



Fun in the sun

Between parades, water slides and sack races, there was plenty to keep the kids busy on the Fourth of July -- but that was just a beginning, what with the balloon toss and the fireworks and other activities that filled the holiday with warmth and brightness.

Left photo by Selena Boise, center and right photos by Jerry Brunoe



Language certification passes Legislature

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Staff

Members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs this year succeeded in lobbying the state Legislature to pass a bill allowing fluent speakers of traditional languages to teach in public schools.

Before, a tribal member fluent in a native language would teach in the classroom as a teacher's aide. Under the new law, signed last month by Gov. John Kitzhaber, the traditional language speaker can obtain a special certificate to teach the language to public school students.

In this way the traditional speakers "can conduct the classroom in their own way, rather than serving as teacher's aides," said Myra Shawaway, director of the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage Department.

During this legislative session, Shawaway and other tribal members traveled to Salem to testify before House and Senate committees that were considering the special teach-

ing certificate bill, Senate Bill 690.

Wasco elders Gladys Thompson and Madeline McInturff testified during each step of the legislative process, Shawaway said. Members of the Culture and Heritage Committee, and program staff were also of great help, she said.

More than 30 tribal members, most from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, attended the session during which the bill was first introduced in the Senate. Comments in favor of SB 690 were persuasive, and the bill eventually passed the Oregon House and the Senate by unanimous votes.

The new law allows the tribes to establish standards language fluency. "The tribes will be in full control of determining who is fluent," Shawaway said. A tribal member meeting the language fluency criteria can receive a special state teaching license.

For the past few years, through the teacher's aide program, traditional language speakers have been

teaching Warm Springs Elementary School classes.

The new certificate program will help improve and expand this program, and could in time lead to traditional language classes at the middle school and high school, Shawaway said.

The 2003 school year may be the first to see implementation of the new program, she said.

In the near future, Shawaway will be meeting with representatives of the Oregon Education Association, and the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission, to discuss how best to implement the special teaching certificate program.

One of the first projects will be determining which members will best serve as language teachers, said Shawaway.

Only five tribal members, each over the age of 70, are fluent speakers of the Wasco language. Some other members are semi-fluent, and the hope is to bring these members

up to the fluency level, said Shawaway.

Among the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, only five members, each over the age of 55, are fluent in Paiute.

This language, though, is spoken by a good number of Paiute people in Nevada, Shawaway said.

Of the three languages of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Shaptin has the most speakers: Perhaps 50 people on the reservation are fluent in the language, Shawaway said. A number of others are semi-fluent.

The idea for the new language teaching certificate program came to Shawaway in January of this year, when she became aware of a similar law that the Nebraska Legislature adopted in 2000.

She contacted Michael Mason, the tribes' lobbyist in Salem, who helped in getting a proposal before the Oregon lawmakers. Kitzhaber signed the bill on June 27.

Merged Kah-Nee-Ta has lofty ambitions

Formerly managed as two separate entities, Kah-Nee-Ta Resort and Warm Springs Gaming Enterprise are now being run as a merged operation.

Rather than two boards of directors, the resort and casino now operate under one management structure, and under one name: Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort & Casino.

The merger was made by mutual agreement of the two boards, and approved by the Tribal Council.

"After considerable evaluation and market research on the potential benefits of the proposed merger, both boards of directors and the Tribal Council agreed that this move makes a lot of sense," said Olney Patt, Jr., chairman of the Tribal Council.

"The integrated corporation will enable us to derive maximum value for our shareholders -- Tribal members and investors. This provides new opportunities to re-purpose and re-energize the Kah-Nee-Ta brand, assume a more competitive market posture, enhance operational efficiencies and augment sustained revenue growth."

Patt added, "This merger is a positive step for the Confederated Tribes and for the entire Warm Springs community. With diminishing timber revenues and other issues challenging our long-term economic sustainability and self-sufficiency, we need to embrace this opportunity to better use all our resources to benefit the entire community."

The combined board of directors has defined ambitious goals for the resort and casino operations, with a target of 20-plus percent net annual return within three years.

Management's broad objectives include increased room occupancy and greater casino spending per room night, as well as a new focus on customer service.

To re-energize consumer awareness, Kah-Nee-Ta will also invest in the most substantial round of capital improvements since Indian Head Casino was constructed in 1996.

Beginning this summer and continuing in phases over the next two years, the planned \$5 million improvements include:

The complete remodeling of 107

guest rooms, scheduled to start in the fall, with completion scheduled for March 2002.

Also beginning this fall, the Juniper Room will be expanded and recast as casual family dining, featuring an exhibition-cooking buffet. Completion is scheduled for the first quarter of next year. The Pinto Deli will be simultaneously converted to fine dining.

This winter, convention and banquet facilities will double in space to nearly 10,000 square feet and be completely renovated.

During this fall, the upper and lower lobbies will be renovated.

Also beginning in October 2002, the gaming casino will be expanded, adding more slots and a larger variety of table games.

"These renovations and additions will strengthen Kah-Nee-Ta's position as one of the finest, most unique service resorts in the West," said Rudy Clements, chairman of the Kah-Nee-Ta Board of Directors.

"For generations, guests have come here to enjoy the extraordinary climate, golf, recreation and the natural spring-fed mineral water pools. Then, the addition of fun and excitement of casino gaming and a world-class spa made Kah-Nee-Ta the Northwest's only resort, spa and casino."

Clements added, "Now, by upgrading guest rooms, improving food and beverage options and quality, and substantially expanding group, convention and meeting facilities, Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort & Casino will continue its proud legacy."

