

Shirley talks personally of DUI tragedy

Crownpoint celebrates creation of MADD chapter

By Larry Di Giovanni
Staff Writer

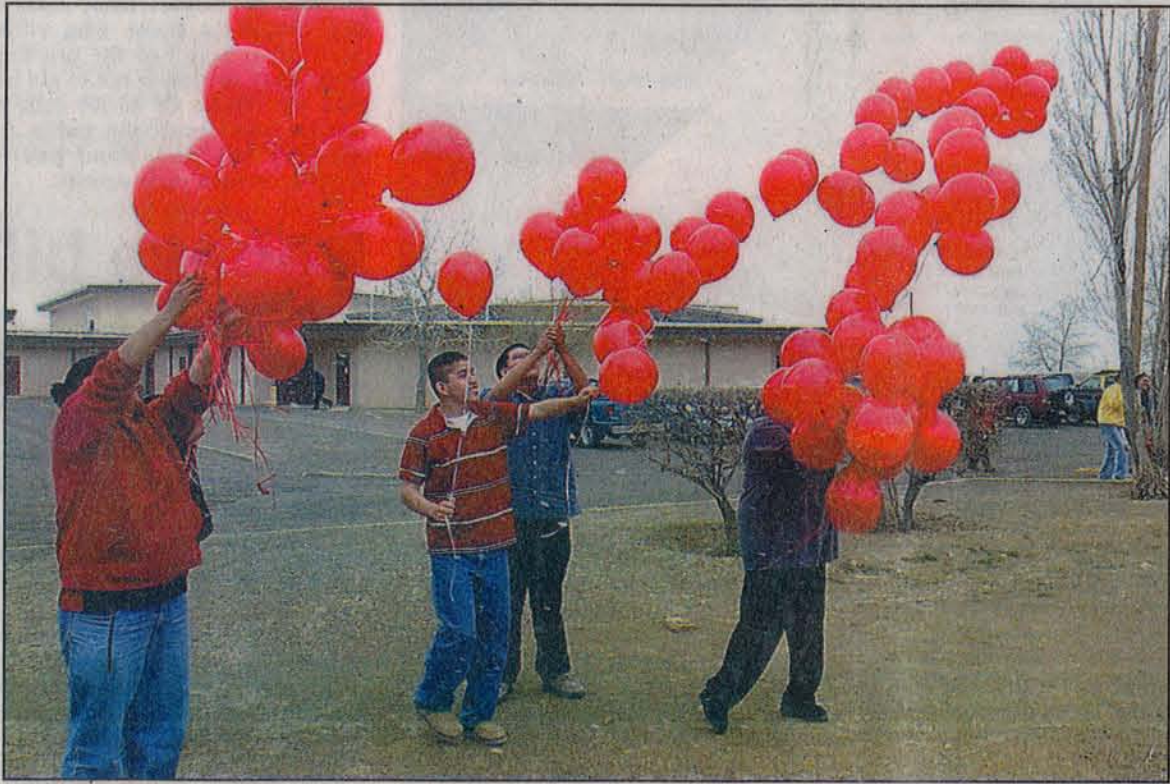
CROWNPOINT — The tragedies involving tales of drunk driving never hit as close to home as when they take the lives of a loved one. On the Navajo Nation and in New Mexico, DUI mayhem occurs all too often, with 214 New Mexicans killed in alcohol-related crashes in 2001.

On Monday in the Crownpoint High School gymnasium, Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr. explained to about 900 people — mostly high school students — why the local community's decision to create a Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) chapter is so important.

"There is too much pain out there of drunk drivers killing people, innocent people," President Shirley said.

In a talk that is difficult for him to relay, Shirley mentioned that one of the Navajo Nation's thousands of drunk driving victims over the years was his own daughter, Tona Vee Paymella. A drunk driver killed her near the Red Lake Trading Post, close to Tuba City, on Nov. 24, 2001.

The newest Navajo president and his wife dedicated their election campaign to Tona Vee, but Shirley actually considered dropping out of the race at one point. He had barely made his de-



Douglas Tesner/Independent

Crownpoint High School students welcomed the first MADD chapter in the Navajo Nation with a celebratory balloon launch Monday, at Crownpoint High School in Crownpoint, N.M.

been married before the accident, had three children and planned to adopt three more.

Three of Shirley's grandchildren were critically injured in the small car his daughter was driving. He was told that she "died instantly." "Talk about devastation ... It took me a month and a half to really come back to my senses, so to speak, to where I could actually continue with my candidacy," Shirley said.

