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Rise of the Collectors: Chachalu Museum & Cultural Center

INDIGENOUS WOMEN RISE

TRUMP PARDONS OREGON RANCHERS WHO INSPIRED REFUGE TAKEOVER

NativesOutdoors

Warren L. d'Azevedo. Collection 1954-1983. (University of Nevada Special Collection AC 397)

Record Number Of Native Americans Running For Office In Midterms

Nevada education officials dismiss Trump policy, citing importance of diversity

Environmental Shorts - protect your community

Northern Nevada monument pays tribute to Native American culture

William "Mister" Crutcher Services



APTN National News

June 28

This little dancer made a big impact last week on National Indigenous Peoples Day in Camrose, Alberta. Two-year-old Albert Apsassin who loves to sing and dance, finally got his first opportunity to dance in front of a big crowd. Video: Martina Josephine

RISE OF THE COLLECTORS: OPENING JUNE 5th 2018 THROUGH MAY 2019 AT CHACHALU MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTER

Rise of the Collectors is a story of resilience, relationship to place, and perseverance of culture developed by the Grand Ronde Tribe with items from the British Museum and Oregon Historical Society. It is a tribal examination of personal belongings collected by Rev. Robert Summers and

Dr. Andrew Kershaw between 1870 and 1910 on the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation.

For nearly 30 years, the Tribe has engaged with and sought greater interaction with our ancestor's belongings near and far. The British Museum and other institutions have become locations of cultural pilgrimage for the people of Grand Ronde. Now the Tribe has opened its

own museum and brought items from these collections to Grand Ronde, on loan, for sharing with our people and the public. The belongings featured in *Rise of the Collectors* have spent much of the past century stored out of the public eye. This exhibit will shed light on these important pieces and offer a deeper understanding of our people who created them at a critical point in history.

[Click here to download our promotional poster](#)

The Chachalu Story

Chachalu tells the story of the Tribes and Bands of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and honor our Elders who kept Tribal traditions and dreams alive during the years of Termination. It is a center where the Tribe's Restoration is celebrated and our culture is being revitalized.

The Yamhill Kalapuya people called this place Chachalu, which translates to "place of the burnt timbers"; a massive forest fire burned through the Grand Ronde Valley shortly before the time of Relocation in 1856.

This vision of the Museum is to tell the story of the resiliency of the land and of the people who have lived here since time immemorial. The land, once devastated by fire, is now revitalized with healthy forests and abundant wildlife. Our salmon have once again returned to our streams; the Grand Ronde people, once uprooted from their various homelands and then Terminated by the federal government, are renewed through Restoration. This is a center for cultural activity where the Tribe's stories, history, and culture continue to be practiced and shared.

Ntsayka Ikanum: A Virtual Experience

Trace the journey of our people by visiting [Our Story: A Virtual Experience](#), a distillation of the eras and facets of Grand Ronde history and culture for the edification of Tribal members and the general public.

Cultural Interpretation

The Interpretation Program coordinates the tribe's mission of perpetuating and preserving the cultural heritage of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde through creation and review of interpretive materials for the purpose of ensuring accuracy of tribally and externally created exhibits, displays, print and other media.

Contact: Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center Department 503-879-2226
[8720 Grand Ronde RD Grand Ronde, Oregon, 97347](#)

Hours: Chachalu is open to the public: Tuesday through Friday 10am to 4pm

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This exhibit is a story of a people's resilience, their relationship with peace, and the perseverance of their culture.

The personal belongings featured here have spend much of the past century stored out of the public eye. This exhibit will shed ligh on these important pieces and offer a deeper understanding of the people who created them at a critical part in our history. Travis Stewart

**INDIGENOUS WOMEN RISE** <https://www.indigenouswomenrise.org/>

Recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the original protectors and strength of our country, we call upon *Indigenous women* to join the ...

