glendale, Arizona.

"As one of the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee's signature events, the 2008 Arizona Indian Festival will attract visitors locally, nationally, and worldwide", says Robin Fohrenkam, AAITA board president. "The artists chosen to exhibit in the Arts & Crafts Market will have a rare chance to share their work with a multitude of people specifically looking for genuine Arizona Native artwork."

To qualify for the Arts & Crafts Market at the 2008 Arizona Indian Festival, artisans must provide proof of registration with a federally recognized tribe of Arizona. Art displayed and sold in each booth must belong to the respec-

tive artisan; no third-party sales contractors or stringers are allowed. Additional rules and regulations are outlined in the application packet.

For an Arts & Crafts Market application or more information about the 2008 Arizona Indian Festival, contact June Shorthair at Red Note, Inc. (602-254-1952, or jms@rednoteinc.com).

The Arizona American Indian Tourism Association (AAITA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, supporting and advancing the efforts of American Indian tourism in Arizona. The mission of the organization is to promote the development of American Indian tourism in Arizona, while respecting the cultural integrity of tribes. AAITA enjoys the leadership of a diverse membership that includes participation by Arizona tribal entities, American Indian business entrepreneurs and diverse governmental and private agencies.

PARADISE CASINOS PRESENTS

ONE NIGHT ONLY!

Patti Page

Paradise CASINOS

On Saturday, December 1st

All Tickets: \$30.00 2 Shows: 6 PM & 8 PM

EDA Survey Seeks Input

The Quechan Indian Tribe's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is conducting a community survey to assess the consumer needs of the residents of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation and the townships of Winterhaven and Bard, California. The EDA will use the information gathered in the survey to assist them with the implementation of future business development on Quechan Tribe owned property located on the reservation, and in or near the Winterhaven and Bard communities. The information will also be used to provide potential tribal entrepreneurs with small business development ideas.

The survey was recently conducted at several community events: The San Pasqual Family Resource Fair, The Per Capital Distribution, and the Quechan Indian Days Celebration.

Allyson Collins, an Economic Development specialist with the agency, says they would like to have more responses, to be sure

the widest cross-section of people living and working here at Fort Yuma get a chance to have their voices heard. If you did not fill one out yet, then please stop by the Quechan Economic Development Office. They will be conducting the survey until mid-November. Surveys are also available at the Quechan ADAPP Office, Quechan social Services, the Quechan Educational Programs Office, and the Tribal Administration Office.

The survey was designed with your time in mind and we have set up the questions so that all you have to do is provide your choices with a checkmark. The EDA staff appreciates your participation in this survey, and we only ask that you provide your honest and straightforward answers to each question.

Results of the survey will be published in the Quechan News by the end of the year. If you have any questions or would like to take part in the survey, please contact Allyson Collins, EDA Specialist, at (760)572-5270.

QUECHAN POST 802



Will hold their annual
Veteran's Day Memorial Service
Monday, November 12
At the Quechan Big House
Starting at 11:00 A.M.

The program will include a Flag Raising by Quechan Post 802
With a Welcome Address by

Quechan Tribe Vice President Keeny Escalanti, Sr.

And a Veteran's Day Message From

Special Guest Speaker Mr. Mike Jackson, Sr.

Quechan Tribe President

All followed by a Community Lunch at Noon

The public is invited to join us as we remember our Veterans!



Diabetes Management Course At Fort Yuma Begins November 7th

A new round of Diabetes Management Classes for any resident of the Ft. Yuma community who faces life with a diagnosis of this sometimes debilitating condition is scheduled to begin at 6 PM on Wednesday, Nov. 7th. The classes will be held at the Ft. Yuma Indian Health Center.

The five-week course meets every Wednesday evening for two- and a-half-hours, and covers all aspects of the disease, from what it is, to preventing complications through meal planning, exercise, and how to keep your spirits up when it seems that you are making no progress.

