

Williams: 'That first one was just my whole downfall'

(Continued from page 1)

It was during his childhood that Williams first discovered what would lead him down a dark path: alcohol.

Williams began to experiment with alcohol as early as age six.

"Right from the get-go I was an alcoholic," he said. "I was already liking the taste of the whiskey and the wine."

When he finally entered school, Williams said, "It was hard for me to mix with kids here."

Standing in the corner became as customary to Williams during his boarding school years as waxing floors and polishing shoes as punishment.

"That did help me, though, to learn to kind of get along with people, to have a voice and opinions," Williams said. "The horses and cows wouldn't answer me back, so the other opinions of people were starting to help."

Around the same time that Williams took up the sport of baseball (he dreamt of playing for the Dodgers), he suffered another devastating loss when his horse died.

It was, Williams explained, just another period of dealing with his relationship with God.

"He took my life away from me right there again. That was my horse. Without that horse I became nothing," Williams explained.

Still, his parents served as motivation to him at an early age and throughout his childhood.

"My father was one of my greatest inspirations," Williams explained. With his father's help, Williams became an able handyman and learned as much as he could.

Of his mother, Williams said, "She was really my inspiration to learn more." Though she only had a third grade education, Williams said, "She had to be at least six to seven times smarter than I was."

Williams has stories of sitting on rubber mats during lightning storms while in a lookout tower with his father, watching his father pinpoint forest fires for awaiting crews.

He once fantasized of following in his father's footsteps and pored over pamphlets about firefighting and logging.

Williams even sought out training in the field and began to learn how to fly planes. Eventually, the hold that alcohol took over his life overran everything else—until now.

Years of bitterness

Cigarettes and alcohol became a normal fixture in his life when those around him began drinking regularly, Williams said.

According to Williams, "It was just something everybody else was doing. It probably looked cool to me."

His older brothers also turned to alcohol and quickly became entwined with the law.

When Williams saw his brother being taken away by the

police, he said, "That's when I started running into trouble."

"If it wasn't a hatred of cops it was just a mistrust," Williams added. "Those were my really bitter years, watching them take my brothers away."

Years later Williams found himself averaging 40 miles of walking per day while searching for cans to cash in for the deposit in order to buy more alcohol.

"I would just walk and walk and walk for that extra mile. If I didn't have enough cans I would walk another five or ten miles for enough to get it," he said.

Williams explained, "My body needed that alcohol. In my mind I knew I wanted it. My body needed it to keep on functioning and keep on going."

He camped by the river with others who chose the same lifestyle, Williams said. But it was not a pleasant way to live.

"There were many times I sat along that river and thought about jumping in," Williams said. But because he knew how to swim, he knew his instincts would kick in and he would just swim back out.

It once came to that—Williams fell in, but swam to the shore. Once he returned to his camp and got into dry clothes, Williams turned right back to alcohol.

"I didn't think nothing about freezing, I went back to my drinking," Williams said. "It's just so powerful and addictive that there is nothing else more important, not even the life itself."

"It was always the only thing on my mind, as soon as I woke up—how am I going to get my next one?"

At that point, Williams camped by the river with a group of elders. Since they were unable to walk, Williams would begin walking during early morning until he had enough cans to cash in.

"Much of that time I was not allowed in the store," Williams said. "I had to wait for somebody to take the cans in."

No matter the cost, Williams always kept drinking—even though it meant risking his life even more.

