

## Former Ute financial adviser banned from lands

By Lezlee E. Whiting  
The Deseret News

ROOSEVELT, UT. — Ute Tribe Security and Bureau of Indian Affairs police have been instructed to escort John Jurrius — the tribe’s former financial adviser — off tribal trust lands if he shows up on the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation.

The Ute Tribe Business Committee unanimously adopted a resolution last week barring Jurrius from the tribe’s 3 million acres of trust lands.

Jurrius’ verbal resignation was accepted in August 2007. But that hasn’t stopped him and his supporters from continuing to push for his return to involvement in tribal operations, said Business Committee Chairman Curtis Cesspooch.

“He realizes that he lost his gold mine and all the deals that he wrote himself into and now wants to get back into it,” Cesspooch said. “His supporters feel that he’s made us wealthy when all he did was shuffle our own money around.”

Business conducted within Indian tribes typically lacks the checks and balances that would take place in traditional business settings, Cesspooch said. He claims that’s what entices Jurrius to continue his efforts to be associated with the Ute Tribe, rather than pursue possible business opportunities with mainstream commerce. Former committee member Richard Jenks Jr. has voiced his opposition to the resolution that bans Jurrius from the reservation. In a letter to the editor in this week’s Uintah Basin Standard, Jenks argues that tribal leaders have “stepped outside their authority” with the ban.

“The tribe does not have an expulsion ordinance ... to exclude Mr. Jurrius from the reservation by resolution is illegal and unconstitutional,” Jenks said.

Jurrius served as the tribe’s financial advisor for more than six years. Depending on what they believed about the controversial figure, tribal members saw him as either a scourge or a savior.

The current six-member committee ran successfully in two different elections on an anti-Jurrius platform. Their predecessors — all Jurrius supporters — were voted out of office.

Jurrius threatened on several occasions to leave the tribe. When he offered his resignation at a tribal meeting 10 months ago, elected leaders accepted. Jurrius supporters viewed the loss of his guidance as a calamity.

Jurrius has declined all requests for comment on his departure from the tribe.

Jurrius’ supporters have organized to bring him back on board, maintaining he was the reason the tribe was able to financially flourish. He scored big for the Utes in making oil and gas companies pay for their use of tribal resources. But he also gave himself a 10 percent cut of all new oil- and gas-lease agreements.

Detractors say Jurrius had the good luck to start working for the tribe at the same time oil and gas prices began their climb. They maintain the increase in tribal revenues and royalties were largely independent of Jurrius’ efforts.

Jurrius has been criticized for becoming involved in more than just tribal finances. Similar accusations dogged him while he was employed by the Southern Ute Tribe in Ignacio, Colo.

According to the resolution that prohibits him from coming on to the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation, Jurrius “continues to be involved with tribal affairs, that has caused a division in the membership of the tribe.”

“We’ve had enough,” Cesspooch said. “The powers of the Business Committee include safeguarding and promoting the peace, safety, morals and general welfare of the Ute Indian Tribe — so the resolution is to exclude him from the reservation.”

# If they deal their cards right, they get jobs

Marsha Halper  
Miami Herald Staff

MIAMI — The dealer surveyed the table with a cool gaze, her eyes flicking across the cards laid out before each player.

Then came the drill: Hit or stand? The first player waved off more cards. The second did the same. The third signaled “hit,” with a quick scratch of fingers on green felt.

Dealer Kathy Chan snapped a card onto the table, face up. “Too-wenty-one,” she announced with a satisfied smile. “Congratulations, sir.”

At the Casino Dealer’s Academy, a storefront operation in a Hollywood strip mall, today’s lesson is blackjack. Tomorrow, it might be Texas Hold ‘Em poker or baccarat or pai gow. Students like Chan pay up to \$1,200 to attend classes that can last six weeks or longer, depending on aptitude, to master the intricacies of being a professional card dealer.

Many students are hoping to land jobs in South Florida’s expanding gambling scene. Texas Hold ‘Em has been a mainstay for years but new games including blackjack are set to debut Sunday at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino near Hollywood.

The tribe has hired 700 dealers, most from out of town, for the opening of its Hollywood casino card games and will be hiring hundreds more as it adds the games to its Coconut Creek casino and others.

“The bigger the talent pool, the better for the tribe,” said

spokesman Gary Bitner. “Having locally trained dealers is important.”