The course is presented by their Certified Diabetes Instructor and Registered Dietitian, Deborah Drumel. Using a variety of visual aids, hand-outs and classroom exercises, as well as

input from Ric Pollard, R.N., the physical activity instructor at the Health Center, Deborah and Ric stress the importance of proper nutrition and using physical activity to keep things balanced, helping those with Diabetes to maintain their blood sugar at acceptable levels – and, hopefully, limit the need for more invasive therapies.

The first class this week covers what Diabetes is, how to recognize and treat the symptoms, and preventing complications. During weeks 2 and 3, participants will be given practical meal planning advice, how to control portions at meals, and dietary guidance throughout the day, using videos, PowerPoint™ presentations and food models.

Later in the course, Ric will go over ways to increase your physi-

cal activity level without becoming a fitness fanatic, and making healthy changes in your day-to-day life.

The final week, on Wednesday, December 12, the course will cover Diabetes medicines and insulin use, sick-day management of your disease, the importance of taking care of your extremities (especially your feet!) and using mind, spirit and emotion in a holistic approach to staying in control of your life.

This 5-week course is offered throughout the year, but for those who have an especially hard time keeping their Diabetes at bay over the holidays, this might be the perfect time to enroll and get some practical advice in Diabetes Management, right when it's needed the most! Call Deborah at (760)572-4227 to register.

Two at Ft. Yuma IHS up for National Awards in Dec.

Two IHS employees of Fort Yuma Indian Health Center will be recognized with National Directors Awards at Bethesda, Maryland on Thursday, December 13th.

Nominated for the awards by Mr. Gary Wabaunsee, CEO of the Health Center, both are being recognized for their invaluable contributions to the operation of the service unit during the short staffing crisis that plagued the facility this past summer.

Ric Pollard, the Acting Quality Manager of HIS, says the Facilities Manager, Lt. Joshua Simms, will be honored for the time he spent as the Acting Administrative Officer. He has been supervising the non-clinical departments of the Clinic since early summer of this year, in addition to his regular duties of inspecting the grounds, maintaining the buildings and equipment, as well as the general upkeep of all the air conditioning and environmental systems.

Also going to Maryland to re-

ceive an award will be Gilbert Vega, a Physician's Assistant with Indian Health Service (IHS).

A long-time employee with the Indian Health Service, Gilbert began his career as a Nurse before coming to Ft. Yuma, where he was promoted to Physician's Assistant upon completion of additional education. He has stepped up to take on additional duties during the staff's shortage, allowing the on-staff Doctors time to take care of the more serious cases, while he serves as the initial point-of-contact for many patients coming in to receive health care.

In the course of a day, Gilbert will meet, examine, diagnose illnesses, and recommend a course of treatment. He often consults with the physicians on staff to insure the recommended treatment is correct before proceeding. This allows the limited number of physicians at Fort Yuma IHS to consult on more cases every day, maximizing their available resources.

Prison a Painful Lesson

Continued from Page 2

visit. They saw what my life had become, and persuaded me to come back to Montana and live with them in hopes of helping me change my life by kicking my addictions. They were offering me a fresh start in life.

The plan was to have me enroll at the Native American Job corps in Ronan, Montana to help me get away from all the drugs and alcohol. So, one week before Christmas, I left the reservation and went with them. I was drinking my first day there. It wasn't long before I found new people to drink and do drugs with.

In January of 2004, I met a very special woman, who would become my wife and the mother of my children. When she announced she was carrying our baby, I thought that would surely be motivation enough for me to stop all the drinking and drug use. I was going to clean myself up and make something of my life...

But in May of 2004, after only five months in Montana, I committed the crime that would send me to prison: Felony Criminal Endangerment.

I was living with my then girlfriend and her step-daughter, when my step-father asked if I would

watch his house and my sisters while he was out-of-town. After all, I was a 21-year old man. I agreed to help him out, and spent my time smoking weed and drinking while watching his house and babysitting. When one of my sisters asked if she could have some friends over, I told her I didn't care.

