



• TAMÁSTLIKT •

CULTURAL INSTITUTE

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NEWS RELEASE

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The Jefferson Peace Medal bore the image of the President who organized the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Dr. Ron Pond of Washington State University will present the story of these emblematic medals at Tamástslikt Cultural Institute on October 28 from 4-6 p.m. A reception will follow the event, which is free and open to the public.

NOTE: For high resolution image files of these medal photos, please click on this link.

<http://www.cleanpix.com/cleanpix/PublicViewSuitcase/960fe54b16d890a75e845fcd23afc32d>

When Lewis and Clark brought their Expedition through the West, they handed out 89 peace medals. Of those, 32 medals carried an impression of the head of President Thomas Jefferson. They were called Jefferson peace medals.

On Friday, October 27, from 4-6pm, at the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, Dr. Ron Pond, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Interim Director of the Plateau Center for American Indian Studies, WSU, Pullman, will present *The Jefferson Peace Medals: A Cultural Phenomenon Passed down from Generation to Generation in Walla Walla Culture, c. 1805-1986*. The event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Pond recently completed research on the Jefferson medals as associated with the chieftainship of the Waluulapam Tribal successions. A reception to honor Dr. Pond for his achievement will follow his presentation.

A second medal, owned by the Oregon Historical Society in Portland, is suspected by some members of the CTUIR to be one found by railroad engineers on an island in the Columbia River near Wallula.

Pond, 66, a Walla Walla tribal member who wrote his doctoral dissertation at WSU on the peace medals, believes the OHS medal was one given by Lewis and Clark to Yellepit, a Walla Walla ancestor described in glowing terms by the explorers. They gave him the medal in part for the many favors and gifts he bestowed on them.

While non-Indians tend to celebrate and praise the Lewis and Clark Expedition, American Indians see it as the beginning of a massive invasion of the West that devastated their cultures and in some cases destroyed tribes. During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, which ends this month with the final Signature Event in St. Louis, some tribes refused to participate. And it was through pressure from the tribes that it was called a commemoration, not a celebration.

Of course, the peace medals distributed by Lewis and Clark are emblematic of that devastation.

In an article in the Seattle Times on the medals, published in July, 2003, Walla Walla tribal elder and CTUIR member Lillian Hoptowit, herself an owner of a peace medal which Pond is researching, noted the name, peace medal, was deceptive.

“It might have been peace and friendship for a while,” she was quoted as saying, “then all the cheating and lying began.”

Speaking in that same article, Pond said, “We can't change history. But we can find the truth about things, and reveal it.”

Pond came to WSU as a graduate student in the interdisciplinary doctoral program, completing his dissertation in 2004 on “A Jefferson Peace Medal among the Walla Walla Indians.” He received a bachelor of science from Eastern Oregon State College in anthropology/sociology, and he earned his teacher certification and later an interdisciplinary master's degree from Oregon State University.

Pond has taught at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, and during his studies at WSU he taught the cross-listed music/comparative ethnic studies course on Native American music. He has worked for the U.S. Forest Service's Cultural Resource Management Program and served as council chairman of the Umatilla tribal government.

As interim director, Pond leads the efforts of the Plateau Center at WSU, including coordination with other Native American offices at the university; communication with the tribes on matters related to the center; participation in Plateau Center planning, including development of the position description for the director; travel to facilitate communication with the tribes; and coordination with the college and other partners on federal funding and other proposals.

Tamástslikt Cultural Institute is located at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 10 minutes east of Pendleton. From Interstate 84 take exit 216 and follow the signs five minutes to Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Coming from the north, take the Mission exit from Highway 11 just northeast of Pendleton and follow the signs for about ten minutes to the Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Tamástslikt is open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition to exhibits telling the story of the three Tribes' history and culture, there is also a Museum Store and the Kinship Café.

For more information: 541-966-9748 or www.tamastlikt.org. Direct dial the museum store at tollfree 1-866-282-2022. Tamástslikt is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

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