

# SHO-BAN NEWS



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35 years of service



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## Burns Paiute want occupants to leave



Burns Paiute tribal leaders discuss their stand on the armed men occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and explain how they're desecrating their sacred land. (Lori Edmo-Suppah photo)

By LORI EDMO-SUPPAH  
Sho-Ban News

BURNS, Oregon — Burns Paiute tribal leaders believe the armed men occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge don't belong there and are desecrating one of their sacred traditional properties.

Charlotte Rodrigue, Burns Paiute Tribal Chairwoman said, "The protestors have no claim to this land — it belongs to the Native people who continue to live here."

The Burns Paiute Tribal headquarters are north of Burns, but the tribe also inhabited southeast Oregon, southwestern Idaho, northern California and Nevada. The tribe's ancestral territory includes the area now managed as the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, along with other federal lands in southeast Oregon. Tribal officials say they have not ceded any of their rights in their ancestral territory.

The militia occupation began on January 2 at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge — about 30 miles south of Burns — following a protest in Burns in support of local ranchers Dwight Hammond and his son Stephen who reported to



The Malheur National Wildlife Refuge building.

federal prison to finish serving time for setting fires to public land in 2001 and 2006. Militia members split off from the protest to occupy the refuge according to the Burns Times Herald newspaper, along with Ammon and Ryan Bundy — sons of Cliven Bundy who battled with the Bureau of Land Management in 2014.

Ammon Bundy has demanded the refuge be turned over to local ranchers but Rodrigue said the protesters don't recognize the Paiute people have

been there for centuries. "I was offended, angered actually when the militia came in and said they were going to reclaim land and give it to the rightful owners the ranchers." "If they want to give back to the rightful owners it's the Paiute people," she continued. "I'm offended by their arrogance."

Rodrigue said they've had major wildfires burn a lot of the grazing area and native vegetation. When the ranchers say the federal government is doing them wrong she

disagrees because many get federal subsidies and grazing supplements. "For them to say they're not getting anything is wrong," she said.

She believes the militia came into the area under false pretenses saying they were invited by the Hammonds, "But you didn't see any of the militia people there when they walked into the jail."

Wanda Johnson, Burns Paiute council member, said the tribe didn't take a stand

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## FH Rez New Year baby is born



Zendaya LaDella Yupe

By ROSELYNN WAHTOMY  
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — The 2016 Fort Hall Rez's New Year baby arrived on January 4 at 7:15 a.m. at Portneuf Medical Center in Pocatello. Her name is Zendaya LaDella Yupe and she was seven pounds and 20-inches long.

Zendaya is the daughter of Amanda Yupe, a Shoshone-Bannock tribal member. Her mom wanted a unique name for her so she looked for something different and found it on the Internet. Amanda's aunt, the late Della Yupe, was the inspiration behind her daughter's middle name. Amanda's pregnancy was easy for the most part because she didn't experience as much morning sickness as she did with her first pregnancy. However, the last two weeks of it, it became harder for her to walk.

Zendaya has a brother named Leandro Yupe, who is three-years-old. He likes to do a lot of things by himself. Amanda says he's a big help and wants to help change, hold and feed his new little sister.

During her first pregnancy, Amanda was told she was having a girl had a boy instead. When they told her she was having a girl this time she thought it would be the same case. Also, her older sister, Carmen, has only boys too.

For now, little Zendaya is enjoying her sleep. Sometimes her mom has to wake her up to feed her. She likes to be wrapped, but don't have a cradleboard — yet, one was donated by Marcia

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## Malheur National Wildlife Refuge standoff activity analysis

By LORI EDMO-SUPPAH  
Sho-Ban News

BURNS, Oregon — As one approaches the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, a number of reporters can be seen milling around the entrance where a white pickup Ford pickup blocks it.

Usually the small group of protestors against federal land use policies occupying the refuge have a press conference at 11 a.m. but didn't because it was Sunday and the Bundy brothers went to church.

A sign hanging on the fence near the entrance reads, "BLM Another Intrusive Tyrannical Government Entity Doing What They Do Best ABUSING POWER & Op-

pressing the Backbone of America." The words tyrannical and government are misspelled.

Behind the sign is a canopy with wood piled near it and a fire is burning next to it.

