

Journal #6089 from sdc 10.10.25

'Tis the season

Tommy Orange is a MacArthur Fellow

Tahoe agency okays removal of hundreds of trees to make room for 'glamping'

Wyoming library director fired amid book dispute wins \$700,000 settlement

Great Basin Anthropological Association OCTOBER 15-18, 2025 at the Whitney Peak

Rare, striking "Catholic Ladder" for use on mission to native American peoples of the northern Plains

This shouldn't need to be said, but there is no honor in slaughtering women, children, and elders

Pub lands facing increasing attacks by extractive fossil fuel & attempts to erase our Native history

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Imperial Valley faces 'serious risks' from lithium mining project, report says

Jeremy Smokey

Tashara Cassandra Guerrero



Oakland Novelist Tommy Orange Is a 2025 MacArthur Fellow



Photo: Courtesy of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Oakland writer Tommy Orange is one of 22 people selected this year to receive a MacArthur Fellowship — an \$800,000 no-strings-attached cash prize paid out over the course of five years.

Known colloquially as the “genius awards,” the fellowships are given to celebrate, and help fund the creative pursuits of, outstanding individuals working in any field.

Born and raised in Oakland, where much of his work is set, Orange is best known for his two novels, 2018’s *There There* and 2024’s *Wandering Stars*, both of which weave together large casts of Native characters who grapple with both historical, intergenerational trauma as well as urban, contemporary struggles like opioid addiction.

[Read More](#)

Tahoe agency okays removal of hundreds of trees to make room for ‘glamping’

“A development designed as an opportunity to enjoy Tahoe’s great outdoors requires the removal of 300 hundred towering pine trees on nine acres of privately owned land in Douglas County near the Lake Tahoe shoreline, as well as on U.S. Forest Service land slated to provide access to the property, which is just off congested Highway 50. The 53-unit development is planned for year-round camping without the gear, but with the amenities of a luxury resort. Talaz, as it’s known, is intended to create “a positive impact through nature-based hospitality,” according to its website. It’s equipped with air conditioning, running water, and electric vehicle charging stations. “Camping is evolving,” Julie Regan, executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, said of the project at a meeting in late September. “How people experience the

great outdoors is evolving.” But enjoying the great outdoors should not require the removal of healthy trees, say critics. ... ” [Read more from the Nevada Current](#).

Wyoming library director fired amid book dispute wins \$700,000 settlement

By [MEAD GRUVER](#)

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — A former Wyoming library director who was fired amid an uproar over books with sexual content and LGBTQ+ themes that some people complained were inappropriate for youngsters and who sought their removal from youth shelves will be paid \$700,000 after settling a lawsuit.

Terri Lesley was fired as the library system director in northeastern Wyoming’s Campbell County in 2023, two years into the book dispute at the library in Gillette. Lesley sued last spring over her termination and reached the settlement with county officials Wednesday.

“I do feel vindicated. It’s been a rough road, but I will never regret standing up for the First Amendment,” Lesley said.

A major coal-mining area on the Western high plains, Campbell County is among the most conservative areas in one of the most conservative states.

Public officials there sided with the book objectors and violated Lesley’s First Amendment rights, Lesley claimed in her federal lawsuit against Campbell County, including its commission and library board.

The county denied Lesley’s claims. Only Lesley’s performance — not the dispute over the books — played a role in her dismissal, the county argued in court documents.

A private-practice attorney hired by the county for the lawsuit, Patrick Holscher, and County Attorney Nathan Henkes didn’t immediately return phone messages Wednesday seeking comment.

The books objected to in Gillette included “This Book is Gay” by Juno Dawson, “How Do You Make a Baby” by Anna Fiske, “Doing It” by Hannah Witton, “Sex is a Funny Word” by Corey Silverberg, and “Dating and Sex: A Guide for the 21st Century Teen Boy” by Andrew P. Smiler.

“We hope at least that it sends a message to other library districts, other states, other counties, that the First Amendment is alive and strong and that our values against discrimination also remain alive and strong,” said Lesley’s attorney, Iris Halpern. “These are public entities, they’re government officials, they need to keep in mind their constitutional obligations.”