The developments at Kah-Nee-Ta include the development of a new logo symbolizing the Earth, Sun and the three Tribes. Over the next several months the focus will be on reaching out to the target markets, Clements said.

Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort is wholly owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The resort offers a complete gaming casino with slots and table games, an 18-hole golf course, natural hot springs-fed pools, a full service spa, and a wide range of lodging options including camping and RV sites.

Warm Springs valedictorian

Joseph Aguilar was chosen Valedictorian for the Riverside Indian School 2001 graduating class. Aguilar is the son of Ralph Aguilar Sr. and Etta Arthur and the grandson of Ella and George Aguilar Sr. of Warm Springs.

While attending Riverside Joe was a member of the National Honor Society, Color Guard and the Indian club. He enjoys Khido Karate and earned an orange belt. He is the first wrestler at RIS to make All-State and the first in twenty years from the Riverside Indian School to receive the honor of All-State in sports. He had attended many leadership camps and served as a peer counselor on HIV and AIDS. He was recently accepted into the Indians in Psychology Doctoral Education Program to be held at the summer institute at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, N.D.

Aguilar will be participating in a two-week enrichment program for Native American Junior and Senior High School students who are interested in pursuing a degree in psychology-related disciplines.

His future plans are to attend Oregon State University and major in psychology. He plans on becoming a school counselor.

Opinion: Salmon placed in peril

From the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Columbia River salmon face a long, hot, and deadly summer if the Bonneville Power Administration acts on the Northwest Power Planning Council's (NWPPC's) recommendation to severely curtail or eliminate summer spill measures mandated by the federal Biological Opinion. Coming hard on the heels of a disastrous spring migration, the BPA has continued to operate the Columbia River as a power-only system under the auspices of its self-declared emergency, despite the agency's ample cash reserves and refill of storage reservoirs ahead of schedule.

No spill has occurred at federal hydro projects since June 15. Millions of juvenile fish are currently in-river attempting to find passage to the estuary, with peak of the summer migration only weeks away.

Last month, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) and a coalition of conservation groups sent a letter to BPA Administrator Steve Wright calling into question the legality of its emergency criteria and his agency's resolve to correct its problems.

"BPA shouted 'emergency,' drew the curtain closed, then promptly replenished its bank account on the back of the spring

migration," said CRITFC Executive Director Donald Sampson, tribal signatory on the joint letter. "If the summer migration goes the way of the spring, it begs the question, 'How much financial security is enough?' Bonneville's 'can't' is really Bonneville's 'won't'."

The NWPPC based its recommendation on a biological analysis since challenged by the greater scientific community.

The analysis omits critical mortality factors associated with a no-spill/maximum transportation scenario, such as predation, delayed mortality and thermal related mortalities.

Spill -- literally spilling water through dam spillways -- has proven to be the superior method of passing juvenile fish through hydroelectric projects while reducing direct and delayed mortality. Earlier this spring, the Independent Scientific Advisory Board, along with other prominent fisheries biologists, urged that spill begin as soon as possible and continue through the spring and summer migratory periods.

Failure to spill at federal dams leaves migrants vulnerable to the uncertainties of barging, physical damage in screened bypass systems, predators and delays in reaching the ocean. The NWPPC recommendation also paves the

way for more out-of-region power sales -- transactions that have not yielded the promised benefits for salmon protection.

The Northwest is owed some \$85 million from power exchanges made over the past several months, yet the BPA has already signed an agreement with the California ISO to send power south during Stage 3 emergencies acknowledging that some of the power may come at a direct cost to salmon.

BPA continues to mortgage the lives of fish under the guise of power swaps.

Sacrificing salmon to maintain artificially low rates, among the lowest in the nation, many please BPA's customers, but it threatens to backfire as the region seeks funding from Congress for salmon recovery.

The BPA is certain to face continued criticism that its rates don't reflect the true costs of protecting salmon.

"It's naive for this region to think that it can have its cake and eat it too. Bonneville must live up to federal laws protection the salmon, including Indian treaty fishing rights. Failure to do so is not good for the region or for salmon. When the Northwest doesn't run a clean shop it becomes salmon's liability," Sampson said.

Quilt show deadline coming up

Deadline is Aug. 31 to submit quilts for the Warm Springs Community Quilt Show, to be held at The Museum at Warm Springs.

The museum invites tribal members, and those who live and work in the Warm Springs community to submit their finest,

funniest, most unusual and treasured quilt works. Items that can be submitted include quilts, pillows, throws, dolls, wall hangings and, of course, quilts.

The "Quilting Traditions" exhibit will be on display at The Museum at Warm Springs from Sept. 9 through Nov. 11.

Childbirth classes to be held

Beginning next week, Mountain View Hospital District is sponsoring a childbirth education series in Warm Springs.

The six-week series will provide an understanding of the labor and delivery process, information on breathing and relaxation techniques, and support skills for the mother and her partner.

Discussion will also cover newborn behavior, care and feeding. Other topics include infant rescue breathing, airway obstruction and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training.

Teacher for the series is Registered Nurse Janet Bissell, who is a trained instructor with the International Childbirth Educator Association. Bissell is also a certified lactation educator.

The course begins at 1 p.m., Wednesday, July 18, at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center. The fee is \$25, which includes a workbook. To register, call the Health and Wellness Center at 553-1657.

If you are interested in attending, but will require assistive aids, please contact the District Wellness office in Madras at 475-3882, ext. 2307. Please call in advance so appropriate arrangements can be made.