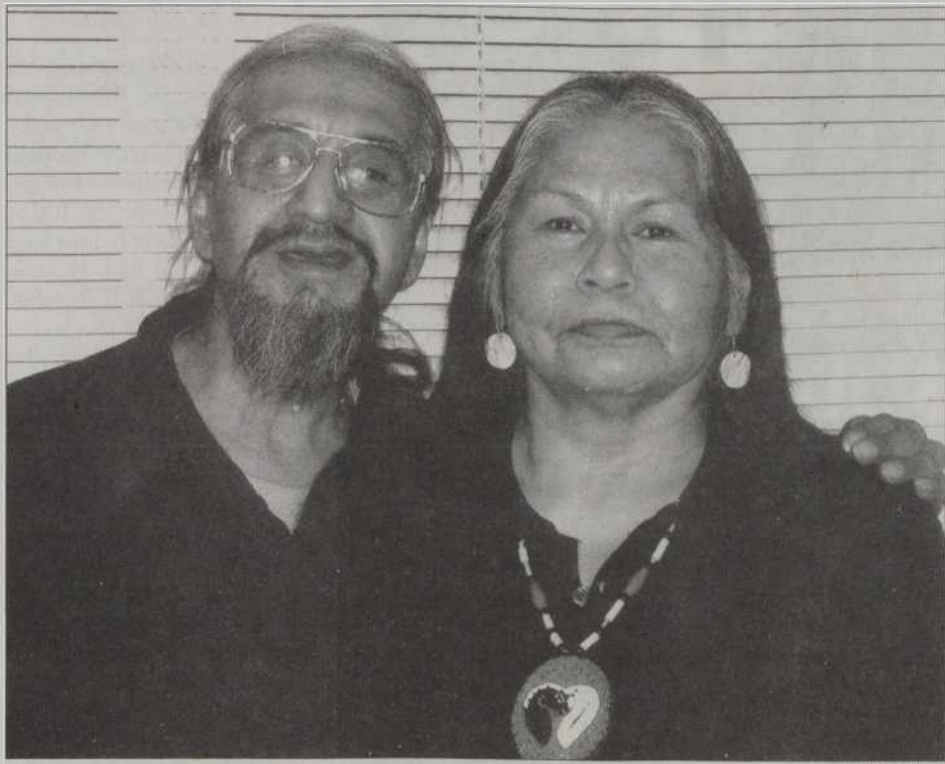
At one point, Williams said, he turned to trash bags for warmth while he slept. When someone took his camping equipment, he had to crawl inside large trash bags during the night.

"That was not fun," he said. "It was survival, actually, but it was just kind of more of a slow death more than anything else."

But death wasn't something Williams found concerning. At the time, he said, "If I did not wake up, at least I would be dying happy, having that alcohol."

One of the closest calls came when Williams fell into a cattle guard and became stuck. Because freezing rain was pouring down, he nearly died of over-exposure.

"I was freezing to death right



Williams and his wife Annie "MIMI" Hairy Bull.

there stuck in a cattle guard," he said. "Someone finally found me and took me to the hospital."

Even that experience didn't frighten him away from alcohol. For a brief time, he said, it only made him more careful.

Stayed by the river

As for his children, Williams said, alcohol definitely affected his relationship with them.

"I always tried to make it to their graduations and all their Christmas programs," he said. "The alcohol was in the way."

It didn't take much alcohol either, he added. "At times it wouldn't even take more than two or three drinks and I would be in the blackout stage," Williams said.

After awhile, Williams decided it would be best just to stay out of the lives of those around him.

"That's why I chose to stay along the river," Williams explained. Often he would just start walking, sometimes to states as far as South Dakota—"Just to see what's over that next mountain or that next river," Williams said.

But always, he added, "Deep in my mind I knew I just had to quit."

Drinking kept him frequently in trouble with the law as well. Throughout his life, Williams has been to prison six times.

"I don't blame the law for sending me to all of my alcohol programs," Williams said. "But when I was court ordered that put me on a defense."

"I couldn't wait for that door to open," he added.

"It wasn't the law, it was just the obsession and the possession of alcohol that just overruled," he added.

But it's not that Williams never tried to stop drinking.

"So many times I sat along that river looking around and wondering if I should go walk up in the mountains and sit down for a few days and

straighten up," he said.

Though he did just that on several occasions, he was never able to resist the temptation of alcohol. "I had no answer at all except that I could not function without it," he explained.

Part of the problem involved being offered a drink.

Williams said it's almost like his body automatically took hold of the bottle being held out to him. According to Williams, "To stop the shakes I guess my body just reacted and I just took it."