[THE FRONTLINES](#) · [ABOUT](#) · [WHAT WE STAND FOR](#) · [Contact](#)

[National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#)      [July 2 at 2:24 PM · #WomenAreSacred](#)  
[Storytelling session with Erica Tremblay and Kasia Chmielinski! #WAS2018 at the Women Are Sacred Conference](#)

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**TRUMP PARDONS OREGON RANCHERS WHO INSPIRED REFUGE TAKEOVER**

President Donald Trump has pardoned two ranchers whose case sparked the armed occupation of a national wildlife refuge in Oregon. <http://erj.reviewjournal.com/ct/uz3688753Biz37588612>

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[nativesoutdoors](#)      <https://www.natives-outdoors.org/>

**NativesOutdoors** - Gear Designed and Developed by Indigenous People for the Outdoor Community. [About Us](#) · [Shop](#) · [8-bit logo" 5-panel ...](#) · [Mountain Ridges" 5-panel](#)

Many of us love the outdoors - it has a place in some of our most cherished memories and it connects us to our home. Knowing the history of the land we live on or visit brings meaning to what we experience every time we walk, hike, view, or play on the land surrounding us.

NativeOutdoors is an organization dedicated to bringing attention to land preservation and land use practices by combining the influence of the outdoor recreation industry and policy makers with tribal leaders of protected land. Using the power of social media, they are sharing images of American Indians and fellow outdoor enthusiasts combining their passion and love of the land with traditional knowledge of the importance of the rock and soil they stand on.

Fostering this unity helps create a shared understanding of not only what a mountain or river provides to us, but also the role we play in its protection." AICF News Bulletin

"The purpose of NativesOutdoors is to tell stories through adventures. Giving Native people the opportunity to share knowledge of the land we hike on, rivers we swim in, and mountains we climb is how we make Native history and culture accessible to everyone. We are creating a shared space that allows everyone to have a deeper connection with the land, helping us to protect and preserve it for generations to come.

My education has made this possible. The three letters (PhD) at the end of my name has opened doors for me that aren't often open for Native people. We're working with companies to more fully develop diversity and inclusion policies. We're building more connections between tribes and the outdoor industry to create opportunities for Native students to intern in the outdoor industry. We're looking at how this industry can incorporate cultural aspects from our Native lands into the work they do." ~~~~~extract of remarks by Len Necefer, Founder/CEO

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[Warren L. d'Azevedo. Collection 1954-1983. \(University of Nevada Special Collection AC 397\)](#)

Warren L. d'Azevedo, Professor of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, 1963. B.A., University of California, Berkeley, 1942; PhD., Northwestern University, 1962; Emeritus, 1988.

The Anthropology department at the University was initiated under joint sponsorship with the Desert Research Institute. Originally combined with the psychology department and the sociology department, it became separate in 1963, but still received a joint position with the Desert Research Institute. In 1967, the anthropology department was established and d'Azevedo was appointed the first chairman.

The records in this collection are primarily student papers and reports submitted for anthropology courses taught by d'Azevedo which focus on minority groups, especially Afro-Americans and Indians of North America. Some student reports were completed at institutions prior to d'Azevedo's appointment at the University of Nevada, 1963.

Also included are publications by d'Azevedo prior to coming to Nevada; materials collected from other institutions on similar subjects; duplicate racist materials from the Contemporary Issues Collection, University of Nevada [a collection of alternative publications, it was transferred to California State University, Fullerton, 1980.]; course bibliographies with lecture notes, and original and copies of published material dealing with topics taught.

<http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/univarch/colls/ac397.html>

**Sample of contents:**

## **Box 2**

### **Folder 67    Minority Student Organizations. ca. 1969-1972.**

American Indian Organization.

Asian-American Alliance.

Black Student Union.

### **Folders 68-76.                      *Ethnic Studies*.1970-1971. Student papers:**

Bondy, Denise. Frustration of the Indian.

Brown, Timothy R. Brown. Causes and Conditions of Suicide Among Native Americans.

Vidovich, James. Autobiography, class critiques, report on the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe.

**Folders 77-85.** Following student papers were either not dated and/or did not have the class identified.

Allen, Norman. Ethnic Student Workshop Evaluation Report.