The man blocking the entrance in the white pickup truck said his name is Blaine Cooper, an Arizona resident who said he represents "another pissed off American" and he's been there since before Christmas to support the efforts of the Hammonds and to "try and keep the feds from coming here murdering people." He intends to stay as long as it takes.

He lets a brown pickup truck pass that has a load of wood in

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Rancher LaVoy Finicum talks to press. (Lori Edmo-Suppah photos)



Blaine Cooper, of Arizona, blocking the entrance.



Above, the posted BLM sign. On right, a U.S. flag is posted.





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**BURNS, continued**

either way but the desecration comes from the militia's presence at the refuge, "The area is very sensitive, for thousands of years our people were living there," and there are burial sites that are important to them. The refuge is a gathering place for the tribe but right now it is all under snow.

Chairwoman Rodrigue said the Burns Paiute have a good working relationship with refuge officials and other federal agencies. The archaeologist from the wildlife refuge came and met with them after the occupation began because there are artifacts in the museum and also files of cultural sites within the refuge.

The tribe has a Memorandum of Understanding with refuge officials. They take youth into the marshes to gather tules to make tule boats and duck decoys. Excursions include tribal elders and youth. They also gather willows for cradleboards. They bring the materials back to the reservation so they can teach and show people

how to do things.

Rodrigue added, "A lot of us go out there on a regular basis, as much as we can, there are groundhogs in that area." She takes family members to explain tribal history. "It's an important tradition, it needs to continue."

Council member Johnson said the concern with the occupiers at the refuge is they have access to the files — they have keys to get in and out of the buildings. There is no blockade — the people come and go into town.

Rodrigue said many local people are upset. "As a Native person, if I had gone down there and did the same thing, they would have hit me with a baton, asked what I was doing and put handcuffs on me."

"I can't understand it," Johnson said, the road wasn't cut off, the electricity wasn't turned off — what would have happened if it was a black or brown person? She added federal employees are afraid, militia members have intimidated the federal employees, staked out their homes, etc. Schools were closed

all week. "I just don't understand it — any other race it would be handled different," she said.

Because of the remoteness of the refuge Johnson surmised the only standoff the occupiers could be having is with a jackrabbit or something. "Nobody is trying to go in there and get them out."

Burns Paiute council member Jarvis Kennedy said some militia members have been driving around town with guns and a group of them were at McDonalds on January 8. His cousin was eating there and snapped a photo of the group but the militia didn't like it and surrounded him. Words were exchanged and being a Native man he stood his ground. Another Burns Paiute man was present and pulled the other back urging him to go back to the rez and cool off. Kennedy said he was able to speak with him and he cooled down. "I told him to relax because if we do something it will blow up — all we can do is pray."

Rodrigue said they've always been treated well by the Burns townspeople, "They know us — when things are happening we get support from the community — we're involved on boards and commissions that make decisions for the area," she said. "On the government level we feel comfortable with what happens in the community."

A Burns community meeting was conducted on January 6 where they were told the militia members aren't being destructive and the same day the tribe had their own press conference.

The tribe also had a meeting with tribal members on January 8 where they had a good turnout. At the meeting tribal members were encouraged to be safe and keep an eye out on their family members — some tribal members walk to and from town because of the close proximity.

Because of the occupation and the fact some militia members are driving around in the town of Burns with guns, extra law enforcement has been called in to patrol the areas. The Burns Paiute Tribe has three tribal officers for their reservation but one is at federal training, another is on leave, that leaves one to patrol. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have loaned four of their officers to help out and the council members are appreciative of the officer's presence.

Council member Johnson said their concern is for their tribal people, "We want them safe and to protect our Indian community." They've been getting calls from other tribes who are ready to come stand with them but they've had to decline because they don't want anyone getting arrested.

Chairwoman Rodrigue said if people would stop paying attention to the militia, their cause would die out. "I think there is a certain amount of frustration with the federal government but we don't take it in our own hands, intimidate others to accomplish what we want. They're approach is not well meaning."

**ANALYSIS, continued**

the back.

Walking down the hill to the refuge offices it's quiet, a bunch of reporters walk ahead with cameras in hand trying to avoid falling down on the icy tire tracks along the roadway.

Up above on the hill to the right is a fire lookout tower that has a couple of men occupying it.

Refuge offices consist of about six different buildings including a maintenance shop and museum. Behind one of the maintenance buildings an American flag sits on a pile of snow while next to it is a trailer and a horse in a corral.