Halpern and her firm, Rathod Mohamedbhai in Denver, have supported [fired library employees](#) elsewhere in recent years. Under the settlement agreement, Lesley is dropping her lawsuit, though a separate lawsuit she has filed against three individuals who contested the books will continue.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency tasked with enforcing discrimination laws, allowed the lawsuit against the county officials to be filed based on an earlier EEOC complaint filed by Lesley.

Great Basin Anthropological Association OCTOBER 15-18, 2025 at the Whitney Peak Hotel



The Conference will be held at Whitney Peak Hotel. Book your room at our \$159/night (plus fees/taxes) group rate and take advantage of all the amenities.

[Book Your Room](#) [Government Rate Booking Link](#)

If you plan to stay longer than our block of dates, call in your reservation and ask for the conference discount.

FIELD TRIPS

We are excited to announce that we have three field trips planned for this year's GBAC, each with varying levels of cost, accessibility and duration.

[Purchase Field Trips](#)

1. **Historic Walking Tour** – enjoy a walking tour of historic downtown Reno, with your guide, Alicia Barber, Ph.D. (writer, historian, educator, and founder of the historical consulting firm Stories in Place). Cost is \$10 per person. Lunch is not included because there are plenty of restaurants in the area.
2. **Hidden Cave and Grimes Point** – if you are interested in getting out into the Great Basin Desert, sign up for your guided tour to the prehistoric sites of Grimes Point and Hidden Cave, with your guides, Donna Casset (Northern Paiute Cultural Specialist & Registrar of the Churchill County Museum), and David Hurst Thomas (Senior Curator in Residence, North American Archaeology, American Museum of Natural History). Transportation for 50 attendees and a boxed lunch will be provided for a cost of \$75.
3. **Basque Tree Carvings** – If you prefer to spend time in the beautiful Sierra Nevada, enjoying fall foliage and learning how to help digitally preserve Basque tree carvings with your phone, sign up for the Arborglyph field trip guided by Teresa Wriston (Associate Research Professor, Desert Research Institute), Inaki Arrieta Baro (Head of Jon Bilbao Basque Library at the University of Nevada, Reno), and Carrie Smith (Tahoe National Forest Heritage Program Manager). A maximum of 30 people can attend. Carpooling will be the mode of transportation and a boxed lunch will be provided. Cost of field trip is \$35.

BANQUET **The banquet will be on Friday night, October 17, 2025.**

Purchase Banquet Tickets

The cost is \$90 for attendees and \$80 for students. Enjoy a delicious plated meal with friends,

old and new. Awards of various kinds will be given out; dancing and general merriment will follow with the cash bar. There will be no keynote speaker this year.

Field Trips and Banquet Tickets are available for purchase on the [Registration Portal](#). Login to purchase your chosen options.

- **MEMBERSHIP**

BECOME A MEMBER Support the GBAA and its mission.

- **CONTACT US** [Send Us An Email](#) [SIGN UP FOR GBAC NEWS](#)

WHO IS GBAA?

[The Great Basin Anthropological Association \(GBAA\) promotes the study of the peoples and cultures of the Great Basin of the western United States and its relationship to adjacent regions. \[READ OUR MISSION STATEMENT.\]\(#\)](#)



In 1799, Alexander von Humboldt met a parrot that spoke a human language no one else did anymore. It was the language of the Atures, an extinct Amazonian tribe. Though the people were gone, the bird still remembered their words, keeping their language alive.



[illegible]

The "Fall and Restoration of Man"



- [An Epitome of Ecclesiastical History, engraved by Amos Doolittle](#)

ÉCHELLE Chronologique et Historique DE LA RELIGION. [bound in to:] RAPPORT SUR LES MISSIONS DU DIOCESE DE QUEBEC, QUI SONT SECOURUES PAR L'ASSOCIATION DE LA PROPAGATION DE LA FOI. JUIN 1843, No. 5. Quebec: J. B. Frechette, Père, 1843.

