

Middle School offers Native language course

"Listen!" said tribal member Arlita Rhoan in Sahaptin. Speaking to her class of 16 tribal members, she explained that Sahaptin, or Ichishkiin, the Native language of the Warm Springs people, is best learned by listening.

"That's how I learned about my culture," Rhoan said later. She speaks Sahaptin as her first language and learned English when she was 11.

Rhoan is quick to point out the cultural significance a language carries.

"Language teaches about culture. Our language is deep. There are things lost in the translation to English."

Throughout her class, assisted by a second teacher, Dallas Winishut Jr., words were described by actions or by pointing at the object.

Little English was spoken. The class included many students who were already five years into the language, as well as three students who had never learned Sahaptin before. The students listened, answered, and repeated what Rhoan said.



Shannon Keaveny/ Spilyay



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LEFT: Arlita Rhoan teaches a class of 16 on their first day of lessons at JCMS. RIGHT: Dallas Winishut Jr. demonstrates a word rather than speaks it at JCMS.

By Shannon Keaveny
Spilyay Tymoo

In a huge step forward for Native Americans nationwide and Warm Springs Reservation, Arlita Rhoan taught her first Sahaptin language class on Dec. 2 at Jefferson County Middle School.

Warm Springs fifth graders, who comprise the totality of the JCMS class, now have the choice of continuing their earlier language education throughout their middle and high school years.

As the students progress to higher-grade levels, the school will continue to provide the opportunity to learn their Native language at more advanced levels.

"At least a handful of these kids will graduate from high school fluent in Sahaptin," Rhoan said confidently.

In turn, she hopes the new generation will teach their kids.

The Native language classes fulfill Oregon high school requirements to complete two years of a second language by the time of graduation.

"It's no longer just French, German and Spanish," said Wendell Jim, general manager of Adult and Community Education at Warm Springs.

"It's come full circle. Now we are able to learn our language in the same system that took it away," said Jim, referring to the history of boarding schools where Indian students were punished for not speaking English.

Senate Bill 690, signed into law July of 2001 by Gov. Kitzhaber, spearheaded the Confederated Tribes decision to take action.

Senate Bill 690 ensures that Native American languages are acknowledged as vital and irreplaceable elements of Oregon's heritage and culture.

SB 690 directs the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission to establish an Ameri-

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Arlita Rhoan
Sahaptin teacher

can Indian language teaching license.

In order to do so, each American Indian tribe needs to develop a written and oral test that must be successfully completed by an applicant for an American Indian languages teaching license. The test is to determine if the applicant is qualified, according to the bill.

Each tribe should decide which dialect will be used on the test, if the tribe will standardize the tribe's writing system, and how the teaching methods will be evaluated in the classroom.

Applicants do not need an academic degree but can teach based solely on their knowledge of the Native language. This allows elders and other tribal members who speak Sahaptin fluently to teach.

Native language teachers are able to teach in a school district public charter school, education service district, community college, or state institute of higher education.

"We're just implementing the law," said Jim.

Presently, the Warm Springs Reservation is in the process of developing a written exam for tribal members.

Tribal Council adopted a resolution regarding Native languages on the afternoon following the first Sahaptin class at Jefferson County Middle School.

The resolution has provisions similar to those of SB 690, with a special condition regarding the value of the elders as teachers of Native languages.

Sahaptin has been taught at the Warm Springs Elementary School,

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Wendell Jim
Educ. Manager

a 509-J school district school, for the last five years.

The classes are part of an active program to revive and preserve the Native languages on the reservation.

Right now, Rhoan estimates there are probably only about 50 tribal members who speak Sahaptin fluently, including herself.

She explained that people could finally start to understand her English when she was about 11 years old.

"These kids (tribal members

learning Sahaptin) won't encounter the same problems, because they will be raised bilingual," said Rhoan.

She hopes she will be around to see the language brought back into the community.

"I encourage parents to support their kids who are taking my class," she said.

The language program is looking for more Sahaptin teachers.

Sahaptin classes for adults are also offered on the reservation.

The time and place are as follows: Natural Resource Building, Tuesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Simnasho, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 to 9 p.m.

The language trailer (on the Warm Springs Campus), Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

The Warm Springs Jail, Mondays, 9 to 10 a.m.

Transport needed for Medicaid

Medicaid, not Medicare, recipients are eligible for medical transportation as part of their benefits. The benefit covers transportation to the doctor, counselor, or other general medical benefits.

The problem is a shortage of volunteer drivers on the reservation.

Volunteer drivers, who can be family members, are reimbursed for mileage at the rate of 36.45 cents per mile. Meals and lodging are also covered where applicable.

The Medicaid transportation program, in effect for 34 years, has the potential to save the tribes money from medical transportation costs off the reservation.

Volunteer drivers need car insurance, valid drivers license, and their own reliable vehicle. Volunteers are subject to a background check.

To receive a ride, clients call their caseworker in Warm Springs. In turn, the caseworker contacts the Prineville Volunteer Service. A ride is scheduled for the client.

