N. Nevada Indians talk about attack by skinheads

By Valerie Taliman, Indian Country

Johnny and Lisa Bonta, a Native family from the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, became the latest victims of a hate crime on May 24 when they were attacked at a gas station along I-80 in Fernley, a border town between the Fallon and Pyramid Lake Indian reservations.

“I was pumping gas at Quick Stop on our way to Reno to look for another job when these skinheads in a blue car drove by real slow and checked us out. The driver jumped out with a baseball bat, and I asked them ‘why you holding a bat?” said Bonta. “He said ‘let’s do this’ and tried to pick a fight. I don’t know how to explain what happened—we didn’t do anything to them.”

Bonta, a Paiute member of the Reno Sparks Indian Colony, tried to avoid the confrontation by telling them he didn’t want to fight. He got back in the car, with his son-in-law Shane Murray at the wheel, and they quickly drove away with the carload of skinheads in close pursuit.

As they approached the freeway ramp, they were cut off as the blue car swerved in front of them, then slammed on the brakes, causing Murray to crash into it. Murray said he recognized one of the attackers as Jacob Cassell, a former classmate and son of retired Lyon County Sheriff officer Jim Cassell.

“They all jumped out of the car with baseball bats, knives and a crowbar, and we knew they were going to hurt us,” said Lisa Bonta, in an interview from Washoe Medical Center, where she was in treatment for seizures she suffers.

Read the whole story

Reminder: Personal fireworks illegal in Lake Tahoe Basin

By Michael D. Brown

Everyone enjoys fireworks during the Fourth of July. The North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District would like to remind everyone to enjoy them safely and responsibly. The National Fire Protection Association states that more fires are reported on July 4 than any other day of the year in the United States and more than half of the fires reported are caused by fireworks.



You can enjoy your holiday and the fireworks with just a few simple safety tips for you and your family:

• Leave fireworks to the professionals. Please do not use consumer fireworks (includes sparklers and firecrackers).

• The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public display conducted by professionals.

• Please keep matches and lighters out of children’s reach.

• Never leave young children alone with an open flame.

• Teach older children to use fire responsibly.

Fireworks are illegal to posses or discharge in Washoe County or on any U.S. Forest Service property in the Lake Tahoe Basin and elsewhere. This includes all consumer fireworks (fireworks

purchased by individuals) known as “safe and sane” brought in from out of state. The use of consumer fireworks can lead to devastating burns, other injuries, fires and even death. Not only are safety precautions a concern, the cost of suppression and any other injury or liability caused by fireworks is the direct responsibility of those persons using fireworks.

Anyone with fireworks may turn them into any fire station in any fire district without penalty at any time.

The National Fire Protection Association reported that in 2009 fireworks caused an estimated 18,000 reported fires, including 1,300 structure fires, 400 vehicle fires and 16,300 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in an estimated $38 million in direct property damage.

On Independence Day in a typical year fireworks cause more outdoor fires in the United States than all other causes of outdoor fire combined. This emphasizes the fact that consumer fireworks are dangerous, especially with children and teens present. NFPA states that the risk of fireworks injury was highest for children ages 10–14, with more than twice the risk for the general population.

Please teach children that fireworks are not toys. Explain the dangers and ask your children to tell an adult if they find fireworks or another child playing with them.

Remember to use extra caution this 4th of July holiday. Please extinguish cigarettes in proper designated receptacles and leave the fireworks to the professionals. Left to the professionals, fireworks can be a spectacular way to enjoy your 4th of July celebration.

Michael D. Brown is fire chief of North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

Website details Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway

Cyclists can keep tabs on the latest developments of the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway through the organization's website.

On the website visitors can learn about the organization's vision of a foot and cycling path that follows the Truckee River from its source in forested Lake Tahoe to its desert terminus at Pyramid Lake. The website also features section-by-section trail descriptions with accompanying downloadable maps, a list of upcoming events and ways to support the project.

Truckee-based design firm SmallPond Studio designed and developed the website.

The Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway route will descend over 2,000 feet in 116 miles, using a combination of existing dirt and paved roads, plus some sections of new trail and bridges. To learn more about Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway, call (775) 825.9868 or go online.

Fourth of July steeped in tradition with barbecues and

fireworks

On this day in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress, setting the 13 colonies on the road to freedom as a sovereign nation. As always, this most American of holidays will be marked by parades, fireworks and backyard barbecues across the country.



