

Chemawa Post Office Closed Down

Chemawa, Oregon 97306 no longer exists.

After 87 years the Chemawa Post Office has been closed down by the Post Office Department. The last day of operation for the office was December 31. Salem records show that it was first established on November 11, 1885.

The reasons behind the closing seem to be economic according to Mr. Jerry Schmitz, owner of the Chemawa Store and the last postmaster.

The mail now goes through the Administration. Students still receive their mail in the dormitories. A mail drop has been installed by the tunnel for outgoing student mail.

Administrative Officer, Pete Reeder stated that the school's new address will be a number not yet chosen on Indian School Road. He added that the Marion County Planning Commission is considering the approval for three street names on the campus.

The new streets will be Misty Street on the West end of the campus, Chugach Street (formerly Hospital Street) and Salish Street down by the Store. The names were chosen from a list submitted by students. Houses and Buildings on these streets will be given numbers and mail will be delivered there.

The Chemawa Store will still sell stamps, envelopes and money orders. The question of who will handle outgoing packages has not yet been decided.

Mr. Schmitz, who took over the store from Mr. & Mrs. Hibbs this fall, said that the pay for running the post office has not been raised in more than 12 years, and that the cost of having an assistant to help him manage it is more than the Post Office Department pays him.

"If the Post Office would renegotiate the contract, I'd be glad to keep it open," Schmitz said to the American. "But they won't. So I can't."

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Leonard McCarr, a freshman from Kwethluk, Alaska, shows off the dulcimer he made during the 3-week mini-course. (Photo by Bob Tomaskin)

Many Mini-Courses Offered Over Long Christmas Vacation

Faced with the problem of a three-week vacation and 260 students who could not make it back to their homes for Christmas, Chemawa teachers and staff members came up with over twenty "mini-courses" for students to take between semesters.

Each mini-course lasts four hours each day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Students successfully completing a mini receive a quarter credit. Each student who remained over Christmas had to take one (and only one) course, and the courses were to be subjects not offered during the regular school year.

The results were such courses as calligraphy, dulcimer making, ham radio, military choices, stitchery aluminum casting and wild animal tracking.

Even tame-sounding courses such as humanities or social studies turned out to be studies in "the Oregon Experience", "Eskimo language and culture" and "the history of native land claims".

For the athletes, it was four hours a day of training and conditioning, as the basketball and wrestling teams prepared for the winter season.

Math students studied the laws of chance and probabilities, learning (among other things) why the house is the ultimate winner in roulette. The graphic arts department taught introductory photography and film developing. Oregon Experience students (all Alaskans) field-tripped their way across the Willamette Valley by bus and train.

"It was quite an experience," one teacher commented, "but I'll be glad when the regular semester starts and I don't have to work quite so hard."

Four Seniors Finish

Four Chemawa students received their diplomas on December 22. They are Leslie Charles, from Koyuk, Alaska; Ken Madron, from Kaltag, Alaska; Daisy Nick, from Pilot Station, Alaska and Harold Yatlin, from Koyukuk, Alaska.

The four received their diplomas after completing the requirements set by Chemawa and the State of Oregon. There was no graduation ceremony held for them, but they are eligible to return this spring and go through the formal graduation ceremonies with the rest of the Class of 1973.