Others who spoke during a

drinking and driving. Monday was a day for Crownpoint residents, Joe and Vikki Shirley, local law enforcement officers, area students, medical professionals and MADD representatives to put their collective foot down and say, "Let's do something about it." President Shirley signed a proclamation signifying that Feb. 24 to 29, 2003 is "Navajo Nation Mothers Against Drunk Driving Proclamation Week," carrying a theme of "Working Together for a Safer Na-

now, taking the lead in forming a MADD-Navajo Nation chapter based in Window Rock. At the same time, Crownpoint residents led by Alberta Becenti and Diane Porter are seeking the 20 or more signatures that will create the Navajo Nation's first MADD chapter.

Monday's MADD kick-off event was important enough to draw MADD National Office President Wendy H. Milton, MADD-New Mexico Executive Director Terry Huertaz, and MADD-New Mexico

Diné water rights session held in secret from media

By Larry Di Giovanni
Staff Writer

WINDOW ROCK — The Navajo people and the news media have been shut out of a secretive two-day "Work Session on Navajo Water Rights" that started Monday which some tribal council delegates said they only found out about Friday.

The "work session" is bringing together the Navajo Nation Council with the tribal Water Rights Commission, chaired by former Navajo Nation President Albert Hale. The agenda is dominated by presentations — already made or scheduled

for today — from tribal water lawyer Stanley Pollack.

Shiprock Delegate Wallace Charley was unable to attend Monday's "work session" at the Peterson Zah Navajo Nation Museum and Visitor Center, but plans to attend today's final day. A "work session" would not necessitate shutting out the media, Charley said. The council typically shuts out the media only when executive sessions are called to discuss litigation issues.

However, a Gallup Independent

See Diné water rights, page 2



Douglas Tesner/Independent

Cibola Hospital is the center of crisis in Cibola County that has

ant water decisions — from approving new water appropriations or transfers on any water that a tribe may have a legal claim to. That includes most of the stream

The law would, some say, basically bring water decisions to a grinding halt in New Mexico until

many tribes' water rights are being stolen or misappropriated because on many stream systems — including the San Juan — tribes have claims to water rights that go ig-

On many stream systems in the state, tribes have claims to water

See Begaye bill to, page 2

On Jan. 23, the Cibola County Board of Commissioners terminated the management agreement with Cibola General Hospital Corp., citing alleged breach of contract.

In his ruling, Sanchez said: "The

Sanchez also recommended mediation between the county and the hospital board.

"The county may not sign a con-

See Judge rules on, page 2

Three conked with bottle, man arrested

By Andrea Egger
Staff Writer

GALLUP — Three Gallup people got hit over the head, one by one, after they each confronted a Winslow, Ariz., man armed with a beer bottle following an argument at a local bar.

Gallup Police Officer Chavo Chischilly was sent at 3 a.m. to 319 E. Vista to investigate a fight, according to a report. Chischilly met with Stephanie Hale, 27, of Gallup, who had blood running down the right side of her face.

Hale said a man hit her with a 20-ounce bottle. McKinley County Sheriff's Department deputies were at the scene, searching for the suspect.

Meanwhile, Chischilly talked to two other victims, Trisha Toledo, 25, and Marson Cayadita, 26, of Gallup. Toledo said she heard a noise outside and saw the man standing by her car, according to the report.

She went outside and told him to get away. She said he charged at her and hit her on the nose with the bottle, causing heavy bruising.

Hale then ran outside and told the man to leave. She said he pinned her against the wall and hit her on her head with the bottle, which left a bump on the right side of the top of her head, according to the report.

Top City

Then her boyfriend, Cayadita, ran outside to see what was going on. The man then hit him on his head with the same bottle.

Cayadita said he and the man fought until police arrived, when the man ran north. Hale and Toledo refused to go to the hospital by ambulance.

Cayadita was treated and released at Gallup Indian Medical Center.

Officers later caught and arrested Marvin Hood, 32, of Winslow, after the victims recognized him as the suspect, according to the report. They charged him with three counts of aggravated battery, a felony.

Hale, Cayadita and Toledo later said they didn't know Hood, but Hood told police the four had "an incident" at Shalimar earlier in the evening, according to the report,

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REWARD

For information leading to the recovery of a Corral type fence, stolen from the Oak Wood Homes lot, located on 666 north. Contact Aztec Auto 863-5343.

Locals to entertain at ROC performances

By Beth Franey Rosebrough
Special to the Independent

GALLUP — Three college students from the Gallup area are among the performers who will add their own special ingredient to the multicultural mix at three ROC (Remembering Our Culture) Entertainment, Inc. "Cultural Fx" performances. The performances will be held beginning on Saturday, March 1.