Jones, John. No title or date. Report on Navajo Religion.

McKinney, Dan and Cynthia. The Necessity of Ethnic Studies.

Mills, Kymrie. A Bibliographical Outline for a Course Concerned with Indian Education.

## **Box 3**

### **folder 87. Anthropology 205: Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Societies. Course materials.**

**Folder 88-89. Anthropology 205: Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Societies, 1971. Student papers:**            Melarkey, Teresa. BIA Schools: Indian Ed. Stewart Indian School.

***Anthropology 205: Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Societies, 1972. Student papers:***

Beck, Marilyn. Native American Rights Claims.

Harjo, Ray. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Five Civilized Tribes; Its Enforcement and Effect.

Jones, John. I Hope You Didn't Take It Personally: American Indians.

Smith, Kenny. Cherokee Indians.

Wilson, Donald J. The Indian Reservation System: Past-Present-Future?

**Folder 113-16 No author, date, or class number [with above papers]: A Look at Indians. Miscellaneous anthropology papers, 1959-1971.**

Allard, Michele Y.; Anderson, Troy J.; Canak, Susan C.; Williams, Vicki L. The Question of Discrimination in Reno. Anthropology 101, 1968.

Burrows, Sheryl L. And Dansie, Amy J. The Folklore of Racial Throwbacks. Anthropology 339, 1968.

West, John P. Studies of Racial Differences in Level of Aspirations, Anthropology 670, 1968.

Manning, Clair; John, Janice; Multine, Norma; Hicks, Jonathan. Nevada Indian Leaders, Past and Present. For Contemporary Issues in American Indian Education, 1971.

Anthropology 499/799; Political Science 497/797; Education 499/799.

**Box 4 Folders 117-126. Reports and papers completed at the University of Utah.**

Grosscup, Gordon L. The Social Organization of Western North America. Anthropology 299, 1956.

Wells, Robin F. Plains Indian Political Structure: A Comparative Study. Anthropology 237, 1959.

Wilson, C. Sylvia. Indian-White Relations in Utah. Anthropology 170, 1961.

Sweeney, Kay. Human Ecology and Subsistence Among the Southern Paiute and Ute. Anthropology 198, 1961.

Witherspoon, Y. T. A Phenomenological Approach to Acculturation and Culture Change. Anthropology 261, 1961.

McFadden, Margaret S. A History of the Eastern Great Basin to 1800 (Ute and Shoshone.) Anthropology 275, 1961.

Sweeney, Kay. An Introduction to the Ecology of the Basin Area. Anthropology 275, 1961.

Fowler, Don D. Distribution of Desert Side-Notched Points, Great Basin Social Organizations, Eastern Shoshoni Social Organization: Study Proposal, and dissertation prospectus. Anthropology 276 and 278, 1961.

Wilson, C. Sylvia. A Comparison of the Geographies, Histories, Subsistence Patterns, and Cultural Changes of the Gran Chaco and the Great Basin. Anthropology 253, 1962.

**Folders 127-130 Research papers in Special Problems in Cultural Anthropology, Seminar 278, 1962. Anthropology 101-Anthropology 333, 1967-1979. Student papers:**

Tillmanns, Bob. Mobility and Fosterage Patterns Among the Washo Indians. Anthropology 101, ca. 1967.

Olsen, Perry. Gosiute and Western Shoshoni. Anthropology 180, 1964.

Beattie, Diane. The Paiute, Nuer, Mende and Maya as Levels of Organization. Anthropology 312, 1965.

Schmidt, Doris. The Ethnic Identity of the Passamaquoddy Indians. Anthropology 333, 1979.

**Folders 131-139. Anthropology 360:Indians of the Great Basin, 1964. Student papers:**

Bream, Carol. Achomawi-Atsugewi and Klamath.

