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Counselor finds new hope, faith

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

At one time Michelle Wells-Elliott wondered if she still had a soul left, as a prisoner of addiction.

"I was homeless," she said. "It was that bad. I was doing a lot of jail time. I was running the streets. I just didn't care anymore."

At the height of her addiction, Michelle lost her mother. "That's my biggest regret. I was in full-blown addiction while my mother was on her death bed."

Guidance came to Michelle in the form of a court order, when Heather Crow-Martinez was sent to do an assessment on Michelle in jail.

"I remember people would see me back then," Michelle said. "They'd think—'Oh, I can't believe this is what she has become. This is where she's at in her life.'"

Heather became Michelle's mentor. "It was nice to just have support. She had faith in me. She held my hand from the beginning, and I never had that kind of faith while I was using."

Michelle went to treatment at Visions of Hope in Redmond on February 14, 2006. The program lasted 28 days, but the lessons for life continue.

"I moved on to a half-way house. I was scared, of course. Being in residential treatment is such a safe haven. You're surrounded by people



Duran Bobb/Spilyay

Michelle Wells-Elliott recently celebrated her fifth year in recovery. Having earned her CADC1, she facilitates recovery classes in Madras.

striving for a common goal."

In the days to come, Michelle found a new goal, having realized that what might have been considered a weakness in the past could be a strength for tomorrow.

"I started COCC in the summer of 2008, majoring in addiction studies. It was tough! I'm not going to lie."

In December of 2010, Michelle tested at the state level, to become a certified drug and alcohol counselor.

"In order to earn your CADC1, you need to complete a 250 question test. That was hard to obtain."

Her husband, Richard Elliott, and

her three children Desirai, Tosha and Richayla ignited new inspiration in Michelle. "It's amazing how much support they were to me through this time."

Michelle knew that she was on the road to being a better person. "I was learning how to live a different way of life, other than having drugs to cope. I learned different ways of dealing with stress and every day living. I was getting myself back. I was getting my family back. I was stepping up."

Please see COUNSELOR on 10

N'Chi Wanapam

Family ready for second canoe season

March 26 dedication planned at Indian Park

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The N'Chi Wanapam Canoe Family is preparing for its second season on the water.

The plan is to add a second canoe by the time of the summer 2011 Tribal Canoe Journey, said Jefferson Greene, N'Chi Wanapam coordinator.

This year the Canoe Journey will be the Paddle to Swinomish 2011. The destination, the Swinomish Indian Reservation, is in northern Washington on Skagit Bay.

The Paddle to Swinomish will be from July 25-31. The Warm Springs Canoe Family will probably begin the journey at Celilo Village, as they did last year with the Paddle to Neah Bay, said Greene.

The Canoe Family has planned a canoe dedication for Saturday, March 26 at Indian Park. There will be a salmon bake and giveaway, and canoe heritage and cultural presentations. Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Nisqually and Tulalip tribal members are expected to attend.

The N'Chi Wanapam family will be making practice runs on Saturdays until the Paddle to Swinomish. The practice

runs are from Pelton Park to Indian Park.

There are about 50 members of the N'Chi Wanapam family. This includes the pullers and the ground crew.

The family welcomes new members, said Greene. "This is a community project, open to everyone," he said.

"We're recruiting pullers age 13 and over," he added. The N'Chi Wanapam canoe has seating for 18 pullers. The family currently has 25 pullers. Nineteen made the journey last year to Neah Bay.

More pullers are needed as a backup crew for N'Chi Wanapam, plus more for the second canoe, he said.

The Canoe Family is working with the master canoe carver of the Tulalip on the second canoe. This project needs to go to Tribal Council for approval, and then construction would take about two months, said Greene.

The tribal canoe is funded by the Confederated Tribes as part of the Museum at Warm Springs, carrying out the museum mission of preserving and sharing tribal heritage. Donations are also welcome.

Besides the practice runs on Saturdays, the family members participate in tribal cultural activities throughout the week. On Sunday they hold Washat Service at the Agency Longhouse.