In my drunken, pot-smoker's haze, I didn't care about anyone but myself. When my sister's 14 year old friend asked me if I could buy him some Whiskey, I told him I didn't have an I.D., but I still took him to someone who did. All I was thinking about was sharing that bottle and getting drunk myself. Once we had the Whiskey, we went back to the house and got messed up.

My sister's friend eventually passed out, and I took my sister home and went fishing with some friends for several hours. I had planned to return home and get my sister's friend for another round of drinking and partying, but when I got home I found him unconscious. I tried to wake him, and realized he wasn't breathing. I called 911 for an ambulance and then tried to resuscitate him till help got there.

When the paramedics arrived, they quickly figured out that my sister's friend had been dead for over two hours. He had died of

alcohol poisoning while I was out fishing with my buddies.

I was still in shock when the investigators started questioning me about where he got the Whiskey, why he was drinking, and how it all happened. I knew I was in deep trouble, and I got scared and lied to the detectives.

Finally, after I had been questioned four different times, I broke down and told them I had helped get the Whiskey, and I had been drinking with him that day. I was arrested and charged with Felony Criminal Endangerment on May 12, 2004. I was able to post bond, and spent the next ten months in and out of court.

In the midst of all that, my son, Jacob Devin Lopez, was born on October 7th, 2004. My girlfriend had given me a perfect baby boy, and being out on bond to see him made me realize how much I needed to take advantage of what little freedom I had left. I spend every available minute with the woman who would soon be my wife and my little family. When my son was only 3 months old, I was convicted and sentenced to ten years with five years suspended in the Montana State Prison.

I have been incarcerated for 33 months now, and I still find that I have a lot to be grateful for: my beautiful wife, a beautiful step-daughter and my beautiful son. They have all stood by me throughout the ordeal I have put them through. They somehow continue to love me, and offer me moral support.

Because of the Creator, I have received a second chance with my family and a second chance at freedom. Without my wife and family, I wouldn't have found the hope or strength to make it this far. Things could have been worse, with all that I have put myself (and my loved ones) through. There are times I could have easily died. At times, I think it should have been me, rather than my sister's friend, who died that day.

I've had lots of time, sitting in prison, to think about my life and how alcohol, pot and meth has ruined that life. How could these drugs have taken over and ruled my emotions and left me dead to the most valuable and precious

things in my life? I now realize that I was on a one-way trip to the Big House from the moment I took my very first drag of pot.

They say, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." When I think of some of the very special women in my life I took for granted, I know now how true that is. I think back and realize that I've hurt a lot of people who loved me.

It is my wish to all who read this to be proud of who you are. Be proud that you are Kwat'san. Please don't lose your identity. Don't forget where you come from. Spend time at the feet of your Elders and learn from them. Take time to learn your language and your true heritage. Our Elders are important to us as Native Americans, and we can only learn the old way by listening to them and taking their teachings to heart.

Our ancestors were proud to be Kwat'san and they were willing to lay down their lives for us. We come from a strong people, with strong hearts, and we have plenty to be proud of. Become a modern-day Warrior who helps his people, like the Warriors who came before us. Stay in school and get an education, so you can work hard and earn your keep.

Not too many years ago, I was there, participating in all the arguing that goes on amongst our people. We are a family, brothers and sisters who have become a nation with a rich and proud heritage. We are the Kwat'san! I now realize that we are so few compared to some other tribes: we should be standing together, helping each other, rather than fighting amongst our own people.

Let us show greater love and unity with each other. Let us become leaders and examples, both to our children and the other nations.

You can't go back and change the past, you can only move forward and make your future right. Wake up before it's too late! Please don't end up like me, 2000 miles away from home and sitting in prison. It's a heavy burden to bear, knowing that I had a part in the death of a young man. Knowing that my children are out there, growing up and I am not a part of their daily lives.

I also pray every day that the family of that young man may someday forgive me for my part in their loss.

It's a sad thing that I had to come to prison to straighten myself out. It took this for me to wake up to the cold reality of my drug and alcohol problems, and my stubborn, rebellious attitude towards my family, friends and all those who loved me, who only tried to help me before my life became what it is now.

