



# Spilyay Tymoc

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Coyote News, est. 1976

September 4, 2003 Vol. 28, No. 18

## Language lessons to see changes

### At the elementary school language classes will be cancelled for a time

By Dave McMechan  
Spilyay Tymoc

For the upcoming school term teachers of the tribal Language Program will not be instructing students during regular school hours at Warm Spring Elementary.

Classrooms may be available after school for language lessons. Also, the language lessons could return to the regular elementary school curriculum in January of 2004.

The hope is that the temporary absence of the language lessons from the regular school curriculum will in time improve the Language Program.

Both Myra Johnson, director of Culture and Heritage, and Dawn Smith, principal of Warm Springs Elementary School, agree on this point.

#### Initial concern

The language program teachers have been in the elementary school for the past six years. They teach the languages of the three tribes: Sahaptin, Wasco and Paiute.

All parties involved in this issue know the significance and importance of the languages to the Confederated Tribes.

They also realize that the languages are in danger of being lost, as most fluent speakers are elders.

For these reasons, some in the community were concerned, if not quite upset when they first heard that the language lessons would be discontinued for a time at the elementary school. Several people expressed their concern during the school district 509-J board meeting last week.

They requested that the school board return the language lessons to the elementary school.

The board took no action, because the language lesson item was not a part of the meeting agenda.

A short time after the school district board meeting, Myra Johnson and Dawn Smith discussed the situation.

Their meeting went well, and some of the initial sense of concern was replaced by a more optimistic view.

"I think this will lead to more of a partnership with the school," said Johnson. "We want to accomplish the agenda that Dawn set out. We believe this is going to be a good thing. We see this as an opportunity to improve what we're doing."

Smith agrees. "We have a chance to help save the languages, and a strong program will help accomplish that," she said.

#### Reading First

In a memorandum Smith listed some of the ways the Language Program could change and improve. Some of the suggestions are:

Provide a clear scope and sequence or curriculum map of topics to be covered at each grade level. Identify target language goals and objectives at each grade level.

Provide on-going and regular assessments for students to measure growth toward language goals and objectives.

Smith also emphasized that daily school instructional time is limited. A Reading First grant that provided the school with substantial funding, for instance, requires a certain amount of time dedicated only to reading.

Also, federal legislation sets high academic standards that must be met, requiring the school to maximize instructional time.



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The Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery Twenty-Fifth Anniversary celebration featured dancing by the Wasco Dancers. Above, Deanie Johnson helps young Sharina Warner prepare for the first dance.

## W.S. Power Enterprises stabilizing finances

Good financial news is rare these days, which is why recent word from Warm Springs Power Enterprises is very welcome.

Through the Confederated Tribes, Power Enterprises is set to issue bonds that will pay for the purchase of the tribes' share of the Pelton hydroelectric project.

The bond issuance should help stabilize Power Enterprises revenue to the Confederated Tribes general fund.

There have been some delays of many months in issuing the bonds. But the transaction appears likely to happen by the end of September, said Jim Manion, general manager of Power Enterprises.

Having a stable revenue stream from Power Enterprises is important because, of the tribal enterprises, Power Enterprises is by far the largest contributor to the tribes' general fund. The general fund is responsible for the day to operation of the tribal government.

The bond issuance will repay the money the tribes borrowed in early 2001 from Pelton co-owner Portland General Electric (PGE).

The tribes initially borrowed \$24 million from PGE, and owe approximately \$17 million, because the tribes have paid down on the principal.

The tribes' upcoming bond issuance will be in the amount of \$50 million, and will be repaid over a 30-year term.

The bond revenue will repay the rest owed PGE, and will also cover the initial costs for mitigation measures during the next dam re-license period.

Mitigation measures eventually may include migrating fish passage past the dams.

The interest rate on the bonds is expected to be about 5 percent lower than the amount on the loan from PGE. This will be the first tribal bond issuance on the Pelton project. Tribal Council has reviewed and approved the documents necessary to go forward, said Manion.

## Fire burns edge of reservation

By Bill Rhoades  
Spilyay Tymoc

Weekday traffic on Highway 26 was approaching holiday volumes and one visitor from Los Angeles said the air quality in Warm Springs was reminiscent of home.

Those were the most noticeable impacts of the B and B Fire Complex that continued to burn over the Labor Day weekend.

The complex, made up of the Booth and Bear Butte fires, had consumed just over 51,000 acres as of Tuesday morning.

Officials are reporting the fires, burning primarily on remote national forest lands, were 45 percent contained at press time.

The Bear Butte Fire has burned approximately 2,800

acres on the southwest corner of the reservation, but fire lines in that area held throughout the weekend and fire crews are now saying they have secured the northeast and east flanks of the blaze.