In July 1776, the estimated number of people living in the newly independent nation was 2.5 million. The nation's estimated population on this July 4 is 31.7 million.

In 2010, the dollar value of U.S. imports of American flags was $3.2 million. The vast majority of this amount – $2.8 million – was for U.S. flags made in China.

The value of fireworks imported from China in 2010 was $190.7 million, representing the bulk of all U.S. fireworks imported ($197.3 million). U.S. exports of fireworks, by comparison, came to just $37 million in 2010, with Japan purchasing more than any other country ($6.3 million).

Thirty-one places have "liberty" in their names. The most populous one as of April 1, 2010, is Liberty, Mo. (29,149). Iowa, with four, has more of these places than any other state: Libertyville, New Liberty, North Liberty and West Liberty.

The chance that the hot dogs and pork sausages consumed on the Fourth of July originated in Iowa. The Hawkeye State was home to 19 million hogs and pigs on March 1, 2011. This estimate represents more than one-fourth of the nation's estimated total. North Carolina (8.6 million) and Minnesota (7.6 million) were also homes to large numbers of pigs.

Number of Americans who said they have taken part in a barbecue during the previous year – 81 million. It's probably safe to assume a lot of these events took place on Independence Day.

Opinion: One day Declaration of Independence will ring true

By Kathryn Reed

I was reminded a week ago how after 235 years, the intent of our forefathers through their words in the Declaration of Independence have yet to be fully realized.

Today, as we mark the birth of the United States of America, take a moment to appreciate what we have as a nation and acknowledge how far we have to go.

I was at Crazy Horse on June 25 – which happens to be the anniversary of the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn. Gen. George Armstrong Custer went down in defeat to the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. Crazy Horse is the Lakota Sioux who led that battle for the victors.



Crazy Horse is

destined to be the world's largest mountain carving. Photos/Kathryn Reed

A massive stone carving honoring him has been in the works since 1948. It’s being paid for through



Mount Rushmore

donations. It’s obviously a slow process. Funding is such that major blasts only occur twice a year.

Down the road is Mount Rushmore – the granite carving memorializing Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Construction began in 1927. The National Park Service, which runs the site today, took over ownership in 1933 before the faces were completed.

Our history books say “we” lost the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

That begs the questions: Who are “we” today? And whose land is it?

Crazy Horse is quoted as saying, “My lands are where my dead lie buried.”

Based on that criteria, I get to claim part of his Black Hills

of South Dakota as well because we buried my dad's ashes there a week ago today.

There is no denying the Indians were scattered throughout the United States well before Europeans took over. Winning the "war" at that time meant securing ownership of the land. Eventually we put the Indians on reservations – in isolation, in a prison of sorts.



Perhaps now as they erect casino after casino (and not just in California) they are reaping a sort of revenge on the white man. Look at how we, I say we because I am of European ancestry, destroyed their land, their culture, their way of life.

Look at Lake Tahoe and Reno. Haven't those Indian casinos helped destroy our economy, our way of life, and therefore our built landscape?

It is cliché to say what goes around, comes around. But it seems so appropriate here.

The Battle of Little Bighorn came 100 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. Clearly, in that instance all men were not created equal. They could not all pursue life, liberty and happiness.

We are a young nation compared to most. We seem to keep trying to define ourselves by who we see in the mirror instead of who we are as a nation. Until we take off the blinders to realize "we are all created equal" does not mean "we all look the same," we will continue to be stagnated by petty squabbles with one another that extend from sea to shining sea.

We have created wounds that have yet to heal. Maybe the first step would be to make Crazy Horse a national park. Perhaps then this monument to one of the first Americans would be finished in my lifetime. Maybe we could treat him and his people as equals like the Declaration of Independence says we all are.

Keep pets safe around fireworks

By Barbara J. Koll, Best Friends Network

The Fourth of July is a time of family fun and fireworks, but for many pet people it can become a tragic nightmare.

At almost every fireworks display, you see someone who has brought their beloved pooch with them. That is generally not good idea. Fireworks displays can be stressful, disorienting and frightening for dogs. Your normally calm dog can be easily spooked and confused by the noise, crowds and bright, flashing lights and become afraid or aggressive or run off. Even if you leave your dog at home, dogs who are not normally frightened by loud noises may panic from the cumulative effects of fireworks, noisy crowds outside the house and being left alone.