It is said, "Experience is a dear teacher, but fools will learn by no other way." Please don't be like me and all the others sitting in prison, because we refused to listen to our Elders and those who love us. They have a duty and an obligation to correct us when we go astray.

I thank our Creator for giving me this second chance to make things right with my beautiful wife and two children. I've been through a lot of trials in my time in prison. It's particularly hard when a family member or someone you love passes on. You can't do anything to properly grieve. You can't be there with others to pay your respects or see them off on their next life's journey. You can only sit there, choke it down, and go on.

I pray that my story touches the hearts of my people, the Kwat'san. Please feel free to write to me, anytime, for any reason.

Richard Lopez
AO#2081089

Crossroads Correctional Center
75 Heath Road
Shelby, Montana 59474

A note to the readers: Since his incarceration in 2005, Richard Lopez has completed chemical dependency treatment, cognitive principals and restructuring classes, Phases I, II and III, the Medicine Wheel and Montana re-entry programs. He is involved in self-help groups such as Mental Health Group Therapy and Montana Dads Incarcerated, and has completed classes in carpentry. He is also taking Psychology 101 through Blackfeet Community College; and Sociology 101, and Introduction to Health and Nutrition in the Ohio University's Health and Consumer Sciences Course, made possible by a grant he received through the Montana Youth Offender Program.

The Quechan Tribe

Requests Letters of Interest for new members to serve on following Tribal Oversight Committees:

Education Committee
Housing Board
Cultural Committee
Enrollment Committee

Enrolled Quechan Tribe members with an interest in serving on any of the Committees listed should submit a Letter of Interest to:

Committee Membership
Tribal Council Secretary
Quechan Tribe Administration Office
(760) 572-2013, Ext. 204

WARRIOR OF THE COLORADO

Story and photo submitted to
QUECHAN NEWS
by **Tudor Montague**
of the **Quechan Tribe**

Our Kw'tsan people have long been known as fierce warriors. Several accounts of our ancestors' prowess in warfare are documented from the earliest Spanish encounters to the first settlers of Yuma. Even more recently, one of our own has again proven this fact in a very decisive way . . . in the fighter's cage.

I recently had the opportunity to revisit Lawrence, Kansas this past September. Lawrence is the home of Haskell Indian Nations University, where several of our community members have attended school and received degrees. I was speaking to Manual Ayon (who is the grandson of Shirley Escalanti) about my upcoming journey to Kansas, and he mentioned casually that he'd be fighting in a mixed martial arts (MMA) event during the time I was going to be in town.

I immediately made arrangements to attend a couple of the practices at his club during the week I would be in town. He is in training with a club in Lawrence called In-

tegrated Martial Sciences (IMS) that specializes in MMA methods utilized in many cage fights.

The first evening in town we met for a class which covered some Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) techniques, along with the regular conditioning exercises fighters due prior to their fights. Needless to say, most of the evening I was trying to not get wrapped up into a human pretzel while simultaneously trying to catch my breath.

These guys are serious about their training! I did have a chance to roll with Manjo (a nickname that's short for Manuel Joseph), and he was showing me the finer points of chokes and arm bars, at which he seemed to excel.

The next day found us (or me, rather) sweating buckets to an intense boxing workout, this time under the trained eye of a Haskell professional boxing coach. He seemed at ease with the greater majority of the workouts and often used some of his prior training to keep his fellow athletes in line during open sparring.

The day before the fight was one of relaxation and mental preparation. Scheduled to fight at 185 lbs.,

Manjo had to run a few unplanned laps while the others were weighing in that evening. (That frybread was worth it, though!) During this



Manuel "Manjo" Joseph demonstrates a fighting stance just before his big match in Lawrence, Kansas.

time we found out that his opponent was switched up at the last minute. As a result, his original strategy for his other opponent (a professional boxer from Mexico) had to be adjusted to counter the new fighter.