Please see CANOE FAMILY on 8

Gaming update

Architect on board

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

After interviewing three firms, the Temporary Casino Planning Team has tentatively hired the Worth Group out of Nevada as the architects for the temporary casino.

The architectural firm, with offices in Las Vegas, Reno and Denver, specializes in Native American casinos. The Worth Group have been in business for over 20 years. "We're in the process of getting those contracts done," Deepak Sehgal, Chairman for the KNT board of directors, said.

The board will also meet with four general contractors for the project. "We have some names in that hat. We have also told them strictly, we want to make sure tribal members are given the opportunity to bid on different parts of the project."

Those bids might include grading, installing footings or building sidewalks or landscaping, or other appropriate parts of the project, Sehgal said.

"We are trying to use tribal expertise as much as possible. For example, Travis Wells will be helping with the civil engineering. We'd like people to know that we're committed to the membership on this. We have the construction enterprise here, and I know Housing's construction crew does work on projects. In addition, there are local contractors right here, so we're going to try to use those folks as needed."

"We aim to design and build unique places that speak to the human spirit," a representative of the Worth Group said. "We're proud that our projects create such a unique sense of place."

The Kah-Nee-Ta board has hired Cultural Resources in Warm Springs to conduct the cultural field surveys.

Tribal attorneys are working on the

wording for minor changes to the compact. Tribal Council will present the minor changes in the compact to the governor, government-to-government.

"So this project is moving along at 100 miles per hour," Sehgal said. "There is no time to waste, and there are a lot of different moving parts involved."

Kah-Nee-Ta is working with three different banks to secure financing for the project. The board will also meet with Warm Springs Tribal Credit.

Because the project is an expansion of Kah-Nee-Ta, moving the current casino to a temporary location along Highway 26, the resort will secure its own funding for the project.

"And this is a business enterprise," Sehgal said. "So we are looking for support on utilizing the BIRF (Business Investment Revolving Fund) dollars that are available for business enterprise."

The temporary casino is expected to bring 200 new jobs to the community of Warm Springs. "There's also the opportunity for tribal members to go into business for themselves. There are empty spaces at the plaza. Someone might think about a gas station or a convenience store."

Tribal representatives will meet with architects on Thursday of this week at the proposed location for the temporary casino.

"And it doesn't stop there," Sehgal said. "We're also planning a meeting for Simnasho in the near future. We want people to know that we're being very open about this project, moving the casino."

"If anybody would like to have a meeting with their family any time during the process, we're even open to that. Just get a hold of Harry Taylor, Scott Moses, J.P. Patt or myself and we'll get together."

Girls at State Tournament



Courtesy of MHS.

The Madras White Buffalo girls varsity basketball team—Valerie Smith, Norene Sampson, Inez Jones, Joella Smith, Rosie Suppah, Raylene Jones, Coach Oster; Abby Scott, Cheyenne Wahnetah, Lucy Suppah, Rachel Simmons, Misty Spino and Ashley Kaltsukis (from left)—are at the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) 4A Girls Basketball State Tournament this week. They play Banks this evening, Wednesday, March 9, at 6:30 in Gill Coliseum in Corvallis. Listen to KWSO 91.9 FM for live coverage. With a victory, the White Buffalos would play the following evening at 6:30 against the winner of the Brookings Harbor-Cascade game. The championship game is on Friday at 6:30.

Cascade Locks state compact officially approved

The Cascade Locks gaming compact between the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the state of Oregon became official on March 1. On that day, the notice of approval of the compact appeared in the Federal Register.

There will still need to be a "two-part determination" before the critical step is taken to bring the Cascade Locks site into trust, after which the gaming plan can move forward. The

two-part determination test of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires a finding that the proposed gaming enterprise is in the best interest of the tribes and its members, and does not harm the neighboring communities.

Regarding the compact, the tribes and the state submitted the document to the Department of the Interior for approval in November of last year. The compact sets out terms of agreement

between the tribes and the local community of Cascade Locks, regarding law enforcement, fire protection, the number of slot machines, among other issues.

The compact is an updated version of one that the state and the tribes negotiated in 2005, which the federal government rejected, because the land was not yet in trust.