

## **Hopland tribe celebrates longevity**

By ROB BURGESS The Daily Journal

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Joe Carrillo grabbed the reddish stake with a large hunk of salmon on the end and buried one end deep in the soil on the edge of a recently dug fire pit.

"These are made from old fence posts," he said. "You can use these again and again."

After placing the small stake in the ground surrounding the small blaze below him he rubbed one hand across the opposite forearm.

"The heat is so intense that the first ones are almost done," he said pointing across the hole to the darkest-colored slab of speared meat.

It's that sense of renewal and rejuvenation that turned an old fence post into a reusable stake on which to cook meat has kept the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians' fire burning at their current location for exactly 100 years.

The centennial celebration recognizing the group's history at the site was commemorated by a series of celebrations Saturday.

Among the long list of events, which included four separate tribal dances, a memorial run/walk and a noontime feast, was the planting of a small apple tree conducted by tribal member Shawn Padi.

"The apple tree is the last landmark of the original Foster Ranch site," he said, referring to the band's previous home which the tribe last occupied a century ago. "Amazingly, even with out any TLC it still stands and still produces apples."

Padi said the tree which was planted Saturday was grafted from that tree onto the roots of a store-bought Gravenstein apple tree.

"We brought some life from over there to over here," he said. "It's been a landmark for many of us including me for many years."

The man responsible for the actual grafting, Glen McGourty, said he was surprised how healthy the tree was.

"It was the last day we could have possibly done it," he said. "When you graft a tree it really is a roll of the dice. I can't believe how well the tree is doing."

Before filling dirt in around the root structure, Padi invited first the assembled children and then adults to take part in the planting of the tree by tossing handfuls of dirt into the pit.

"It really wanted to be here," said McGourty. "Trees last a long time. Hopefully after we're all gone and forgotten this tree will still be here as a reminder."