

TRIBAL MEMBER NEWS

Hobby of Collecting Trophies

by Brian Smith of *The Columbian in Vancouver, Wash.* (originally printed Oct. 3, 2006; reprinted with permission)

Most everyone has a hobby. Some people go shopping. Some watch television. Some work in the garden. Something they do on the weekend, in their free time.

Something they'd rather be doing than working.

For Vancouver's Joe Cherington and Stacey Fordyce, it's racing.

"I'm proud of it," Fordyce said. "It's a passion of mine. The competitiveness of it just makes it fun."

Fordyce and Cherington are more than competitive. At River City Raceway in St. Helens, Ore., the Vancouver drivers are champions.

Fordyce's love of racing is a family affair.

"My husband (John Fordyce) got me into it," she said. "He used to work at the Chevron in Hazel Dell. He's showed me a lot. At the beginning, I was busy with my own thing. But as soon as I got interested, I loved it. Now I can't imagine doing anything else."

Racing a blue and silver 1987 Chevrolet Monte Carlo at the River City Speedway in St. Helens, Ore., Fordyce has quickly made a name for herself, winning the championship title in the women's sportsman division in 2006, after finishing third in 2005.

As a result of her quick success – Fordyce has only been racing for four years – and a shrinking pool of women drivers, Fordyce is ready to move on to a bigger challenge: the men.



Vancouver racecar driver Stacey Fordyce won the sportsman division at River City Speedway in St. Helens, Ore., this season. (DAVE OLSON/The Columbian)

"That's my biggest concern right now," the 33-year-old stay-at-home mom said. "I time in faster than a lot of them. I think I'll probably get some flak from them if I do move up, too. My husband gives me a great car to drive, so we'd do well."

A major factor in Fordyce's devotion to racing is her ability to include her extended family.

On race days, her husband, son, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, nieces and nephews all lend their attention and support while she is out on the track.

And there are even plans in the works to establish a tradition of racing in the Fordyce family.

"We're building a car for my son to race out in Madras (Ore.)," Fordyce said. "You only have to be 12 to drive it, and he's really interested in it. We'll have our whole family racing."

Cherington first experienced dirt racing in 1983, at the now defunct Portland Speedway.

"My buddy and I got into it," Cherington said. "We used to race jalopies. It just kept building and became what it is now."

In the 23 years since, Cherington has become something of a small race-track legend in the Columbia River area.

A five-time Columbia County Racing Association champion, Cherington

also won four titles at the Portland Speedway – in 1984, 1987, 1988 and 1998.

In fact, Cherington's been so successful on the track throughout his career, it may have actually brought about a temporary hiatus to his racing life.

"I might take a year off," he said. "I've been racing for a long time now. And I told myself that I was just going to race this year to win another championship and make it three in a row."

Crediting experience and an understanding of how to fine tune his car as being the keys to his success, Cherington quickly learned how to make his car work for him.

Currently racing a purple 1981 Datsun 210 two-door hatchback in the four-cylinder division, the 45-year-old Hazel Dell native was able to apply lessons learned at his day job as a parts worker at Westlie Ford in Camas to his hobby.

"I own the car, do the maintenance and besides one other person, am basically my own pit crew," Cherington said. "Most of being a good racer comes down to experience. Older guys just know more tricks than the younger guys. But it's also about handling and horsepower."

And even with the long hours at the track – Cherington estimated that he put 15 hours a week into his car during racing season – and his nine track titles and 23 years of racing, Cherington's not yet sure he's ready to stop.

"Maybe I'll just race something different," he said. "It's fun and enjoyable, and I guess that's why I've done it this long."



Guess Who?

Above: From the Lincoln County Leader, Toledo, Ore.

Making His Money the "Hard Way" This 13-year-old makes his spending money the "hard way," making three packs a day up a steep hillside. He gathers chit bark which he sells. Each trip he brings up 50 pounds or more. His parents report that he earns around \$100 during the season.

Right: Attending the Veterans Memorial Rededication Ceremony held Aug. 27 at Chinook Winds Casino Resort are Bill (left) and Don Foelker (right) of Milwaukie, Ore, who are the oldest commissioned officers living in Oregon. Siletz Tribal elder Maria Alicante Westervelt (center) who lived in Japanese-occupied Manila, Philippines, during World War II, joins the Foelker brothers at the memorial.