Xii, 136pp plus large folding chart (woodcut with letterpress title on two sheets joined, 35”h x 7 ¾”w) bound at end. Removed from volume, with recent blue wraps. Text with a couple of annotations, chart with some glue discoloration at joint. Ownership stamps and other markings from Oblate libraries in Ottawa and Montreal, both now defunct. \$6,000 [Add to cart](#)

[Purchase inquiry by e-mail](#) [Have a similar item to sell?](#)

The Diocese of Quebec's fifth annual report on its [missionary](#) activities across North America, published in June 1843, with particular emphasis on missions to the Native American peoples of the Columbia River Basin. With an extraordinary and rare example of the “Catholic Ladder”, a [chronographical](#) teaching aid for communicating the essentials of the faith.

First published in 1838 as *Notice sur les Missions...* and later as *Rapport sur les Missions...*, the annual report described the Diocese's far-flung range of mission activities, from the Native American peoples of Lake Abitibi in northern Quebec and Ontario to the Eastern Abenaki along the Kennebec River in Maine, to the *voyageurs* and native peoples of the Columbia River basin in present-day Washington and Oregon.

As a map and print dealer, this is *not* the sort of material I'd normally work with, but this particular report is an exception for its inclusion of an extraordinary image, the “Échelle Chronologique et Historique de la Religion”, often rendered in English as the “[Catholic](#) Ladder”. The image is an elaboration on the “Sahale Stick”, developed in 1839 by Father Francis Norbert Blanchet (1795-1883) while at Cowlitz on the Columbia River, across from the future site of Portland.

“He was to travel to the Oregon Territory under the protection of the Hudson's Bay Company to minister to the *voyageurs*, the French-Canadian frontiersmen who formed the backbone of the Northwest fur trade. Though ignorant of native Northwestern languages and cultures, Blanchet also set out to make Christians of the local tribes, a project that required explaining the Christian

story—a feat he managed with the aid of lively performances, interpreters, and the Sahale Stick, a curious chronological tool of his own devising.” (Rosenberg and Grafton, p. 151)

“Starting from the bottom of the stick he would leave a space of some inches and then carve or paint 40 bars, setting off each set of 10 bars with a space, so that the 40 bars representing the 4000 years before Christ appeared as four distinct groups of 10 bars, each representing 1000 years. After the last bar he continued carving or painting a series of 33 dots in a vertical line, again separating the groups of 10 dots, so that he had 3 groups of 10 dots and one group of three dots. The dots represented the 33 years of Christ’s life on earth. Above the dots he made a cross. He carved above the cross a group of 10 bars and a group of 8 bars, which represented the year 1 A.D. to the year 1000 A.D. and the year 1000 A.D. to the year 800 A.D. Above these bars three groups of ten dots and one group of nine dots brought the Sahale stick [as the first ladder was called in the Chinook language] to the year 1839.” (Hanley, p. 19)

The Sahale Stick was thus a mnemonic tool: “The intention of the missionary was to associate in the mind of the Indian each point of the faith with a particular bar on the Sahale stick.” (ibid., p. 20) So, for example, the Creation would come to be associated with the very first bar at the base of the stick.

Blanchet himself soon elaborated on this visual aid and developed the “Echelle Chronologique et Historique”. He retained his original bars-and-dots framework but added illustrative images at key points—thumbnails of the Sun, Moon, and Earth at the Creation; Noah’s Ark, the Tower of Babel, and Sodom and Gomorrah; crucifixes atop Calvary, and so on. Blanchet’s Ladder was originally copied in manuscript, but in 1842–43 a large number were lithographed in Quebec. A few were bound in to the June 1843 number of *Notice sur les missions du Diocèse de Québec*—as offered here—but the great majority were sent out to the missions under the Diocese’s supervision. For example, on April 17, 1843 Bishop Signay of Quebec wrote to Blanchet:

“We have lithographed your Catholic historical and chronological ladder of Religion & you will receive a good number of copies by canoe.... The share for your Missions is 2000 copies. What you do not receive by canoe you will receive by sea. The 5th Report [i.e., that offered here] has a copy – we have made a good number of copies for the missions of the Red River, Abbitibbi and St. Maurice.” (quoted by Hanley, pp. 47–48)