Broili, Robert. Northern Paiute Indians.  
Elliott, Michelle. Ute Indians of Colorado and Utah.  
Farnesi, Dennis. The Ute Indians.  
Hannifan, John. The Northern Paiute.  
McCready, Katherine Joan. Annotated Bibliography.  
Roseman, Ellen. Western Mono and the Miwok.  
Scudder, Florence. Southern Paiute: Walapai Yavapai Havasupai. Willard, Charles. The Northern and North Eastern Shoshoni.

**Folders 140-151. Anthropology 360, Indians of the Great Basin, 1978. Student papers:**

Campbell, Joseph. Mormonism and Indian Affairs.  
Crompton, Donald. Duck Valley Reservation: Shoshone and Paiute Tribes.  
Hixson, John. Trade Among Great Basin Indians.  
Horton, Christine. Shamanism.  
Lyons, Susan E. Life Training and Socialization of Great Basin Indian Children.  
McNees, Molly. The Stewart School: Indian Education and Enculturation.  
Minor, Julie. The Paviotso: Nevada Northern Paiute.  
Reaves, Diann. A Survey of the Petroglyphs in Nevada.  
Rahming, Roger M. Spiritual Manifestation of a Suppressed People.  
Rochester, Hillary. Shamanism in the Great Basin.  
Rose, Robbin. The Lovelock Cave People.  
Sandberg, Ral. A Short Ethnography of the Gosiute Indians of Nevada and Utah.

**Folder 152. Anthropology 360, Indians of the Great Basin, 1982. Student paper.**

Hyder, Tina. Plentiful Harvest: A Brief History of the Nevada Indian Missions.

**Folders 153-157. Anthropology classes, 499-790, c. 1975-1983.**

Lockett, Cari. A Preliminary Examination of Lithic Technology and the Spatial Distribution of Artifacts at the Yucca Wash Quarry Site, Nye County, Nevada. Special Problems in Anthropology 499, 1983.  
Frye, David. Western Desert Culture and Basin Plateau Shoshonean Society: A Comparison. Anthropology 502, 1980.  
Siegler, G. Analysis of a Western American Kinship System. Anthropology 512, 1982.  
Hamby, Richard. Irrigation and Social Organization in Owens Valley. Anthropology 560, 1978.  
Colvin, Marjorie K. Case Studies in Applied Anthropology. Anthropology 790, ca. 1975.

**Folders 158-160. Anthropology 905, Ecological Approaches to Prehistory. Student papers:**

Cluff, Derek; Edaburn, Sharon; Freeman, Chris K.; Kraus, Paul. Carrying Capacity of the Great Basin for Hunters and Gatherers.  
Watters, David. Big Game Hunting in the Northwestern Great Basin.  
Watters, David; Seigel, Steven; Bath, Joyce. Big Game Hunting in the Great Basin.

**Folders 161-171 Anthropology 950, Regional Studies in Anthropology, 1976. Student papers:**

Bath, Joyce. Northern Paiute Ethnography: A Review and Annotated Bibliography.  
Krouse, Maribeth. The Pai: Walapai and Havasupai. The Status of Our Knowledge.



Krouse, Maribeth. A Proto-Numic Kinship Terminological System: A Preliminary Report.  
 Logan, Brad. Northern Shoshoni and Bannock, Sun Dance and its Role in the Acculturation of Basin-Plateau Groups. Northeastern Shoshoni and Bannock, The Ghost Dance Among the Paiute: An Ethnohistorical View of the Documentary Evidence, 1889-1893.  
 McNeil, J. Southern California Shoshonean: The Cahuilla, Serrano, Tubatulabal. Anthropology 960.  
 Phillips, H.B. Central California Groups.  
 Silver, Norman. Great Basin Subsistence and Settlement Patterns: Historic and Prehistoric.  
 Siegel, Steven. Peyotism in the Great Basin.  
 Silver, Norman. Report on the Southern Paiute.  
 VanWinkle, Barrik. Western Shoshone Ethnography: A Review and Annotated Bibliography.

**Folders 172-173. Anthropology papers missing class numbers. Arranged by date.**

Westbrook, John T. The Nevada Shoshone: A Dual Economy? 1963.  
 Dansie, Amy; Logan Brad; White, Barbara. The Spread of Farming in the Great Basin. 1975.

