

VISITOR FOUND JOY AT THE TRIBES POW-WOW

BY SHIRLEY DEVOSS

The setting was common but the spirit was not. The drums and the singing a strange combination of foreign and familiar; the pulse beat of a nation. It was to be a day of unexpected contrasts, but I didn't know that yet.

I walked from my car to, and through, the elementary school building--nothing unusual here. As I stepped through the large doors opening onto the school playground, vivid images of the American past competed with the reality of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde today. This was Pow Wow 1989!

It wasn't a particularly big crowd as crowds go, but a certain strength was evident as a group of dancers began to form a circle on the green grass. It took me a while for me to see the circles within the circles within the circles.

These people had changed a rectangle into a round space. The placement of a variety of chairs, bales of hay and wooden bleachers formed a longish, unbroken circle. Within this outer circle the drummers formed 3 small circles around each of three drums. Circles of feathers and beads were sewn onto the clothing of the dancers--all serve as a reminder of the unbroken hoop of the Indian Nation.

The dance ended and I walked out of the round world into the commercial world; the area of vendors and concessions. This was American familiar--the gaudy, the tawdry, and the good. I comfortably bought a coke and Indian fry bread--a contrast?

The voice of the master of ceremonies called me back to the edge of the outer circle. One by one the people came forward to speak--unpretentious-straightforward--directly honest--yet elegant in their simplicity. Unbidden, the thought came, "They speak not with forked tongue, but heart to heart." My eyes stung with unexpected emotion; tears of guilt, or pride--I didn't know which.

The drums began--the dancers returned--over and over the circles--over and over the honoring of the 4 directions, and Mother Earth, and Father Sky. These were the Fancy Dancers, the intricate skill of the Hoop Dancers, the feminine beauty of the Shawl Dancers. The dancers were able, the costumes well done, but there was something else--an elusive something that nudged at the edge of my mind--then it came of a sudden as I watched a young 7 year-old girl dance the Jingle Dance. This child, like the other dancers before her, danced for the sake of the dance; not centered on audience approval, no plaining to the spectators, only serious intent on meaning and form. They danced for the healing of the people.

I felt included and left out at the same time: I was white.

The Eagle Dance called the eagle back--slowly the eagle awakened and flew, to return again. The masked, painted warrior, Standing Bear, danced and transformed the area. When Standing Bear danced, your mind played tricks on you--caught between two worlds. Momentarily you felt and saw a clearing in the woods--the flicker of firelight--the strength of his mission--he brought change--pride and fear! This man had power! He awakened a collective memory. He was the dance and the message!

The drums stopped: The circle was empty. The voice of the MC spoke of Our Mother Earth and our need to respect and care for her--she has been misused--we must all work to make her well again. "Above all, not to place blame. That does not good." he said. The generosity of this statement struck me as beyond

understanding, given the historical past.

The traditional dancers came forward; uniting the past, present and the future.

A wise, older woman, with infinitely gentle, strong voice, offered a prayer to the Great Spirit: She spoke softly of the pain of Termination and asked humbly for the courage and strength needed for Restoration.

The closing ceremony began with 4 flags leading the procession around the circle--the U.S. flag (carried by a Native American Vietnam War Veteran)--the Oregon flag--the Council flag--and the uniting eagle feather staff. Then came Pow Wow Royalty, just behind the flag bearers, followed by elders, dancers and all the behind-the-scenes workers who make it all possible in any culture. By their entering the circle, the "thank-you" came alive.

Even at this closing event I faced the contrast again--of place and feeling--the pathos of this comparatively small group of representing the thousands of yesterdays. This reservation, the result of many broken treaties and promises, representing the vast lands that once were their home.

The bitter taste of sorrow my mouth as I acknowledged the fact that the house I live in at Cascade Head Ranch sits on stolen sacred Indian ground.

Was this gathering pathetic because at one time these people had so much? Are they losers? I think not. All the legends of mankind speak of rebirth by way of making the sacrifice that leads to transformation, and if any people ever have, these people surely have made the sacrifice and survived the terrible pain--the transformation is due. It is time for the Eagle's return.



REMAINS TO BE RETURNED

A newly established Smithsonian Institute policy could allow the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to bring home from Washington, D.C., the remains of long-dead ancestors that were removed from an island in the Columbia River.

According to tribal attorney Jim Noteboom the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History has 28 sets of skeletal remains gathered in 1934 from Memaloose Island in the Columbia River. The Tribe believes the remains are those of the ancestors of the Wasco tribe.

Although the Tribe has had a request for the return pending for several years with the Smithsonian, a formal request, under provisions of the new policy, will be made soon, said Noteboom.

The Smithsonian will form a five-member commission to inventory and identify its collection of remains with the intent of returning them to their descendants. The Smithsonian has an estimated 18,600 sets of Indian remains.

The Warm Springs remains were collected without permission by Herbert Krieger, curator of ethnology at the Smithsonian from lower Memaloose Island in 1934.

While the Smithsonian housed the remains for 55 years, Wasco Chief Nelson Wallulatum enlisted the aid of tribal attorneys to seek the return of the remains for burial on the reservation.

Noteboom added actual return could occur within six months to a year.

GRAND RONDE TRIBAL DEPARTMENTS:

BY MICHAEL CHILDERS

"ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT" - PAT AND SHELLEY

For the last few months the Accounting Department has been very busy working on the '88 and '89 Audits. Pat Mercier, the Controller and Shelley Hanson, the Program Director says that the '88 Audit will be sent out at the end of November and the '89 Audit will then be started. Besides the Audits, the Accounting Department will still stay busy with other work such as Processing computerized general funds checks and Payroll checks. Also in the next six months the Department plans on starting the Accounting Manual and Procedures.

If anyone has any questions or wants more information of the status of the Accounting Department, please feel free to call Pat or Shelley, Monday through Friday during business hours, (503) 879-5211.

"DRUG & ALCOHOL" - MARGARET PROVOST

Just recently the Drug and Alcohol Program attended a Public Presentation "No No Know" for the Quarterly NW Portland Area Indian Health Board Meeting. The Five Tribal youth members that also showed an interest by attending the Conference with the Drug and Alcohol Director, Margaret Provost, are, Tina Butler, Joe and Erica Mercier, Amelia Haug (Standing Bear), Molly Rimer (Jr. Miss Grand Ronde), and Jolene Poole (Miss Grand Ronde).

On the 21st through the 24th there is going to be a Prevention Conference, "Strategies for the 90's at Sun River where the Tribal Youth will additionally attend. The Conference will focus on five prevention strategies: Information, Social Skills, Social Policy, Alcohol/Drug Free alternatives and Training Impactors.

For any more information on these upcoming activities, please call Margaret Provost at (505) 879-5211.

"EDUCATION" - DEAN AZULE

With the start of Fall Term 1989 and the remainder of the '89-'90 school year, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde currently have a total of 47 students participating in all educational programs. The Higher Education Program has 21 students, the Adult Vocational Training Program has 11 students. The Adult Education Program had a total of 15 during the months of September and October '89. This year the JOHNSON O' MALLEY Program will provide services to a total of 81 students Pre-School aged (3 & 4 years old) through the 12th grades.

Upcoming activities the Education Program will be providing during the school year include: field trips for students to the NW Indian Youth Convention, College and University visitations, field trips to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, College Fair Awareness workshop for students and parents, Oregon Teen Leadership activities for students and Parent Committee Training and related activities.

The 1989-90 school year is off on a positive step. If you are interested in participating or any of the Educational Committees, Parents Committees or wish more information regarding Educational Services and activities, please feel free to call Dean Azule or Camille VanVleet at 879-5211.