The program is ideal for retired Warm Springs residents who aren't locked into a work schedule.

Many tribal members aren't aware of this resource. Vio Vaeth, from the Warm Springs Senior Center, encouraged the community to use this valuable resource.

The program currently has only two volunteers and seeks more volunteers. For more information contact Vio Vaeth at 553-4955 or 553-3491.

Police step up patrols for impaired drivers

Patrol cars, now equipped with mobile video recorder, record actions and words of drunk, or otherwise impaired, drivers. The videos are used as evidence in the court room.

By Don Courtney
Chief of Police

The Warm Springs Tribal Police Department is stepping up patrols in search of the impaired driver.

With winter season here and road conditions slick and dangerous, we felt it time to eliminate potential problems.

The impaired driver can be on the streets at any time of the day, they can be in any area of the reservation and driving all types of vehicles. The impaired driver puts all drivers and pedestrians in danger by driving while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or the combination of both.

We are making this attempt

to let people in the community of Warm Springs know that we are trying to prevent drunk driving activity rather than just react to the many reports that we get. We also want to inform our people that we will be doing sobriety checkpoints throughout the month of December and New Years Eve, as we have in recent years.

The sobriety checkpoints will be held in several different locations at several different times. We hope that this activity will prevent drunk drivers from ruining everyone's holiday season.

Cameras now in cars

Two of our patrol cars are equipped with the "Kustom Signals" mobile video recording unit. If you watch the television program *Cops* then you have seen some footage of patrol cars with camera systems showing pursuits and traffic stops that turn into drug arrests and arrests of different kinds.

Our systems are the same and have the same capabilities. We obtained this equipment from a grant at the Oregon Department of Transportation Safety Board.

The video equipment will aid the officers in the detection, ar-

rest, and prosecution of the impaired driver. Once an incident has been recorded, the tape is immediately removed and put into evidence for the prosecution of that suspect.

The video can be used as evidence in court of that incident. The video equipment records both voice and actions.

The officer wears a remote transmitter that when activated will record the whole conversation of both the officer and the suspect.

As of yet the equipment is still being experimented with and being finetuned for use by our officers.

The officers assigned these vehicles that are equipped with the video equipment have been trained prior to operating it and using it officially.

The Warm Springs Tribal Police Department would like you to know that we are doing all that we can to make your holiday season a safe and pleasant one.

We would also like to remind you to use your seatbelts and child safety restraints, even if it is just a short 1 trip. An accident that results in permanent injury can happen in much less time. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Early release granted for holidays

In the spirit of the upcoming holidays, and in appreciation of the work throughout the year by tribal employees, all tribal departments will be closed, except for the police, fire and safety and other on-call personnel, on the following dates:

Christmas, December 25, 2002. Early release granted at 3 p.m., Tuesday, December 24.

News Years, January 1, 2003: Early release granted at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31, 2002.

Managers and directors are responsible for ensuring limited phone coverage is available to the public from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on early release days.

Tribal administration wishes each and everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Around the rez

Man busted in West Hills

The Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team executed a search warrant the morning of November 27 in the West Hills of Warm Springs.

The warrant resulted in the seizure of one and a quarter pounds of marijuana, 5.5 grams of psilocybin mushrooms, packaging materials, weigh scales, \$328 cash, a 9m semi-automatic handgun, a .243 caliber both action rifle, and other drug-related paraphernalia.

A portion of the marijuana was packaged into 28 individual packets. CODE arrested Melvin Albert Tewee Sr.

Tewee was charged with probation violation, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a schedule I controlled substance, marijuana and psilocybin mushrooms and delivery of a schedule I controlled substance, marijuana.

James Cole, Warm Springs criminal investigator, described the incident as "big for this area."

Tewee is being held in the Warm Springs Jail. He is subject to tribal courts and possibly federal charges.

COCC plans tuition hike

Central Oregon Community College faces a \$3 million shortfall for the next school year.

Forty employees, at all levels, have already been notified of their termination. The staff cuts did not affect the COCC Warm Springs branch.

To compensate for the pending cuts, the COCC board has proposed a mild tuition increase.

"The proposed amount is not a large amount because COCC has been super conscientious over time of their budget but they are still facing a \$3 million shortfall," said John Hicks, coordinating instructor for COCC at Warm Springs.

One-third of tribal members, who participate in higher education, attend COCC.

This year over 100 tribal members are registered for higher education, an almost 50 percent increase from previous years. Higher education fees are funded by dividends from a tribal education trust fund.

With increasing participation in higher education and a waning economic situation for everyone, the Tribes are addressing deficiencies in this fund.

But, said Hicks, "The big problem is a still a moving target," as voters wait for the January 28 tax increase ballot to pass or not pass.

Polls suggest it will not pass but until the vote only speculative guesses can be made about education budget cuts.

Donations sought for Christmas

Anyone wishing to contribute to needy families are encouraged to bring canned goods and other household items to the Warm Springs commodity warehouse.

Contact Vio Vaeth, 553-4955, for more information.