**Folder 174. History 714, 1978.**

Nylen, Robert A. The Federal Government's Role in the Paiute War, 1860.

**Folders 175-176. Unidentified class or year.**

Lee, Shirley W. A Survey of Acculturation in the Intermontane Area of the United States.  
 Newton, Richard R. The Eastern (Wind River) Shoshone.



[npr.org](https://www.npr.org) **Record Number Of Native Americans Running For Office In Midterms**

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**[Nevada education officials dismiss Trump policy, citing importance of diversity](#)**

By [Natalie Bruzda](#) / RJ

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**Enviromtmental Shorts**

**[The Council on Environmental Quality \(CEQ\)](#)** has issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) titled **“Update to the Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.”** The notice was published in the *Federal Register* and is now open for public comment. The official *Federal Register* version is attached and available here: [https://](https://www.federalregister.gov)

[www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/20/2018-13246/update-to-the-regulations-for-implementing-the-procedural-provisions-of-the-national-environmental](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/20/2018-13246/update-to-the-regulations-for-implementing-the-procedural-provisions-of-the-national-environmental).

The ANPRM asks a series of 20 questions on the NEPA process, the scope of NEPA review, and other areas of interest related to NEPA. CEQ requests comment on potential revisions to update and clarify its NEPA regulations.

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**AN INTERSTATE BOON?** Interstate 11 is poised to deliver traffic from Las Vegas through northern Nevada, but where, exactly, will the highway go? The Nevada Department of Transportation is holding another round of meetings for citizen input. Details: <http://i11study.com/>

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*Remember that in court cases if there is no tribal ordinance covering an issues, standard falls to federal law; if there is no federal standard, then to state law. Be prepared; create the environment you want.*

### **76 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump**

Nadja Popovich, Livia Albeck-Ripka and Kendra Pierre-Louis, *The New York Times*

Excerpt: "To date, the Trump administration has sought to reverse more than 70 environmental rules, according to a New York Times analysis." [READ MORE](#)

*Time to “638” your local park?*

### **Trump Has Created a Budget Crunch at America's National Parks**

Daria Bachmann, *The Revelator*

*Bachmann writes: "Crowded visitor centers, crumbling roads and aging buildings - those are the sights at some of America's national parks lately, caused by years of chronic underfunding. Will the situation soon get even worse? The Trump administration has proposed stripping national parks' funding even further, despite the fact that people are visiting our public lands more and more often." [READ MORE](#)*

### **Hearing on EPA Science Rule**

The agency will hold a public hearing in Washington, D.C., on July 17 to discuss a proposal that would restrict the agency's use of science in decision making.

The meeting is open to all, but [registration](#) is required by July 15.

The proposed rule, which was offered by ex-Administrator Pruitt, would require the EPA to use only studies with peer-reviewed, publicly accessible data. It is [being reviewed](#) by the agency's science advisory board. (Federal Water Tap)

### **Science Advisory Board Openings (FWT)**

The EPA wants to [fill four seats](#) on the board that advises the agency on scientific matters. There is also a vacancy on the board's drinking water committee. **Nominations are due August 8.**

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“The poor go to war, to fight and die for the delights, riches, and superfluities of others.”  
– Plutarch



## **Northern Nevada monument pays tribute to Native American culture**

**By John M. Glionna Special to the Las Vegas Review-Journal**

July 7, 2018

**For pics: <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-nevada/northern-nevada-monument-pays-tribute-to-native-american-culture/By>**

### **IMLAY**

Fred Lewis is a spiritual guardian of sorts, the caretaker of a spread of man-made ruins that rest along a windswept expanse of Nevada between Lovelock and Winnemucca.

The hiss of traffic along Interstate 80 punctuates Lewis' story of a place that seems both an inspired altar to an ancient people and a backyard fort — a Burning Man-like artist's revelation envisioned long before that festival ever came to be.