The “Ladder” proved an effective teaching tool, and the *Rapport* frequently refers to its use, both in the Columbia Basin and on other missions. In one or another form it had a very long life: A generation later, for example Oblate missionary Albert Lacombe, on mission in the 1860s to the Blackfeet of southern Alberta, elaborated on the Ladder to produce the [“Tableau Catéchisme”](#), called by one commentator “a small masterpiece of pedagogy.” (Paul Breton, *The Big Chief of the Prairies*, p. 64) Lacombe’s innovation was to surround the Ladder with a riot of instructive imagery, beginning at the bottom with God overseeing the Creation and ending at the top with Christ receiving the righteous into Heaven. Flanking the ladder are the Way of Good (in yellow) and Way of Evil (in gray) on the left and right respectively, both heavily illustrated with vignettes exemplifying the virtues and vices, along with dozens of tiny figures working their way toward Heaven or Hell.

In all, a visually striking and very rare example of religious chronography, and a fascinating artifact of early attempts to bring Catholicism to the indigenous peoples of the northern Plains.

References

OCLC #1450560914 describes the pamphlet, while #60358575 describes the “Echelle Chronologique” (Newberry only, probably bound into the pamphlet). Philip M. Haley, *History of the Catholic Ladder* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1993), pp. 46-50 (Haley also provides superb background on the background and variants of the Catholic Ladder.) See Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time*, pp. 150-157 for an illustrated discussion of the development and reception of the Catholic Ladder.

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**This shouldn't need to be said, but there is no honor in slaughtering women, children, and elders.**

**"Under my direction, the soldiers who fought at the *battle* of Wounded Knee will keep their medals. This decision is final. Their place in history is settled."**

These are the words of Trump's Defense Secretary, Pete Hegseth, a White Christian nationalist who brags about renaming the Department of Defense the "Department of War." When he calls Wounded Knee a *battle* and defends the Medals of Honor given to men who slaughtered our people - women, children, and elders, he isn't just twisting history, **he is celebrating genocide.**

This isn't a one-off. It is part of the Trump regime's white nationalist agenda - glorifying violence, erasing Native voices, and twisting the truth to serve hate.

**We cannot stay silent. At Native Voters Alliance Nevada, we are building year-round political power, electing Native candidates and allies, and fighting for a democracy where truth and justice matter.**

History is clear. Our ancestors' blood was spilled at Wounded Knee in 1890. U.S. troops surrounded a Lakota camp, fired cannons into our people, and then hunted down survivors for miles in the snow. Women, babies in their mothers' arms, and elders - no one was spared. Even Teddy Roosevelt called it what it was - *a massacre*. But Trump's toadies still try to rewrite the story.

This fight is bigger than history books. It is about whether MAGA lies and hate will rule our democracy, or whether truth, justice, and Native voices will prevail.

In the trenches with you.     -Native Voters Alliance Nevada

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Public lands are facing increasing attacks from extractive fossil fuel industries, and attempts to erase our Native history from these ancestral homelands.

So we're ramping up our work with coalitions to protect and re-Indigenize public lands.

During last month's public comment period, our environmental coalition and allies generated over 600,000 comments in defense of the Roadless Rule, which protects 60 million acres of forests that store carbon and shelter sacred wildlife. This is a powerful show of mass support for

environmental protections, especially considering that the comment period was shorter than required.

With your support, we'll continue supporting Tribal Nations by working with Tribes to ensure their sovereign right to make decisions about their homelands, including:

- co-managing federal lands and waters and protecting them from industrial developmenteducating national park visitors about the parks' true history and original stewards
- restoring traditional Indigenous names of geographic landmarks and replacing racist, misogynistic place names

Hawwih (*thank you*) for defending Mother Earth and Tribal sovereignty.

Together we'll keep restoring the dignity of our sacred lands by honoring their history and their original stewards. We won't stop advocating for Tribes' inherent right to determine the future of their ancestral homelands.

Judith LeBlanc (Caddo), Executive Director, Native Organizers Alliance,
info@nativeorganizing.org

Original message

All public lands are on Indigenous homelands, where our ancestors lived since time immemorial. Right now, we're defending these lands from attacks.