Dogs and cats have an acute sense of hearing and fireworks will be particularly loud and frightening to them. Pets frequently become more sensitive to loud noises as they grow older. Even if they have not reacted in the past, they may become unexpectedly fearful.

Pets, children and fireworks can create a particularly

dangerous situation as frightened animals can unintentionally hurt a child. Children may not realize that waving sparklers or setting off firecrackers could upset the family pet. Educate your children on the dangers of fireworks around pets.

Some pets don’t even seem to notice fireworks or can be easily distracted from the noises with physical activities such as playing with a ball or other toy. Others do well simply by having their person nearby, talking to them and petting or holding them. Others cannot be calmed by anything because they are simply too frightened.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The KidZone Museum, a nonprofit children’s museum in Truckee, is offering free admission to active-duty military families through Labor Day.

• Restaurant registration forms are available for the 2nd annual Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week scheduled for Oct. 2-9. The deadline to register is July 15. For registration forms and details, contact Pettit Gilwee at (530) 525.1164 or pettit@gilweepr.com.

• Namaste in North Lake Tahoe this summer with the ultimate in yoga throwdowns as Wanderlust Festival returns to Squaw Valley July 28-31.

• South Tahoe High students Maggie Albrecht, Travis Klover, Michael Crandall, Karina Enriquez and Karli Yokotake won the

Geography’s Alive at the Lake Résumé Competition made possible by a grant from Vail Resorts.

• Truckee’s Cedar House Sport Hotel won the 2011 WoodWorks California Wood Design Award for innovation and excellence.

• More than 1,800 soccer enthusiasts made the trek to South Lake Tahoe the last weekend of June to compete in the Come Up for Air Tournament. The tournament is a fundraiser for South Lake Tahoe Soccer Association.

Nevada paves way to get robotic cars on the road

By Sharon Gaudin, Computerworld

It looks like self-driving cars may be on the road sooner than most people had thought – at least in Nevada.

The state passed Bill 511 last month, authorizing executives at the state’s Department of Motor Vehicles to begin coming up with a set of rules of the road for autonomous, or self-driving, vehicles .

This is the first step in what could be a lengthy process in getting autonomous cars, which are designed to use artificial intelligence, computer sensors and GPS instead of human drivers, on the nation’s roads.

But the move must be seen as good news to companies such as Google and General Motors, along with researchers at institutions such as Stanford, Cornell and Carnegie Mellon University. All of these organizations have been working on autonomous cars.

Just last fall, Google announced that its engineers were working on software for self-driving cars . Google’s self-driving car reportedly logged 140,000 miles in California, driving – with a trained driver and software engineer on board – around Lake Tahoe, across the Golden Gate Bridge and along the Pacific Coast Highway.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Improv Players return to Boathouse Theatre

Tahoe Improv Players will take the stage at the Boathouse Theatre on at the Tallac Site on the South Shore on July 5 and Aug. 2.

Shows start at 7:30pm.

A special benefit performance will be Sept. 6 with all proceeds donated to the Boathouse Theater.

Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children.

For more information, call (530) 541.4975.

Conservation group asks White

House to commit to National Parks

By Ashlie Rodriguez, Los Angeles Times

Conservation groups have warned that parks “cannot survive” unless the White House redoubles the resources needed to maintain them.

Using data from a new study released Tuesday on the state of national parks, the National Park Conservation Association and the Center for Park Research said the health of natural and cultural resources within national parks is fading, while a “host of new and long-standing threats” is rising, such as declining air quality, polluted waterways and decreased diversity of species.

“These parks are in jeopardy,” said Ron Tipton, NPCA senior vice president. “We are concerned about the condition of park resources, but we also believe there are solutions to all these challenges. We believe there is hope and opportunity.”

NPCA called on President Obama to sign an executive order that would recommit the federal government to the conservation of national parks using the study’s recommended policies. They are also calling on Congress to provide $600 million for restoring ecosystems and habitats.

Tom Kiernan, president of the NPCA, pointed out parks are receiving two-thirds of what they need. Funding parks amounts to “one-thirteenth of 1% of the national budget. Cutting funds or not providing funds is not going to impact the deficit.” Kiernan said parks are an economic investment, with a $4 million return annually. The parks system generates $13.3 billion in economic activity, according to NPCA.

Read the whole story