About 50 full-time college students will weave traditional and modern songs and dances from the Native American, Latino, Polynesian, Asian and African cultures into performances that focus on the importance of a higher education for minority students.

The performers, who all attend Brigham Young University (BYU) and Utah Valley State College (UVSC) in Provo, Utah, draw on their own backgrounds from one of the five featured cultures as they sing and dance in brightly colored costumes.

Among them are sisters Krystle Seschillie and Tawna Seschillie from Crownpoint, both attending BYU; and Michael Halona from Tohatchi, attending UVSC. The three Navajo students are among the Native American students

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Utah college students model the costumes they will wear when they perform in the ROC Entertainment multicultural show to be held 7 p.m. Saturday, at the Red Rock State Park Auditorium. Entitled Cultural Fx, the show gives the students from diverse cultural backgrounds a chance to showcase traditional and modern dances as they continue their education. The group also will perform in Kykotsmovi and Tuba City, AZ.

Courtesy Photo

Newspaper Carrier Needed
in Navajo, N.M.

Call Leona at 505-863-6811 ext. 204.
The Independent is an E.O.E.

By Jim Tiffin
Staff Writer

GRANTS — A timeline in the Cibola County v. Cibola General Hospital lawsuit is provided below, according to court documents and copies of letters acquired by the Gallup Independent.

- Dec. 16, 2002 — County and hospital officials allegedly met to discuss the county's request for payment of "net profits" as listed in the management agreement, to the county.

- Dec. 23 — The county sent a letter to the hospital corporation alleging a breach of contract, asking the hospital to pay \$1.5 mil-

lion in settlement.

- Jan. 21, 2003 — The hospital replied to the county's Dec. 23 letter stating it had not breached the contract and would not pay the county.

- Jan. 23 — The county terminates the management agreement with the hospital board of trustees giving 180 days notice (July 23, 2003).

- Jan. 29 — Cibola County files \$3.9 million lawsuit against the hospital.

- Feb. 3 — The hospital files a counterclaim against the county asking the Thirteenth Judicial Court to stop the county from pro-

ceeding with the lawsuit and prevent it from collecting any past, current or future funds.

- Feb. 4 — Thirteenth Judicial District Judge Camille M. Olguin recuses herself from the case.

- Feb. 17 — Thirteenth Judicial District Judge William A. Sanchez, Los Lunas, accepts the case.

- Feb. 20 — Grants/Cibola County Chamber of Commerce votes to support the hospital in its lawsuit from the county. Local physician, Dr. David Pitts emails Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici asking for their intervention in the lawsuit.

- Feb. 21 — The hospital re-

quests a temporary restraining order prohibiting the county from selling the hospital as well as an amended answer requesting the court order the county to stop proceeding with its attempt to collect funds and sell the hospital.

- Feb. 24 — Sanchez grants a limited temporary restraining order prohibiting the county from finalizing any contract to sell or lease the hospital but allowing the county to proceed with attempts to find a buyer.

- Feb. 24 — The hospital board of trustees voted unanimously to go to mediation pending an agreement by the county.

The 90-minute performances are scheduled at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 1 at Red Rock State Park Auditorium in Gallup, at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 3 at Hopi Veterans Memorial Center in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.; and at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4 at the Tuba City High School Warrior Pavilion in Tuba City, Ariz. Tickets cost \$5 and can be purchased at the door.

The college students also will give shorter performances during the day at several area high school assemblies, said Bess Seschillie.

ROC Entertainment, Inc. is a non-profit organization that encourages multicultural students to stay in college as they share their cultural backgrounds with others. Students from the two Utah colleges, all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, are invited to participate in the volunteer program for at least eight hours each week.

Among the featured dances in the performances are the Bamboo Dance from the Philippines, the Native American Fancy Dance and Hoop Dance, the Polynesian Awana dance, and the Jalisco, a fast-paced traditional dance from Mexico, said Tawna Seschillie, a sophomore Eng-

in white face dresses dance with candles on their heads.

"These students are positive role models of their individual ethnic groups," said Bess Seschillie. She noted that the majority of the performers come from all parts of the United States, but a few also come from Mexico and South America.

While the students mostly travel in California and the Southwestern states, they hope to expand their agenda to include locations all around the country, she added. The group is planning a summer tour in Nevada and California. The ROC organization also hopes to use donations to develop a scholarship program for minority college students, she said.

