

Letter to the editor: Not just another day on the calendar: Indigenous Peoples' Day matters

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 15 October 2021 05:19



Editor,

Every day is Indigenous Peoples' Day. Even more so in the "Indian Capital of the World" where the Gallup City Council acknowledged the historical contributions of the First Nations who call "Turtle Island" home and met the challenge of celebrating the correct history of this misguided federal holiday.

On September 27, 2016, the Gallup City Council passed Resolution/Proclamation R2016–40, declaring the second Monday of October as "Indigenous Peoples' Day" into perpetuity. On October 17, 2017 the McKinley County Commission also approved Resolution/Proclamation No. OCT 17–085 designating the Second Monday in October of each year as "Indigenous Peoples' Day."

At a September 26, 2017 GCC meeting, (former) Mayor Jackie McKinney stated that the Resolution/Proclamation would be on permanent display in City Hall. I have yet to see this fulfilled, so perhaps the current Mayor Louie Bonaguidi will see to it that this commitment is honored.

Accordingly, 573 federal tribes are recognized in the United States of America and every year, the number of states and cities are added to the list (internationally) that also acknowledge the Indigenous Nations and our role in the World's Society on this Marked Day.

Historically speaking, then Mayor McKinney and Navajo Nation Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie were the first elected government officials who attended the Indigenous Peoples' Day

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Event in 2019.

The fake history of the sailor who was lost at sea and found by the "Indians" who have inhabited the "American" continents since time immemorial, is not reflected in school books or the education system of America. Instead we are given the bogus myth of "Divine Providence" and "Manifest Destiny."

The historical truth remains with over 100 million Indigenous Peoples having their lives indiscriminately killed outright, starved, raped, exploited, imprisoned, and sold into slavery. The Diné (Navajo) survived the Long Walk and the following four years in America's first Concentration Camp at Hwéeldi (Fort Sumner) only to return to our homeland and flourish.

With the last four years of Republican GOP (Gang of Putin) rule under the most racist U.S. president (Donald Trump), the Indigenous Nations in America have a lot to recover and the U.S. Government has far more to add if it can fulfill its Trust Responsibility it has through the treaties we were forced to sign.

Trust Responsibility: Fake Republican GOP president Donald Trump basically tore up the Treaty Obligations and began targeting Native American reservations for economic exploitation by (inter)national corporate interests. Trump did away with "Trust Responsibility" by stripping the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe of their land. They fought back and won. Many tribal leaders were deceived by Trump and supported his attacks on Indigenous sovereignty. The local issues are related to the institutionalized racism (White supremacy) in Gallup, once the territory of my Dine' (Navajo) people. Stolen land and failed treaties is not Justice...

"Native Americans" everywhere have the opportunity to participate in the continued progress we share with our votes, our plans for our future, our productive contributions to society and our direction with our history, culture and language. As it has always been done.

Prior to the pandemic, the (recent) historical Indigenous Peoples' Day event has been held from noon to 5:00 pm at the Gallup Cultural Center located at 201 E. Hwy. 66. If it is possible, this annual event must be continued. Wherever you are, join the International Celebration of Indigenous People's Day.

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Mervyn Tilden
Kinlitsoh sinilí (Church Rock)

Editor's note: As of Oct. 7, no contacts at the City of Gallup or the Indigenous Peoples Commission have announced plans to hold a special event on Indigenous Peoples' Day 2021. Building Nations LLC is holding an Indigenous Peoples' Day horse ride beginning at 8 am Oct. 11, starting at the Cornerstone Ministry Center in Smith Lake at 1299 N.M. Hwy. 371.