Approximately 2,300 firefighters are working on the B and B Complex. Officials say there are three camp crews and a hotshot crew from Warm Springs on the fire.

Evacuated residents of Black Butte Ranch and Camp Sherman have returned to their homes, but are still on alert in case conditions take a turn for the worse. Highway 20 over Santiam Pass reopened to traffic on Sunday morning, relieving some of the congestion on Highway 26 through Warm Springs.

Tribal representatives have curtailed logging operations near the fire area. The area south of Whitewater River has also been closed to hunting.

The Bear Butte Fire, about 25 percent of which is on the reservation, had spread over 11,312 acres by Tuesday morning.

Resources advisors are evaluating the area to determine appropriate rehabilitation measures, which may include grass seeding to reduce soil erosion and tree planting to reforest burned stands.

Containment costs continued to rise early this week, topping \$11 million on Tuesday.

The cause of the fire is still unknown.

## KWSO has new sound

This week marks the start of the "new look" at KWSO, the Station on the Reservation, 91.9 FM.

Sue Matters, station director, encourages listeners to tune and check out the new lineup.

## 41 summers on Sidwalter Butte Fire watch has become a family tradition for the Keenes

By D. "Bing" Bingham, Spilyay Tymoc

Jim Keene loves a good thunderstorm. He likes them even better when he's in his fire tower on Sidwalter Butte, where he's spent the last 41 summers.

"I've always wanted to have that (tower) hit by a lightning bolt while I'm up there," grins Jim.

He's heard the stories from other lookouts. All the hair on your body stands on end, while blue flashes of light run over the tower.

"If you get on the stool with the insulators, it's the safest place in the world," Jim adds, "but don't touch any iron, it's not a good idea."

For now, though, Jim and his wife, Gloria, will settle for what they have: spectacular thunderstorms during their summer job, and lightning striking within a couple hundred yards of their living quarters.

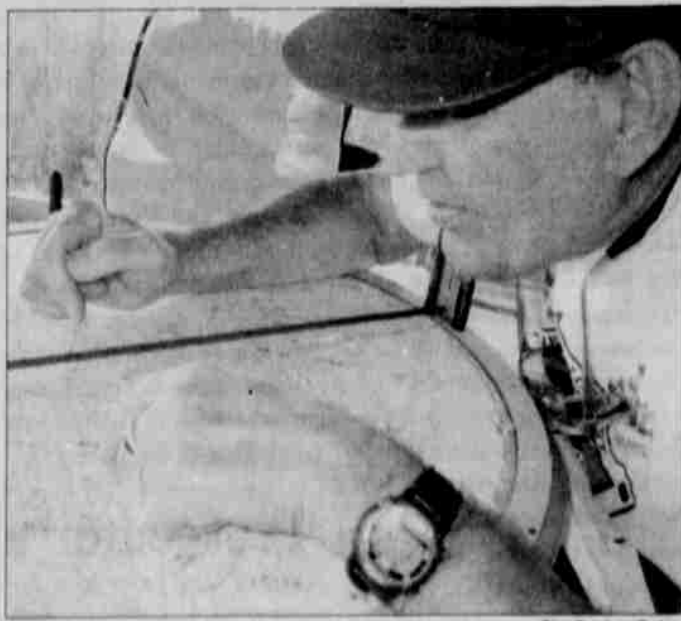
Gloria acknowledges that sometimes the thunder gets loud on their hilltop retreat.

"It's like sticking your head in a can and beating on it," she admits.

Thunderstorms are serious business in a fire tower.

"You get to do what you're paid to do," says Jim.

People in fire towers have a huge responsibility. They pro-



Bing Bingham/Spilyay

Jim Keene uses an azimuth to track potential fires.

tect a major economic product, timber, which means big money for the tribes. If tower personnel aren't on the ball when a fire is still small, the potential loss is immense.

When a thunderstorm happens during the afternoon or evening, first thing the next morning Jim heads up the tower looking for "sleepers" left over from earlier lightning strikes. He checks the places of the most frequent activity. Sometimes as the day warms, smoke pops up.

Other times, though, it's hard to tell the difference between the smoke of a small fire and a fog pocket after a thunderstorm.

"You have to take an azimuth on that particular spot," Jim says. "If that spot moves, it's not a fire."

Decades of experience help: smoke has a slight blue tint, fog doesn't. According to Jim, if the person in the tower looks at the suspected smoke and isn't sure it's a fire, then chances are it's not.

Watching for forest fires in a tower isn't all lightning bolts, crashing thunder and reporting smoke. There's the rest of the time. It's filled with sounds of singing birds, wind in the trees and quiet - lots of quiet.

It takes a different kind of person to stand a fire watch, especially for many years. There's no television, phone or neighbors. It's hard to justify driving into town for a quart of milk. This isn't a job for everybody.

Please see FIRE WATCH on page 10