

Meet the two new Housing Authority members

By Brent Merrill

Whitecloud lends her experience to Tribal Housing Authority

After years of serving on the Powwow Committee, the Election Board and the helping the Fish and Wildlife Committee re-write their ordinance, Tribal member Dakota Whitecloud has settled into a new role with the Tribe's Housing Authority.

Whitecloud is one of the two new members of the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority's Board of Directors. She said she got involved with the authority in 1994 when it was still a working group looking at the Tribe's housing options.

"They were looking for people to help the Tribe decide what the housing program's mission statement would be," said Whitecloud of her initial involvement. "So, they put together this housing group. I think there was nine of us. We helped define the mission statement and some goals that the Housing Authority wanted to accomplish and we discussed some of the types of housing they wanted to do."

Touring other reservations and looking at their housing programs gave the Tribe ideas on how to get started on their own project, said Whitecloud.

"We looked at all kinds of things from the types of units to different forms of construction," said Whitecloud of the reasons for touring other reservations.

She said she learned a lot from former Tribal Executive Officer Jim Willis. She said he taught her to look towards the future when making important decisions.

"The one thing he taught me was that it is a good thing to look at things as they could be a year from now or five years from now," said Whitecloud. "But, if you really want to look to the future, you've got to look 15, 20, 30, 40, 50 years out. You have to ask yourself, how much of what we do today is still going to be here?"

Whitecloud said she believes in helping Tribal members outside of Grand Ronde, but she said she thinks the local population should come first.

"I have always felt that whatever we did as a Tribe to provide opportunity for people outside the Six County Service Area or outside the local area was a big plus," said Whitecloud. "But, first and foremost, to me at least, we have to think about here. We have to think about our homeland first."

She said she sees her job as a Housing Authority member as sharing information and trying to open the process up for easier access to those who need it.

"As a housing commissioner, it is my responsibility to provide information to people," said Whitecloud. "It is my job to be available to people if they have concerns or questions or they just want to talk to somebody



Dakota Whitecloud

about the program in general. Then, I think we need to be able to answer those questions. It is our responsibility to be able to provide information to people if they ask for it. It is an obligation and a responsibility.

"I want to preserve our traditional lifestyle. It is who we are," said Whitecloud. "It has got to stay here. It's got to remain."

Whitecloud gets excited when the subject turns to the Elder's housing project.

"It is another dream that has come true that nobody thought would," said Whitecloud. "I think it is a big step in the right direction. I think it is something that the Elders have needed for a long time. I want to see our Elders have a place to live that is comfortable, safe and more than anything affordable for them because a lot of the Elders don't have a whole lot. Whatever we can do to help them have a nice place to live, I think we need to do that."

She said she realizes the issue of water availability is going to be around at least for a while. She said an alternative water source is needed.

"Infrastructure has always been a problem here," said Whitecloud who has been back in the Grand Ronde community since 1989. "And, it is not a problem that is going to go away. I think that whatever resource we have to secure additional water supplies should be looked at. And, I believe they are being looked at. I think that Council is very much aware that water is a problem, has been a problem and is going to be a problem. I think the Council and the Housing Authority both are looking at other options. Whether that be tapping into springs on Tribal land or drilling wells. Those are potentials and I think we need to pursue any alternative that is cost effective. I think there are options out there that are viable. And I think they should be pursued to make sure that we have alternate water sources."

Whitecloud, who has three adult children, comes from a big family. Her great, great grandfather was Chief Joseph Shangretta. Her grandmother was Teresa Holmes and her mother was Pearl McGee. Her father was Kenneth Ames and her children are Christina, Kenneth and Cynthia.

Parazoo looks to future, likes what he sees

Tribal member Monty Parazoo was looking for a way to be involved in the Tribe.

His experience as the chairman of his condominium board of directors led him to pursue a position with the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority.

Since joining the board earlier this year, Parazoo has attended three meetings and two training sessions to get acquainted with his new duties.

"That was real interesting," said Parazoo of his training in Portland and Warm Spring's Kah-Nee-Tah. "One of the things I learned is you have to have patience when dealing with Housing and Urban Development. Nothing happens very quickly. It takes some patience because there is a lot of hurdles that you have to go over. Also, I could see that there is going to be a lot of rewards too."

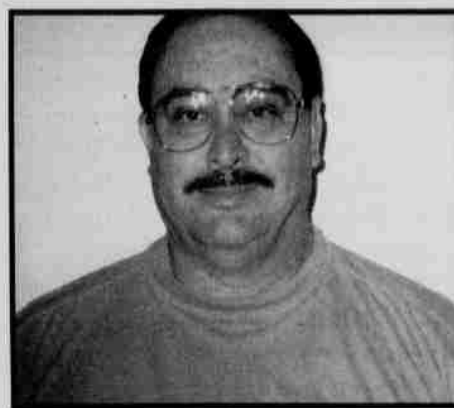
Parazoo feels the Elder's housing is a big bonus for the Tribal community.

"We're getting close to people moving into the Elder Housing," said Parazoo. "That is going to be a real thrill to actually see people moving in."

"I think it is really great," said Parazoo. "I think that (our Elders) was the obvious place to start. It is coming out real nice."

Parazoo said he is proud of the Housing Authority's willingness to help physically challenged Tribal members secure remodeling funds for their homes and he said he likes the idea of turning lifelong renters into first-time homeowners.

"One thing that I have seen, through things like the down payment program we have, is we have the ability to change people's lives for the better," said Parazoo. "To change somebody from a renter to a homeowner is a magical thing because they look at their whole life dif-



Monty Parazoo

ferently. I think that is one of the things that the Tribe can do for its members. It makes probably the biggest difference to them of anything that we do. The more people that we can make homeowners — the better off that everybody is going to be."

Homeownership, and the rewards that can go with it, changes the way people view themselves, said Parazoo.

"It changes the way your kids think too when you get a house. For the next generation, we hope it is the norm rather than the exception to be homeowners."

The future looks bright to Parazoo.

"I think that the future is just really exciting," said Parazoo. "There are a lot of things to do. There is a lot of houses to build on the reservation and then also getting houses built for people no matter where they live. So, I'm really looking forward to the future."

Parazoo said he appreciates the work done by previous board members, especially the work of past Chairman Bob Watson.

"They (past board members) have done a marvelous job," said Parazoo. "They have everything structured and set up in such a way that those of us that are coming in now — we don't have to go through all the hard things they went through. They did a real good job setting things up."

You are Invited:
Flag Dedication Ceremony
 Friday, June 30th
 1:30 to 2:00 pm



**Grand Meadows
 Manufactured
 Home Subdivision**

Veterans Color Guard Presiding

Carpooling is encouraged
 due to limited parking

GRAND RONDE TRIBAL HOUSING AUTHORITY
 800-422-0232, ext.. 2401 • (503) 879-2401
 www.grandronde.org (housing)



Watch for announcement of the Elder Housing Dedication on August 1 and a invitation to bid on the design and installation of four murals.