Last month, our environmental coalition and allies generated over 600,000 public comments to protect our forests from threats of industrial development.

That's incredible engagement for a shortened three-week comment period. An initial analysis showed that 99% of these public comments were in opposition to the administration's rolling back of the Roadless Rule and its protections for 60 million acres of forests.

Together we supported Tribal Nations by raising all of our voices to defend the lands and wildlife that are central to Indigenous identity, cultural continuity, subsistence, and spirituality.

With increasing attempts to remove protections for public lands and to erase Native history from these lands, we're ramping up our work to safeguard environmental protections and to re-Indigenize these places of beauty that all of our families enjoy.

For years, we've worked with Tribes to re-Indigenize public lands, including increasing signage at national parks to honor the original stewards of these lands and showcase the parks' complex and true history, including how they were stolen from Indigenous peoples.

Educating people about how all public lands are Indigenous homelands helps people understand that Tribes have the sovereign right to make decisions about their homelands. This builds public support for Tribal Nations to co-manage federal lands, with the same decision-making rights as federal agencies.

Another part of the essential work to re-Indigenize our public lands is restoring traditional Indigenous place names.

We've advocated for this as part of the steering committee of the Coalition for Outdoor Renaming and Education (CORE). With CORE we've also helped identify, remove, and replace anti-Native slurs and racist language from names of geographic landmarks across Turtle Island.

But the progress we've made together is under threat, with the administration undoing recent place name changes and disbanding former Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's important task force on renaming.

That's why we're supporting the newly reintroduced *Reconciliation in Place Names Act*, which would continue the federal government's essential work to remove derogatory place names and to replace them with names picked by Tribes and local communities.

This is part of how we honor Indigenous peoples' inherent right to make decisions and exercise our sovereignty to protect public lands from corporate plunder, resist the rewriting of history, and restore spiritual connections with Mother Earth for all. It's also how we create a future where the beauty of our landscapes is not tainted by reminders of systemic racism.

Hawwih (*thank you*) for protecting Native rights and homelands. Together we'll continue restoring all of our sacred relationships with Mother Earth and all living beings. And we'll keep working toward the UN gold standard of governance and international law: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent for Tribal Nations.

Judith LeBlanc (Caddo), Executive Director

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**Fall Chinook salmon return to Link River after more than a century**

“According to the Klamath Tribes, Fall Chinook salmon have been observed in the Link River for the first time in over 100 years. The salmon were spotted on Monday, Oct.6, marking a significant milestone in the efforts to restore the river’s ecological balance. ...” [Read more from KRCR.](#)

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Imperial Valley faces ‘serious risks’ from lithium mining project, report says

“Despite promises of bringing cash and clean energy to a long-struggling region in the California desert, a new lithium mining project is already under scrutiny for allegedly ignoring the severe impacts it could have on the people who actually live there, a recent report says. In 2024, Imperial County officials approved the Hell’s Kitchen Lithium and Power Project, a multistage mining operation located by a deposit of geothermal brine deep beneath the edge of California’s largest lake: the beleaguered Salton Sea. But after analyzing the project proposal, environmental advocacy groups announced that it poses “serious risks” to impoverished and overburdened communities in the region. ...” [Read more from SF Gate.](#)



Jeremy Smokey



— ◆◆◆◆ —
Saturday, Ocotober 11th, 2025
at 11:00 a.m.

Please join us for services
at the Tribal Gym 8955
Mission Rd.

Burial at Churchill County
Cemtery Potluck to follow
at Tribal Gym

SUNRISE 3/16/1988
SUNSET 9/30/2025

With regrets, I print the memorial announcements.....but often they do not reach my desk in a timely manner and, thus, are printed after the event. :~(



In Loving Memory of Tashara Cassandra Guerrero

Date: Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Location: Old Wadsworth Gym

Service Time: 11:00 a.m.

Live Stream Option:

For those unable to attend in person, you are warmly invited to join the service online.

Please stay connected to our Facebook profile and accept the invitation sent to you.

The live stream link will be shared shortly before the service begins.

Let us come together to celebrate Tashara's life, whether in person or virtually