The structures and surrounding fence are made of bottles, dented refrigerators, rusted engine parts, bedsprings, entire cars, scrap iron, dolls heads, televisions, truck windshields, animal bones, helmets and old typewriters. All of it has been stubbornly scavenged from the surrounding desert and bound together with chicken wire, concrete and patient determination.

It's a rough-hewn temple overseen by 200 cement sculptures, faces and figurines depicting Native Americans of various nations and status — including Paiute peacemaker Sarah Winnemucca, Aztec god Quetzalcoatl and Ponca tribal chief Standing Bear, who was once imprisoned for leaving Indian country without permission. Surrounded by concrete totem poles are other ornate figures, some raising their arms in both joy and revolt; others dejected, peering out into the desert's nothingness.

The site, known as "The Monument to the Native Peoples of the West," is the creation of the late Frank Van Zant, who underwent a spiritual epiphany when his pickup truck broke down near here one May morning exactly 50 years ago.

Van Zant was equal parts outcast, revolutionary and truth-seeker, a self-identified Creek Indian who soon changed his name to Chief Rolling Thunder Mountain. He spent nearly a decade constructing his testimony to the suffering and plight of the American Indian, often assisted by passing free spirits who shared the vision of the man they called Thunder.

"I'm a castaway," he once said, "and I've sculpted a castaway thing."

### **A tenuous future**

Some call Van Zant a visionary, others an eccentric misanthrope, but most agree he had considerable talent; he was recognized with a Governor's Arts Award, and the monument was later listed as a state historic site. The last was a gesture Van Zant would never live to see. Three years earlier, in 1989, he took his own life by shooting himself in the head.

Today, the shrine located about 130 miles northeast of Reno sits in disrepair, targeted by vandals. Locks have been broken, the stoic faces of Indian chiefs chiseled away. The elements wreak their own damage — the main building was closed after an earthquake raised fears the roof might collapse.

As Lewis talks, a passing trucker sounds his cavernous horn, and the caretaker waves instinctively. "That happens all day — he's just wishing us luck," Lewis says. "Maybe they've been here and know about us, about what we're trying to do."

Lewis watches over the property as a favor to childhood friend Dan Van Zant, the artist's eldest son, who has tried to preserve his father's legacy — with mixed results. The Redding, California, resident travels frequently to the site to make repairs, providing upkeep through private gifts and visitor donations that average hundreds of dollars a month. He has offered to give the monument to the state but was turned down, he says, because officials lacked funds to preserve and maintain the 5-acre site.

"Ever since my dad passed away, I've done what I can to maintain the place and keep it open to the public so people can see his soul and learn about Native American culture and their mistreatment," Dan Van Zant said. "It was my dad's dream, and I don't want to see it disappear from existence."

### **'Something very important to say'**

Nevada, with its rich mining and pioneer history, is full of forgotten places like Frank Van Zant's monument, whether they're ghost towns that once housed thousands or private creations built for religious or political causes. The questions remain: Who should preserve them? And at what cost do we let them deteriorate into the desert dust?

"Frank Van Zant had something very important to say and, intrinsically, Thunder Mountain has a great deal of value," said Dennis McBride, director of the Nevada State Museum in Las Vegas. "These sorts of private monuments do have a place in our culture and somehow should be taken care of. But by whom I can't say."

Nevada officials draw a line between public and private edifices. "Resources on private property really are a labor of love for the individual," said state historic preservation officer Rebecca Palmer. "We're here to assist with technical information, but it's within the property owner's right not to preserve what's there."

The monument can leave a lasting impression. Beneath one statue, visitors have left business cards, coins and trinkets such as a pink child's toothbrush, like the precious mementos left at The Doors' Jim Morrison's tomb in Paris.

"Places like this are my favorite thing about traveling this beautiful land we call home," a Michigan resident wrote in the guest log, which rests on a covered wooden picnic table, secured by a rock so it won't blow away. "Let this place serve as a reminder of mistakes never to be made again."

### **'Living museum'**

Pierce Jensen and his grown daughter Ashley stopped after a brief discussion they'd had traveling east on I-80: she'd passed by Thunder Mountain countless times and decided it was time to stop; he'd never noticed the place.

