

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Oregon Tribes' Tribute to Stan Speaks

In honor of Stan Speaks, regional director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians co-hosted a special recognition dinner on March 29 at Chinook Winds.

The event was in honor of Speaks' 50 years of service in the BIA and specifically for his many years of service to Oregon Tribes.

Speaks' service area includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon and parts of Montana and Alaska, but it was specifically the Oregon Tribes that gathered for this special recognition dinner.

The event was planned as a surprise to Speaks, who was asked to attend an important meeting of Oregon Tribes on March 29 at Chinook Winds. Its real purpose was a well-kept secret from Speaks that even his wife, Lois (we appreciate), kept completely secret from her husband.

Although Speaks dutifully responded to that request, he was not aware of the meeting's real purpose until just before the event was announced that evening.

As Tribal officials, we are involved in many serious, often troubling Tribal issues. It's not often that we can be involved in enjoyable events such as this.

In planning this event for Speaks, many instances came to mind in which the Siletz Tribe coordinated successfully with him, getting his cooperation and support in order to achieve our Tribal objectives.

If anyone, it was Stan, this BIA official, who understood and was sensitive to our Tribal needs and served as our critique and advocate. He was always responsive to our request to be present as he was for attending the meetings of other Tribes.

On a brief stopover in Portland on his way home to California from Washington state, Forrest Gerard, who served as assistant secretary of the Interior, Indian Affairs, learned from me that Speaks was to be honored for his years



Delores Pigsley

of service with the BIA. As soon as he returned home, Gerard sent an e-mail requesting it be read at the event. Here, in part, is what he said:

"First, I wish to commend you for a long, distinguished career on behalf of the Indian people and second, I wish to pay tribute to your loving wife, Lois, who I know must have served as a wise sounding board many times, particularly when everything seemed to be going wrong.

"During the outset of my tenure as Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, I was aware that the agency was on the hot seat with Congress because of inability to track appropriations and inform Congress how these monies were spent. My team attacked the problem with a national accounting firm to correct the dysfunctional management system. Several of your peers offered up the tired old refrain, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'

"You, however, applauded our efforts and offered support and cooperation on behalf of the management reform initiative. I am proud to say, with the help of forward-thinking officials like you, we corrected serious management problems and enabled the Bureau to fulfill its responsibilities to the Congress. ...

"You fulfilled your responsibilities to the Indian people with the under-

standing that your decision-making must be within the context of a federal policy of Indian determination and a self-imposed trust responsibility, assumed by the United States for the protection of Indian lands, sovereign governmental rights and the delivery of essential social services to Indian people, solely on the basis of their status as 'Indians.'

"There is an inherent conflict within these policy attributes but you possessed the professional skills and temperament that enabled you to operate within this conflict and your record attests to a stellar performance. A wise person once said, 'There is no higher calling than public service' You responded to that call and served the Indian people with distinction, dedication and loyalty and at the same time balanced those interests and met that duty as a federal official as well."

Speaks was also recognized by Ken Smith, a former assistant secretary of the Interior, at a recent dinner in Portland for his contribution to the Warm Springs Museum. Sherman Alexie Jr. and Olney Patt also were recognized.

### Another Word About Warm Springs' Cascade Locks Proposal

In closing my chairman's report for this month, I'd like to add a few words to what I have previously said about the Warm Springs Tribe's efforts to establish a casino at Cascade Locks.

Most of you already know there are federally protected in-lieu fishing sites scattered along the Columbia River. In the town of Cascade Locks, the Warm Springs Tribe has had a long-established in-lieu fishing site. It's in this city that the Tribe plans to establish its casino on a site that sits next to a mill on industrial-zoned land.

At a public hearing on the Warm Springs' proposed Cascade Locks casino on March 13, my testimony included the following comments:

"I participated in Oregon Tourism and Tribal Tourism meetings where the

ultimate goal is to bring visitors to Oregon. No one in that group said we don't want you to travel down I-84, I-5 or Highway 20. In fact, we sought many ways to bring people and traffic to Oregon. Tourist routes have been designated to visit many of our historical sights as well as tribal casinos.

"We want people to visit Oregon! Almost every restaurant and many hotels advertise all the popular sites hoping to attract more people, including casinos.

"So let's not use traffic impact as a reason to fight this development. Nor should we use gambling addiction as a reason. The Oregon Lottery system has by far more slot machines than all nine of the Tribal casinos ...

"Oregon Tribes have all had to go the extra step to get land in trust to build our casinos. There is a process and in the case of the Warm Springs Tribe, every step of that process has been followed.

"Were it not for a new administration, the process would have ended successfully for them just as it did for our Tribe. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Indian Affairs changed the rules after a compact was approved for the Warm Springs. It not only was unfair to them but to many other Tribes across the United States.

"The jobs and payroll the casinos will provide not only support their economy but also the local economy. The Warm Springs people have generously planned to contribute to the city, the port, Oregon education and the environment to maintain the beauty of the gorge.

"They deserve much credit for their forward thinking and their plan to provide jobs and benefits that will enhance their membership, the community and the state of Oregon."

I ended my testimony by stating:

"Let's remember who the first people were on this land. Give them the dignity and respect they deserve. Support the Bureau of Indian Affairs decision that the Cascade Locks location for their casino is the best choice."



Robert Kentta, Ed Ben and Bud Lane perform an honor song for Stan Speaks.



Bud Lane helps Stan Speaks adjust a dentalia necklace presented to him, while Delores Pigsley looks on. (photos by Teresa Simmons)