

Well-known Cherokee Dancer Killed In Accident



by Ben Benton of Times Free Press.

Scott Crisp will never pound the earth with the Cherokee bear dance again. McMinn County, Tennessee resident Crisp, a widely known traditional Cherokee dancer, storyteller, and historian of Cherokee lore, was electrocuted Monday (May 19, 2014) while working on his catering truck just outside Etowah.

Crisp, 45, and friend Kimbal Hyde were working on the wiring in the truck around lunchtime Monday when Crisp told Hyde a metal table in the truck was shocking him, according to a McMinn County Sheriff's Office report.

Crisp had started moving the wiring under the table as he looked for the problem when, Hyde said, his friend starting yelling for help. Hyde, seeing Crisp's hand clenched around the wires, kicked the wires away and immediately called 911 and started CPR until an ambulance arrived, the report states. Hyde tried talking to Crisp

but he was unresponsive. Crisp was pronounced dead at Starr Regional Medical Center, just a mile away from the accident site.

McMinn County Sheriff Joe Guy, also a local historian, said he and the boisterous Crisp had worked together on American Indian history and culture projects over the years. "he was friends with everybody. He was somebody who represented his culture well and represented his community well", Guy said. "He was a great resource for all those things, and he'll really be missed."

Meredith Willson, chairwoman of Athens, Tennessee's Pumpkintown Festival committee, said Crisp, of Cherokee descent, was a fellow committee member who brought vitality and culture to the festival in McMinn County's seat. "It's just a shock. He was the heart and soul of Pumpkintown," Willson said, noting Crisp was active with other local history organizations.

"Scott was just 20-something when he started at the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum," she said. Crisp "was pretty well renowned in the Southeast and he even went as far as Michigan," she said. "What he lived for was to do powwows and Cherokee gatherings."

Wilson said Crisp would have been at a Pumpkintown committee meeting Wednesday, but now they're discussing dedicating the next festival in his honor. He will be buried today at McMinn Memory Gardens.



Rick Runningbear retires as editor of Talking Leaves.

Rick Runningbear Dunifer, of New Tazewell, Tennessee is retiring from the editorship of the Cherokee Talking Leaves news paper, official news letter of the Southeastern Cherokee Council, INC, after serving that position for the past 7 years. During this time, beginning with the Spring edition of 2008, Rick put out 14 editions. Before Rick became editor of the paper, his

predecessor for several years as editor was John Night Eagle Curtis of Valdosta, Georgia (now deceased).

Dunifer, has been active in the SeCCI for over 10 years and during that time has served the tribe as a Fire Keeper and a member of the Ceremonial Team. He also heads up a small band of the tribe located in Claiborne County, Tennessee.

For some time a search has been underway to find a new editor in chief for the paper. Until such person is found, the paper will be promoted by associate editor Audrey Autumn Snow Jones, of Orlando, Florida.



Above: Rick Runningbear Dunifer

Dunifer wrote editorial articles on page two of each of the 14 editions as well as wrote several signed and unsigned articles. Dunifer saw to it that the paper was constructed according to proper format on a computer and sent to the printer on time and also printed and applied all the mailing address labels on each paper. He received much help in this from his wife Carole Giving Waters Dunifer.

Editorship of the Cherokee Talking Leaves is an unpaid position and according to Dunifer is "an act of love". The replacing editor will need to be a person who can write well, can garner news of the tribe, and work well with staff writers.

Anyone interested in such a position should contact Chief Panther, or Vice Chief Walela.