After years of sobriety, Williams is still realizing the havoc that alcoholism caused in his life.

"I could be doing something with my life now instead of all those years I spent wasted. That alcohol just took away all of that," he said.

Now that Williams is approaching retirement, he said, he's started to wonder about how that will happen.

According to Williams, "Even now I have a rough time trying to get over what the alco-

hol has done to me. There's no way I can reverse that. I will die an alcoholic even though I do not care for it no more or want it no more. It's still destroying my life, and it will not stop destroying my life. All of those decisions I made were the wrong ones. I'm still lost in that bottle and I can't open it. I'm still suffering for what I've done."

"I don't think I'll ever get away from it. The long-term effects—that will stay with me the rest of my life," he added.

For now, Williams is content to spend as much time as possible with his "very beautiful wife and grandchildren."

"That's my highlight. They're there with me and I'm there for them," Williams said with a shy smile.

According to Williams, others often seek advice from him about how to quit drinking.

"I tell them, 'I can't tell you.' I made the wrong decision. I tried to listen to other people. That is up to the individual," he said.

After so many years of drinking, Williams said, he often thought, "Fifty years from now, who is going to be buying me that next drink?"

His past is something that still haunts him today.

According to Williams, "It will never stop hounding me—all the wrong decisions I made."

"The worst one was to begin in the first place. That first one was just my whole downfall."

Quality Automotive Service

Honest,
Friendly
Auto Repair
&
Service!

Steve, Danita & Henry the dog!

Over 26
Years
Experience

Master ASE
Certified
Technician

475-2412

85 SW 3rd Street (Located in the old Palmain Shop)

We work on ALL makes & models!

Open: Mon-Fri
8:00am-5:30pm

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 509-J

445 SE Buff St. Madras, OR 97741
Phone (541) 475-0339 Fax (541) 475-8279

Office of the Food Services Supervisor

Summer Food Service Program
School's Out Let's Eat!!!

Food Service Truck will come to a central location in your neighborhood, or to your local participating school.

Listed below are the sites, times and dates.

Site Name/Location	Address	Meal Times	Program Dates
Warm Springs Elementary School Cafeteria	1114 Wasco Street Warm Springs, OR 97761	8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast 11:30-12:15 Lunch	July 3 - July 27, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Greely Heights Intersection at Quail Trail	Quail Trail Warm Springs, OR 97761	11:00-11:30 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
West Hills Neighborhood Play Area	West Hills Drive Warm Springs, OR 97761	11:45-12:15 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Upper Dry Creek Tommy Street	Upper Dry Creek Warm Springs, OR 97761	11:00 - 11:30 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Sunnyside Intersection at View Street	Sunnyside Drive Warm Springs, OR 97761	11:45 - 12:00 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Simnasho Long House Parking Lot	Asnamash Loop Warm Springs, OR 97761	12:30 - 1:00 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Westside Elementary School Cafeteria	410 SW 4 th Street Madras, OR 97741	1:00 - 1:30 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Metolius Elementary School Play Ground Area	420 Butte Ave Metolius, OR 97741	11:00 - 11:30 Lunch	June 18 - August 10, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Jefferson County Middle School Cafeteria	1180 SE City View St. Madras, OR 97741	8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast 11:30 - 12:15 Lunch	July 3 - July 31, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007
Madras High School Cafeteria	390 SE 10 th Street Madras, OR 97741	8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast 11:30 - 12:15 Lunch	July 3 - July 27, 2007 CLOSED JULY 4, 2007

- Summer Food Service Program Rules:**
1. All children on site 1-18 years eat at no charge.
 2. Adults are not allowed to eat off of child's plate.
 3. Meals will only be served during assigned meal times.
 4. No meals will be served to adults.
 5. All meals must be eaten on site.

HAVE CAB: WILL TRAVEL

NATIVE
AMERICAN
OWNED
AND
OPERATED

ALL
MAJOR
CREDIT
CARDS

REZ ROVER

CALL JOEY 553-3030

24/7