Most aspiring dealers walk through the door of the academy in search of something -- a second chance or second career or bit of excitement. Among them: a former AT&T communications worker who was laid off. An ex-engineer from the Midwest. A single mom looking for flexible hours and decent pay.

“It’s hard work, but there is glamour,” said instructor Alina Barcelo, 38, who worked at the Paris Las Vegas casino. Now a poker dealer at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale Beach, she also teaches blackjack, baccarat and pai gow at the school. “And you can make a good living at it.”

Though most dealers are coy when asked how much they make, estimates range from \$40,000 to more than \$100,000 a year.

Schools dot the South Florida landscape, including Casino Career School Inc. in Pompano Beach, the Ace of Spades in Hialeah and The Academy of Professional Poker Dealers in Lake Worth.

Poker is probably the most demanding game to deal, Barcelo said, in part because tempers can flare when players compete against each other. Blackjack and pai gow, played against the house, are generally easier on the dealer.

“Anyone can learn to do this,” she says, shuffling and cutting cards as she talks. “Every person is different in the way they learn.”

Speed is important. The faster the dealer, the more

money players can make, the more the casino makes -- and the more the dealer can make on tips, she notes.

Chan, an assistant manager at a Japanese restaurant in Weston, is in the back of the room practicing her blackjack-dealing skills. Among them: how to cut the chips into correct stacks by touch, how to count the cards and how to display her hands -- wide open, front and back -- after every payout. That’s so overhead cameras in casinos see dealers aren’t cheating.

Perhaps most critical, dealers must learn how to manage customers, including losers. Sometimes, instructors tell students, it’s all about the smile.

“You have to control the table. You have to control the game. But you have to make sure the players have a good time,” Chan said.

The 27-year-old is so serious about acquiring this new skill that she and her husband, also enrolled at the school, built a blackjack table at their Lauderhill home, a plywood-and-felt affair they can use to perfect their card dealing.

“It takes a lot of work, a lot of practice,” she said. “I want to be ready if I get an audition.”

Casinos test dealer applicants through auditions. An experienced card room manager can tell within minutes whether a potential dealer has the necessary skills.

Be warned, though: State law bars dealers from gambling at casinos where they work.

Scott Poole, card room

manager at Gulfstream and a former dealer, said he looks for people with skill and personality. About 65 percent pass the audition, he estimated.

Lately, he said, he’s seen a lot of applicants seeking refuge from the tanking housing industry.

He understands why. “They want a change, and they look at the dealers. It’s fun. It can be lucrative,” he said.

Bobby Veillette, poker director at Mardi Gras Race-track and Gaming Center in Hallandale Beach, said he sometimes hires dealers straight out of the schools but also sometimes offers training to employees with schooling but not enough experience.

“We try to give everybody a fair shot,” he said. “If we think someone has promise, we’ll work with them.”

It can take a thick skin to succeed as a dealer, said Joe Rodriguez, poker room manager at Miami Jai-Alai.

A former dealer himself, he loves the work despite the occasional difficult customer - like those who call dealers “criminal.”

“They’re trying to insinuate that you’re a criminal because you’re killing their hands,” he said. “You have to try to smile anyway or make them laugh.”

For Chan, with a job in the restaurant business, dealer school is about better pay and better hours. She works six-day weeks now. Dealers, though, usually work 40-hour weeks, for full-time jobs, with one hour on and 20 minutes off, or 90 minutes on followed

by a 30-minute break.

Chan figures the customer service skills from her current job may come in handy at a casino. She also thought being a blackjack player would help, but it turns out the two roles -- player and dealer -- are very different.

“I was a player, but I didn’t know all the rules,” she said. “As a dealer, you have to execute all the mechanics, the rules for the house, and how you deal the game. . . . Every movement that you do, you have to make sure the cameras above it can see.”

At the Hollywood school, classes are held day or night, and students must pass written tests along with “auditions” in front of their instructors. Those who don’t pass are allowed to remain at the school to polish their skills. Courses cost \$1,200 for poker and \$900 for three other games: blackjack, pai gow, and baccarat.

At other schools, prices vary from \$300 to \$1,000 or more, depending on which classes a customer purchases.

For James Rogal, who has been taking classes at the Casino Dealer’s Academy since February, the school has offered a new direction -- and a unique challenge. At 57, he was between jobs when he was offered a chance to deal blackjack in West Virginia.