Fight day he was up early and obviously feeling relaxed. The IMS coach directed his team to keep a "normal" schedule on the day of the fight, in order to keep their bodies in tune with their regular routines. Oversleep that morning and

you could run the risk of feeling tired or "burned out" the evening of the fight.

Walking into the venue, you could feel the tremendous energy as there was a large native presence in the crowd, all of whom were there to support Manjo in his cage debut. The event was well organized and very professional, similar to the events held at Paradise Casino.

The card boasted 15 fights for the evening, with Manjo fighting seventh in the line-up. After a few good fights, one of which resulted in a TKO, Manjo was up. The announcer began introducing him as several consecutive war cries shot out from the sound system. The song then hit hard with a powerful beat that got nearly the whole crowd on their feet.

A local group, Savage Family, showed their support by providing the introduction song many fighters play on their walk to the ring. For those of you savvy in the My Space area, you can check out their site – which also has a clip of the fight.

Countless hours of serious and intense training led up to that first bell. The fight started with a hard right being thrown by his oppo-

nent...which never found its target and left an opening that led to a quick swing and then a body-lock by Manjo. A few seconds go by and then we see him quickly lift his opponent high and send him slamming into the mat. On his back, the fighter tries to maneuver for a triangle choke using his legs, with Manjo on top and swinging hard. For a moment, it looks like it could turn into a technical fight. But suddenly, the fight takes a quick turn with a pass by Manjo, which allows him to grab a guillotine choke from the side. Next thing I know, he sinks in his grip, locks in his legs, and the opponent has no other choice but to tap out. In total, the fight lasted 52seconds into the first round before Manjo's win by submission! The crowd went crazy! Overall, the IMS crew won 9 out of 11 fights that night...a pretty dominating showing for his team.

I can truly say that I felt very proud at having one of our own with his hand raised high in the cage that night. He was the only native represented on the card, and he made us all proud. Way to go, Manjo!

You can also watch the fight on YouTube in Real Time format.

San Pasqual Wrestling Coach to Be Inducted Into National Wrestling Hall of Fame This November

With over 45 years in the coaching business, San Pasqual's Don Klostreich has built a well-earned reputation as a no-nonsense guy who takes competition seriously. Under his guidance, what some may think of as a small, out-of-the-way high school on an Indian Reservation in the southeast corner of the giant state of California is building a wrestling team with a reputation out of proportion to their small population.

His record of guiding teams and individuals to the peak of their abilities has produced 12 State Wrestling Team Titles in both Arizona and North Dakota, and 76 individual Wrestling Champions over the years.

Now, after putting everything he's got into the kids he's mentored since 1962, he will be in-

ducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame at the Arizona State Wrestling Complex on Saturday, November 17th. There, he will receive the "lifetime Service to Wrestling" Award, given only to those who have devoted their lives to the sport, and instilled in young people the skills they need to succeed in life through an understanding of competition.

Coach Klostreich began coaching in Minot, North Dakota back in 1962. He guided the high school team there to 3 state championships and 21 individual titles in 8 years. While at Tucson-Sunnyside High in the late '70s and throughout the '80s, he saw his Blue Devils win 9 state wrestling titles in a 10-year stretch, and lose only 3 meets in his 15 years in Tucson.

In an interview with the *Yuma Sun* in October, one of his past students who has gone on to his own success as a wrestling coach spoke of the influence Klostreich had in his life.

Now running one of the top collegiate wrestling programs in the nation at Arizona State University, Coach Thom Ortiz said he not only admired Coach Klostreich's ability to lead, but also noticed his tremendous ability to connect with the kids on the team.

"He was pretty intense", said Ortiz, "but we knew with his intensity that he really cared about the kids."

Ortiz also said that he noticed that the real emphasis through his entire career at Tucson-Sunnyside was his concern for his students' welfare. "When you let (kids) know that you care for them more

than for wins and losses, they wrestle for you and win anyhow."

