

Maori: They received a traditional welcoming by the Chinook Nation

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Chinook Nation members and others. "I believe they bring to our world a real perspective, an authentic perspective that they've worked on for 10,000 years, or 20,000 years, and the Maori folks are right in line."

From Aotearoa

The visiting clay artists, considered some of the best in New Zealand, are sponsored by arts organizations Creative New Zealand and Toi Maori Aotearoa to share their culture. They include group leader Colleen Waata Ulrich, group elder Baye Riddell and four younger artists, Dorothy Waetford, Rhonda Halliday, Todd Douglas and Carla Ruka.

All traveled from North Island, New Zealand, also known as Aotearoa in the Maori language, and brought their own tribal backgrounds and artistic focuses:

- Ulrich, is with the iwi (tribe) Te Popoto o Ngapuhi ki Kaipara and involved in several Maori art initiatives. She originally met Rowland at his Dragon Kiln outside Astoria, sparking the relationship that led to the original "Pacific Rim" cultural exchange and exhibit at CCC in 2012. Rowland met most of the other Maori artists in a visit to an indigenous arts festival in New Zealand in 2014.

- Riddell descends from the iwi of Ngati Porou. He took up ceramics in the 1970s and has since tutored and been featured around the world. He is a co-founder of Ngā Kaihanga Uku, a collective of Maori clay workers.

- Douglas, affiliated with the Nga Puhū, the largest of the Maori tribes, works in ceramics, sculpture and wood. Douglas said he has an affinity for old tools, featured prominently in his work. Traveling with him was his wife and glaze technician, Karuna Douglas.

- Halliday, affiliated with the Ngapuhi nui tonu tribe, said much of her work focuses on metaphors relating to rebirth and in learning more about her cultural heritage, both Maori and Pakeha (New Zealander of European descent), and integrating the two.

- Ruka, affiliated with the Nga Puhū and Ngati Whatua iwīs, said that in being a strong Maori woman, many of her works focus on the female form.

- Waetford, from the Ngati Wai, Ngati Hine and Ngati Puhū



Members of the Chinook Nation give gifts to the visiting Maori artists during a public exhibition reception at the Clatsop Community College Arts Center Thursday.



Visiting Maori artists sing "Nga Iwe e," meaning "Our People," during a presentation at Astoria High School Tuesday.

iwis, is a former member of a Maori dance company who gravitated toward ceramics, in which she focuses on figurative sculpture with strong shape, line and form. "I come from the coast," she said, "and this place reminds me of home... a lot."

Ulrich, Waetford, Halliday, Douglas and Ruka came from Te Tai Tokerau, a peninsular

Maori electorate at the northernmost tip of the country, north of the nation's most populous city Auckland. Riddell came from Te Tai Rawhiti, along the east coast and southeast of Auckland.

Joining the Maori artists on their trip was the towering Eddie Daughton — described by Ulrich as "one hairy giant Celt from En-



The visiting Maori artists travel along the Columbia River on the Forerunner, Clatsop County Community College's training vessel, to ancestral Chinookan fishing grounds near Pillar Rock Wednesday.

gland" — from Somerset in the United Kingdom.

A Chinook welcome

The visiting Maoris received a traditional welcoming by the Chinook Nation at Chinook Point (Fort Columbia), Wash., Sunday; the Long Beach, Wash., Loyalty Days parade; and visited ancestral

forests near Willapa Bay.

On Wednesday, they met with Chinookan elder Gary Johnson and hereditary Chief Phil Hawks at CCC's Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station campus.

"It's always a wonderful experience," Johnson said. "We've traveled with many people on the canoe journey. There are always

Maori people who come and pull on our canoes, for Grande Ronde and with Chinook on the inter-tribal canoe journey."

The Chinookan emissaries and Maori artists, along with Rowland and writing instructor Nancy Cook, took a cruise on the college's training vessel, Forerunner, upriver to ancestral grounds near Pillar Rock.

The exchange between the two indigenous cultures culminated Thursday as tribal councilman Tony Johnson and other Chinookans surrounded the Maori visitors in the arts gallery and filled the exhibit hall with the deep drumming of a traditional paddle song from Willapa Bay.

"This relationship has been built, and a lot of it behind the scenes of this really fantastic exhibit and cultural exchange," Johnson said. "It's something that's really important and is going to last longer than all of us, I'm sure."

Center: 'We've waited a long time to get to this point'

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The Astoria City Council voted Thursday night at a special meeting for a revised \$1.7 million price tag, reflecting an extra \$240,000 grant from the Oregon Business Development Department's Infrastructure Finance Authority.

The city had initially received a \$1.5 million grant from the state.

Al Jaques, the city's project manager, said the city originally estimated the project would cost about \$1.3 million, enough to stay within the initial grant.

Jaques had recommended that the city wait until the

winter months to solicit bids, rather than advertising last summer during the peak of the construction season, when bids would typically come in higher.

But the bids the city received earlier this year ranged from a low of \$1.8 million to a high of \$2 million.

"I thank you for working with the low bidder to change the scope of work and working with our partners at the state to come up with these miracle funds to shore the gap," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill told Jaques.

Jaques said the city had wanted to start construction last year, but the project was delayed by an extensive envi-

ronmental review that was a contingent of the grant.

He said construction could now break ground in July.

Larry Allen, the president of the Senior Center's board, said he hopes the project will be completed by Christmas. The Senior Center could seek grant or other money in the future to renovate the basement.

For more than a year, seniors have had to go to a temporary senior center at the old Yacht Club on West Marine Drive, which, for many, is less convenient than downtown.

"We've waited a long time to get to this point, a lot of setbacks and modification and everything," Allen said.

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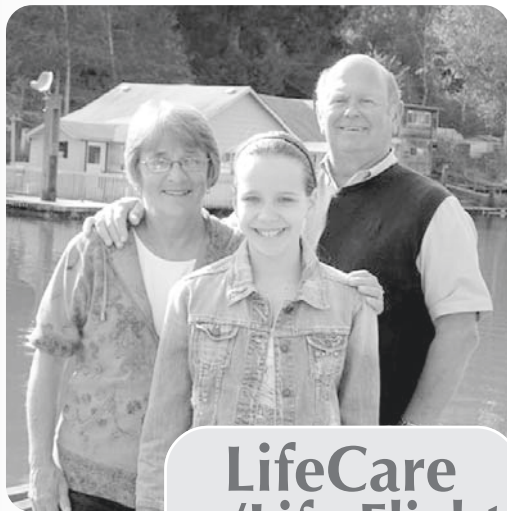
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