He had to go to school first, and he has family in South Florida, so the academy made sense. A tremor in his hand -- which could be an issue for a card dealer -- is being calmed by acupuncture, he said.

## Indians tout \$779 million impact

WBEN

BUFFALO, N.Y. — In a study of their economic contribution to the Western New York region, the Seneca Nation of Indians is touting fresh numbers Tuesday: a total employment of over 6,000 people and a domestic product of \$779 million.

A lobbying consultant to the Nation says the tribe contributes almost as much to the region as the University at Buffalo, and outdoes both the Buffalo Sabres and The Buffalo Bills, the report says.

As lawmakers in Albany debate a possible taxation of Indian Cigarettes sold on reservations, and while casino opponents continue to question the merits of gambling in downtown Buffalo - the nation is comparing itself to other smaller companies that receive substantial economic aid.

“Why try to tax Seneca customers when the nation already produces so much state and local revenues simply by leaving it alone,” says nation president Maurice John, in a prepared statement.

The study was conducted for the nation by the Taylor Policy Group, a Sarasota Florida based consultant that works with several tribes nationwide on gaming issues.

### The study reports :

Revenue of \$1.136 billion, a slight decline from 2005 levels.

A workforce in WNY of 6,311 full time workers up from 5,200 in 2006. The study concludes that workforce makes the nation the region’s sixth largest employer, besting such local mainstays as HSBC Bank, M&T Bank, Tops Markets and The Catholic Health System

A decline in tobacco revenues, spurred by tate action against credit card sales.

A regional economic impact of \$820 million, which the nation says beats the economic contributions of The Buffalo Bills and The Buffalo Sabres.

## Ceremony blessing



Associated Press

Mohegan Tribal Chairman Bruce "Two Dogs" Bozsum spreads smoke from white sage and tobacco burning in an abalone shell with a fan of eagle feathers as he blesses a ceremony to celebrate the grand reopening of the Tantaquidgeon Museum on Wednesday, June 18, in Uncasville, Conn. The museum, founded by John, Harold and Gladys Tantaquidgeon of the Mohegan Tribe in 1931 is the oldest Native-run museum in the United States. The museum is home to artifacts and objects of cultural significance to the Mohegans and other Native American tribes. Tribal elder William Andrews plays a traditional flute.

## Ottawa rejects First Nation’s anti-drug bylaw

CBC News

CANADA — The federal government has shot down a Manitoba First Nation’s bylaw intended to curb drug abuse on the reserve, but aboriginal leaders say the reserve should ignore Ottawa’s directive on the matter.

The Peguis First Nation, home to about 3,400 people in Manitoba’s Interlake region, brought in a bylaw last fall that imposes strict penalties on people caught using or dealing drugs, and that requires drug testing for all band employees.

But in a recent letter, the Department of Indian Affairs rejected the new rules, saying the band is

only allowed to write bylaws for minor concerns, such as animal control or smoking. The band can’t regulate drug use — only Ottawa can.

“We really do encourage them to work with local police to enforce those existing federal laws,” said INAC spokesman Jeff Solmundson.

Ottawa’s decision on Peguis puts other anti-drug bylaws, such as one brought in on the Fisher River Cree Nation four years ago, in question. Lawyers say it’s unlikely the bylaws would hold up in court.

Fisher River, also located in Manitoba’s Interlake area, has thrown eight drug

dealers off the reserve since its bylaw came into effect, and all band employees are tested for drug use.

“It’s just a known fact in the community that, you know, I’m going to work for the Cree Nation, it’s now a requirement that I have to be drug-free,” said Chief David Crate, who is now working on making the bylaw even more strict.

But Crate didn’t seek Ottawa’s approval for his reserve’s bylaw. The chief of Peguis did submit his, and it was rejected. Morris Swan-Shannacappo, head of the Southern Chiefs Organization, said INAC’s decision sends a bad message to all First Nations struggling to deal with drug

problems.

“It just irks me, it just riles me at times, when communities do their own community development plans and then the people in the ivory towers at INAC say no,” he said.

Swan-Shannacappo said more and more First Nations are eyeing anti-drug laws. He suggested they follow Fisher River’s example by not asking for approval.

Peguis Chief Glenn Hudson says he’ll try getting around the federal government’s decision; he’s brought in a new employment “policy” on the reserve, and is writing a new policy also aimed at driving out drug dealers.