Upon leaving Tucson in 1989, Klostreich took over the Kofa High Wrestling Program in Yuma. While there, he coached his own son, Brian, to two state individual championships. He then went on to coach cross-town rival Yuma High to a fourth-place finish at state, and moved to his current post at San Pasqual High on the Fort Yuma Reservation in 1994.

With nine Arizona State Titles to his credit, he is the third ranked wrestling coach of all time across the river in Arizona.

When asked about the upcoming award, Coach Klostreich said "It's always nice to be honored and recognized, but I don't know if it's even sunk in yet. We're talking about the National Wrestling



Coach Don Klostreich has lead the school's Coaching Staff at San Pasqual since 1994. QUECHAN NEWS Photo by William Isbell

Hall of Fame! I belong to the (Arizona) State Hall of Fame, but this is the maximum!"

Still, he attributes his success to the kids he's coached. "I've always surrounded myself with good people. I had a good coaching staff, and of course, I was lucky to have some good kids."

THE STRONG HEARTS NATIVE SOCIETY ANNUAL MISS NATIVE SAN PASQUAL PAGEANT



Winnie Ortega, visiting from the Cocopah Reservation, was the Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening, keeping the show light and breezy.



Every participant provided evidence of their talent, with most opting to demonstrate their abilities with a number of dances. It seems every singing group here got a chance to join a contestant on stage at least once. Above, Larry Hammond is singing for High School contestant Marilyn Galindo.

All Photos by William Isbell for QUECHAN NEWS



Well wishers lined up at the foot of the stage to congratulate the new Miss Native San Pasqual winners, as the Pi Pah Youth sang in closing.

Joseph Aragon, Jr. (above) provides dance accompaniment for all of the contestants for the Elementary School Crown, as well as two Middle School hopefuls seen at the left front of this group. There were quite a few dances on-stage, and some groups got to be pretty large when people from the audience joined in!



Mark Owl sang on stage just after the presentation of the colors to get things started in a traditional fashion, to the delight of the crowd.



Jessica Paddock, the recently crowned Miss Quechan Nation for 2007/08 was on hand to offer her encouragement.

This year's Miss Native San Pasqual Pageant, to choose new goodwill ambassadors to represent the Quechan Tribe from the elementary school, middle school and high school here on the reservation at public events, was attended by hundreds of cheering parents and family members.

Judges Vicki Frazer, Amy Paddock, Sandy Palone, Allyson Collins, Brenda Flame, Phyllis Valenzuela and Lamuel Porter had a real task on their hands as the elementary and middle school titles were hotly contested by nine young ladies, all well qualified and deter-

mined to show their best efforts.

Although Marilyn Galindo was unopposed for the high school title, she came well prepared and demonstrated she is completely qualified for the position she will hold this year, by providing an example of poise and confidence for the younger contestants who followed her on stage.

The outgoing Miss Native Princesses stepped up to dance with the girls who wanted some company on stage during the talent portion of the competition, with the Middle School Princess an especially popular dancer. Last year's

representatives also said goodbye to the crowd with short speeches and their own video presentations, which showed some of the many places they'd visited in the course of their duties since last October.

The Miss Native San Pasqual program has 3 new Princesses, prepared to step out into the world and tell everyone about the Quechan nation, teaching and sharing the culture and heritage of a proud people. They are Marilyn Galindo (High School Princess), Maritza Barley (Middle School) and Ramona Emerson (Elementary).

Congratulations to all of you!



Jessica Collins-Solorio, outgoing Middle School Princess, danced with a number of the younger girls during the show.



Kimberly Durand gave a heartfelt goodbye towards the end of the program, as the outgoing High School Princess.



Ramona Emerson, in the fifth grade, was crowned the Elementary School Princess after a very stiff competition.



Maritza Barley received the Crown as representative for the San Pasqual Middle School, where she is in the eighth grade.



Marilyn Galindo, who fulfilled all the requirements to become this year's Miss Native San Pasqual High, shows her elation.



Maya Montijo concentrated hard to do her very best in the talent portion, performing a Quechan Bird Dance.