Tawna Seschillie, now in her second year in the volunteer program, said the program "keeps you in an environment where you are among your own people and people who are from other cultures.

"It helps me keep in school, and there is a spirituality that the kids share among one another," she added. The student, who hopes to go to law school, said she would like to be a part of the volunteer program until she finishes her studies at BYU.

Diné water rights

Continued from page 1

reporter who attempted Monday morning to cover the session was told by tribal staff members who work with the council that it was "for delegates only."

A delegate, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the principal orchestrator of the "work session" — Pollack — used the media's absence to criticize Independent coverage of Navajo water rights issues.

One tribal government worker, who learned of the "work session" Monday, said it had been changed around — from a plan to have the session the last three days of this week to Monday and today — so that the Navajo people, particularly grassroots Navajos concerned with the fate of their water rights, wouldn't be able to show up in possible protest.

"Where are the reformers?" Charley asked of the 51 "new" delegates and some returning delegates who pledged during their campaigns to work on the peoples' busi-

ness in plain view.

During a recent interview, Norman Brown, a leader within the Diné Bidziil (Navajo Strength) Coalition of grassroots groups, said that for the tribal council or any other Navajo Nation body to allow Pollack to shut the Diné out of water rights discussions is a violation of their "human rights."

Water rights — the Navajos' lack of them, including any access to Colorado River water due to the tribe's failure to file a claim — is one of the gravest issues facing the Navajo Nation's future existence, Brown said.

Last year during the spring of 2002, in concert with former council Speaker Edward T. Begay, Pollack was successful in ousting an Independent reporter during a presentation on his water rights "achievements." The ousting was made by having the speaker announce that only Navajos could remain in the Council Chambers. No executive session had been called.

Since the council's creation of the tribal Water Rights Commission at about that time, Diné Bidziil members have criticized the commission and its chairman, Hale, for not informing Navajo citizens of what their work has been to date. They claim that the commission's five at-large members were "hand picked" by Begay and former Navajo President Kelsey Begaye. One at-large member was also selected by tribal Chief Justice Robert Yazzie. The commission selections were made late last year, with only 22 applicants for the five positions.

Monday's presentations included Pollack's talk on the "Status of Water Rights Litigation and Settlement Activities: Recent Achievements and Efforts." Pollack was also scheduled Monday to have delivered "A Short Course on Indian Water Rights" and a talk on the "Law of the Colorado River" in relation to a mainstream Colorado River claim.

Other presenters Monday as

scheduled were tribal Attorney General-nominee Louis Denetsosie, offering a review of the Water Rights Commission's authorities and responsibilities; Water Management Branch Director John Leeper, discussing "technical issues" tied to water claims; and other topics.

Today's topics are scheduled to include: a "proposed complaint" on a Colorado River mainstream claim offered by Scott McElroy, a lawyer who works under contract for the Navajo Nation; water rights legislation proposed by Arizona Sen. Jon Kyl; status of the tribe's Little Colorado River settlement efforts that have been ongoing since 1985; the status of the Navajo Nation's San Juan River claim in New Mexico and the related Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project; "contingencies" for the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project if the projected drought this year requires "shared (water) shortages"; the Animas-La Plata Project; Navajo Utah water rights; and other water issues.

Foster mom charged in baby's death

PHOENIX (AP) — A foster mother accused of shaking a 6-week-old baby to death was

charged with first degree murder and two counts of child abuse.

Angela M. Monroy, 26, who was charged Monday, had been taken into custody last week.

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which did not detail why the four fought.

"At county jail, Hood said he thought that 319 Vista was a party house and decided to check it out, when the three individuals jumped him," Chischilly wrote in the report.

modern American Indian culture.

"That's why Red Ink is so important," Lawson said. "It makes a

Red Ink shows Indians with mainstream appeal

By Anthony Broadman
Arizona Daily Star

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — As a girl growing up on the Wind River

Lawson is an instructor at the University of Arizona and a managing editor of Red Ink, a magazine of American Indian writing published

woman leans against a fence. She is wearing a yellow cowboy hat, a neon-striped tank top and a digital pager. She has orange streaks in her

the University of Arizona, Lawson has had to deal with the stereotypes people assign to American Indians and their literature

Flagstaff schools face shortfall

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The Flagstaff Unified School District must reduce its budget by \$1.4 million before the end of June or it could face cuts in staff salaries and student programs.

Superintendent Larry Bramblett had initially proposed that schools make voluntary cuts in other areas, but he said it has not made a big enough impact.

"My sense is that this next