As reporters walk around shooting photos and visit, LaVoy Finicum, a rancher from Northern Arizona comes out of the building to speak. He wears a pistol in a holster on the right side and a cowboy hat.

He tells a reporter from the Oregonian he never would have been there if it wasn't for what happened to the Hammonds. He said the fight is to keep grazing rights secured, a fight for hunters and for America.

When I get my turn I ask if the group has met with the Burns Paiute Tribe because of their concern about cultural sites and he says no but they would sure love to have them come visit. Finicum says it's a rancher's responsibility to preserve the land adding he has oral history in his family that he has Comanche blood in him. He also said he grew up on the Navajo reservation. He says he has a great understanding and asks if I'm aware of the Dann sisters? I reply yes and he says it was a great atrocity how they were treated and unfortunately not enough people came to their aid. He compared their treatment to the Bundy's. When asked

if a double standard exists regarding the treatment of the Dann sisters — how they were handcuffed, their cattle rounded up and confiscated — compared to no law enforcement at the Malheur Refuge, he got a little heated and asked was he not at Bundy's, if I looked in town how many law enforcement were there — they've commandeered the school and they have drones flying over us? I said I noticed the law enforcement in town.

After the interview I headed back up the hill and another occupier Dwane Ehmer from Irrigon, Oregon walks with me explaining he is the guy who rides the horse with the American flag each day. He's been there since January 2 because he wanted to find out what was going on because people were labeling the occupiers as terrorists and they're not. Every morning he checks the perimeter then he does a couple of circles with the flag and talks with everybody (reporters). He said he tries to get across he's not a terrorist and neither is his horse. Ehmer said he's trying to do the right thing and make sure no one gets hurt. He shows his pistol he packs and says he loves the area. He wishes the people from Burns would stand up because it's absolutely horrible what the Hammonds were put through. He also claims his Native connection and says his grandmother is Lakota Sioux.

The group calls itself Citizens for Constitutional Freedom according to an Associated Press report and wants an inquiry into whether the government is forcing ranchers off their land.

On January 11, the protestors were reportedly cutting fences down at the refuge.

## Tribes want investigation into Village Council spending

BETHEL, Alaska (AP) — Leaders of four village tribes are calling for an investigation into the Association of Village Council Presidents and its spending of federal funds.

Documents obtained by KYUK-AM (<http://bit.ly/1ZgIjgN>) show almost a decade of misspent federal grant dollars. Despite a federal official denying a formal request from President Myron Naneng, three \$250,000 checks from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families account went to a flight school.

A financial report showed TANF funding being used to pay a quarter of AVCP's Social Services Director Pat Samson's more than \$96,000 salary, with former vice president Zach Brink replying that Samson did a lot of work related to TANF. Emails show then-AVCP grants compliance officer Hansel Mathlaw raising concerns about the pay

in 2008.

Samson, who left the council a few years ago, said he didn't know part of his salary was paid by TANF dollars.

"I did not work for any TANF programs," Samson said.

Leaders drafted a resolution calling for the investigation and for the council's top directors to be placed on administrative leave. Yupiit Nation leader Mike Williams helped draft the resolution after 30 council employees were laid off in December.

"They need more explanation rather than (saying it's) because of economic conditions," Williams said.

The resolution calls for Naneng's resignation if the council does not respond by Jan. 15.

Naneng declined to comment and referred questions to AVCP Vice President Mike Hoffman, who also declined to comment.

2016 Fort Hall Round Dance

January 22nd and 23rd, 2016

Timbee Hall, Idaho, U.S.A.

Feast Nightly @ 5:00 p.m.

Starts Nightly @ 7:00 p.m.

50/50's Raffle's

Giveaway on Saturday

MC's: Earl "Archie" Arkinson and Merle Tendoy

Invited Singers: Redhoop Singers, Dresslerville, Nevada, U.S.A.

Terry Paskemin, Sweetgrass, Saskatchewan, Canada

Randy and Jamon Paskemin, West Valley City, Utah, U.S.A.

Chase Sayer, Bloomfield, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Honorary Drum: Ghost Canyon, Fort Hall, Idaho, U.S.A.

Sponsored by: Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Fort Hall Recreation

For more Information, contact Sonny Dixey @ 208-380-9353

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