

Tribal Life

Candidates speak out on tribal issues, concerns

By Frank King

Twelve candidates addressed a small audience at the candidates forum at the Community Center July 24.

The candidates are running for two positions on the Tribal Council now held by Merle Holmes and Candy Robertson, were among the speakers.

The candidates addressed three subjects in a round-robin format:

- The things that bothered them the most about tribal government.

- The things they would like to change.

- Why they would like to be on the tribal council.

The speakers names were drawn by Sharon Hanson, chairwoman of the elections committee.

The candidates had three minutes to answer each of the questions.

A portion of the candidates' statements follow:

Merle Leno: Favors expanded tribal services outside of the service area.

"All 3,000 of us need some services, no matter where we live. The Tribal Council has to stick together on issues."

Timothy Holmes: Concerned about economic development. Recommends increasing health services out of the service area. "My main concern is the rapport between the Tribal Council and the General Council."

Merle Holmes: Growth will be a challenge because of the gaming facility. Employment will grow from 120 to 500-600 people - they have to be trained. "There are needs in every program. We will have to make good use of the increased revenue." Action is being taken to improve communications by hiring a specialist. Holmes is in favor of enlarging the tribal court to "gear for growth."

Margaret Provost: The Tribes need a more comprehensive health clinic and housing. "There are a lot of sick people in our tribe - treatment should not be a

Band-aid." She wants better communications between the Tribal Council, the managers and tribal members. She is concerned about the hiring of tribal members, and the process being fair.

Dean Mercier: "My main concern is getting the cemetery committee organized."

He sees it a means of fostering tribal unity. He said that the Tribal Council's public relations and access to individual tribal members should be improved by more and better individual contacts.

Wilbur West: He is worried about timber resources dwindling. He is anti-gambling, but the gaming facility "should be run by Indians for Indians, particularly Grand Ronde Indians." Information should be promptly issued to tribal members. Major subjects should go before the General Council for a vote.

June Olson: She hopes for

tribal unity. She is concerned about benefit disparity between the people in the service area and those at a distance. "As you live farther away, your benefit package dwindles." She said the system fosters an "us against them" attitude. She stressed that the Tribal Council has to be responsive to the general membership through better information practices and organizational structure.

Matthew Kirkland: Emphasized a pro-active approach to tribal management. He is in favor of the strategic plan being developed. "We like to be informed, to have the freedom of access to information." He believes that tribal members should have the opportunity to meet individually, in a good environment, with individual Council members.

Candy Robertson: She would continue to press for good economic development and creation of jobs due to the gaming facility. "Training

will be provided for several thousand people. That will result in further education opportunities and housing." She said that more information will go to tribal members by publishing *Smoke Signals* twice instead of once a month. She said the current Tribal Council and staff will be able to communicate more effectively.

Joyce Kirk: She said that with the new gaming center the Tribes have to be financially accountable to make self-governance work. "More information should be made available to the General Council through the tribal newsletter." She wants to be more involved in the decision making process.

Bob Mercier: "We don't have tribal participation. We need to reach out to the people to see how this tribe should be run." He favors a health program that would cover all tribal members. He suggested that the discussion of future

benefits include a retirement plan for tribal members.

Reyn Leno: "There is a barrier between the General Council and the Tribal Council. Every concern should be addressed." He believes that the governmental process should be reorganized so that controversial issues - go before the General Council. He said that currently, tribal members are not able to provide input on important actions taken by the tribal council until after the fact.

Election Notice
• Election for new Tribal Council members will be Sept. 10, 1994.
• At the Tribal Community Center, Grand Ronde.
• Polling hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Jeness involved with Ambassador's Program

Tribal Council member Andy Jenness is representing the Tribe through a Native American Ambassadors' Program this year.

Sponsored by Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), this program consists of 22 young tribal members from all over the United States. The ages range from 25 to 35.

The idea behind the Ambassadors' Program is to bring together current and future tribal leaders to network, talk about the future of Indian tribes, government, and meet other tribal leaders.

The members meet four times per year.

The meetings, which are funded through many supporters of AIO, primarily the Kellogg Foundation, have been held this year at the Makah Indian reservation, and Washington, D.C.

This month, Andy will travel to Sante Fe, and the last trip the ambassadors will take will be to Bolivia in the fall.

In addition to attending



Andy Jenness

these four meetings, each ambassador must complete a field project to present to the group. Andy, who has always been interested in language preservation, is working on documenting Chinook Jargon for tribal members and future generations.

Applications for the Ambassadors' Program are available through AIO in New Mexico. Contact Laura Harris, (505) 867-0278 for more information.

Andy was recently selected to be Treasurer by his fellow Council members. The title is awarded by nomination and vote, the same as Chairman, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Deputy sheriff now on duty

Beginning August 1, there will be a full-time Polk County deputy patrolling Grand Ronde. The Grand Ronde Tribe reached an agreement with the Polk County Commissioners' office where the Tribe will provide money for salary and benefits for the deputy who will be on duty. Tribal leaders have been interested in helping to alleviate the growing drug and crime problem in the community. Not only is there evidence of drug use in Grand Ronde, but many of the local residents have been robbed. The Tribal Chemical Dependency offices have been burglarized as well. Polk County Sheriff's Office is based in Dallas. The office's 13 patrol officers haven't been enough to cover such a wide rural area. This new deputy will patrol tribal and non-tribal lands.



From left: Sheriff Steele, Deputy Wolf, Chip Tom, Polk County Undersheriff Barbara Runyon, and John Mercier.

Staff member selected for grant panel

A tribal employee was recently selected by a federal agency to serve on a grant review panel. Constance Albrecht, the tribal grantsperson, was selected by the Administration for Native Americans to participate on the panel.

The Administrations for Native Americans (ANA) is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. ANA specializes in giving grants to Indian Tribes and organizations with the purpose of encouraging Tribes to become self-governing and self-sufficient. The Grand Ronde tribe has received one ANA grant for development of a land use code, and will likely receive another one in the near future for the Tribal Housing Program.

ANA recently began a new grant program aimed at assisting tribes in dealing with environmental issues. For example, a grant might be given to a tribe for developing tribal ordinances for water protection or waste disposal.

According to Ms. Albrecht, they were looking for people to help the agency review grant applications for this new program. Ms. Albrecht has had extensive experience in the governmental field, including working with a tribe in Idaho to set up their environmental programs, and decided to apply for the review panel.

Ms. Albrecht spent July 11-15 in Washington, D.C. participating in the panel, with ANA paying all of her travel costs. She said, "It was quite interesting to see the diversity of environmental problems on Indian lands and to evaluate the diversity of programs proposed by the tribes and tribal organizations to solve those problems. We put in a lot of hours reading and scoring applications, and writing up suggestions for improvement in case they wish to apply again."

Ms. Albrecht also said, "It was also a good education in grant writing for me, which will help in writing future grants for ANA and other agencies."