So they pulled over, checked out the site on the internet and later marveled at what they found. "It's living folk art, that's what I'd call it, a living museum," said Jensen, 61, an antiques collector. "The beauty is in the details."

No one knows for sure why Frank Van Zant loaded up his 20-year-old Chevy half-ton truck and headed east from California in the spring of 1968. Some believe he was embittered by a lost election for local sheriff; others say he'd received a diagnosis of inoperable cancer.

Whatever the reason, he had already been around in life, collecting some emotional scars along the way. The Oklahoma native came home from serving in the Army during World War II with post-traumatic stress disorder, then called battle fatigue, his son said. Frank Van Zant eventually married four times and had 16 children. Believing he was one-quarter Creek Indian, he'd take his family out looking for Native American artifacts and kept a home museum of what they found.

He had worked as an assistant Methodist minister, forest ranger and private investigator before going into law enforcement. Years later, he declared that he'd had enough of the white-collar grind and hit the road with \$36 in his wallet.

The truck's breakdown changed everything. After squatting with his wife on land in a remote canyon, he struck a deal with a local prospector to buy the land where he eventually built his monument — as the story goes, for \$25 down and \$25 a month.

### **Something from nothing**

In a dream, Frank Van Zant would later say, he'd heard the voice of the Great Spirit telling him to create something out there in the desert.

In a documentary called "Visions of Paradise," filmed in the early 1980s, the white-bearded, chain-smoking artist, several of his eight children running around him, explains that his shrine is constructed of things he'd found within 50 miles. "I'm a builder, a creator of nothing from nothing," he said. "I'm just a guy who can take what everybody says is useless and make something out of it."

The main museum and living quarters were fashioned around the travel trailer Frank Van Zant pulled when he arrived at the site. And then whimsy took hold, an attempt by a man who had never before made any kind of art to explain the visions he saw inside his head. He built a three-story hostel, roundhouse and other structures and sculptures. The site is full of faces, images that he called children watchers. Sometimes, he'd finish a piece, sleep on it, and then tear it all down the next morning.

The monument eventually became a commune for followers who would stay for days, weeks and in some cases years, living and working on the site as long as they followed Van Zant's ban on drugs and alcohol.

Artist Lisa Gavon lived at the monument with her boyfriend for a year in the late 1970s. She has written a book about her experiences, dedicating the proceeds to the monument's preservation and the memory of its creator. "Perhaps Rolling Mountain Thunder's life did not turn out exactly as he had planned," she writes. "But Thunder remained himself. There was no one else like him."

Many see no small irony in the fact that the annual Burning Man festival is celebrated each year less than three hours away. "It's emotional for me. It's very hard to see something this significant kind of put by the wayside," Gavon said. "People go to Burning Man to cross the divide into the sacred for two weeks a year.

"Thunder did it for decades. He lived it every moment of his life."

Frank Van Zant always called working on his precious moment a happy time, one full of song and the impulse of the moment, always surrounded by the children he gave names such as True, Obsidian and Star.

But the day came when his wife finally took the last three and left him alone. That's when he went to the roundhouse, wrote son Frank a note that willed him the monument, saying goodbye but never giving any reasons for what he was about to do.

Then he picked up his gun.

"As he described it, he swam in a wild and sacred river," Gavon writes. "At the end of his time here, he was caught in the swiftly moving current."

*John M. Glionna, a former Los Angeles Times staff writer, may be reached at [john.glionna@gmail.com](mailto:john.glionna@gmail.com).*

## **MEMORIAL SERVICE**



**WILLIAM RALPH CRUTCHER**  
**“Mister”**

**April 13, 1951 - July 3, 2018**

**Friday July 13, 2018**

**8:30 a.m.**

**Pyramid Lake Fisheries Lake Operations**  
**(on the lakeshore)**

**Sutcliffe, NV**

**Traditional feast following service @ PL Fisheries**  
**Food donations greatly appreciated**