

# Stone Cold Joe Stone

By Chris Mercier

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM.

The words don't exactly roll off the tongue. But if you can find a better name, a more traditional Indian name, then by all means let Dr. Joe Stone know about it. The doctor is in the house, and quite open to suggestions.

Licensed Psychologist, Certified Addiction Counselor and new Director of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Behavioral Health program, Stone brings with him an approach that can be best explained as eclectic — spiritual, informed and perhaps unique.

The Behavioral Health program is part of the Health and Wellness Center's Family Services, and Stone will be treating families who have hit rough times and stumbled into such problems as depression, anxiety, alcoholism and drug addiction, almost all of them related.

Stone is originally from Montana, born on the Blackfeet Reservation 44 years ago. He found his way into the field through an alternate route. Formerly an engineering student at Montana State University, Stone said he was struggling through some personal problems himself, and sought help. His treatment made him rethink career options, and not too late thereafter he switched over to psychology. Utah State University in Logan boasted a rare American Indian Support program in psychology, and Stone enrolled for graduate studies there, ultimately

leaving with a Ph.D.

Following the end of his college career, Stone moved eastward to South Dakota where he worked as a clinical psychologist for 10 years with the Oglalla Tribe in Rapid City. He now lives in Port Angeles, Washington with his wife of 10 years, Deanna. He came to the Tribe recently, some five months ago.

Working with alcoholic families and children who've grown up under adverse conditions, one would think such a job could take a toll on a person's soul. Yet Stone seems almost unfazed by any of it.

"We're very resilient people," he said. "We've survived ongoing oppression."

Perhaps Stone remains so level-headed about it because as a psychologist he is able to look at the problems — alcoholism, depression, abuse — and see their roots with remarkable clarity.

"We've gotten away from our culture," he said. "We need to reconnect, recapture our ceremony, our beliefs, our love for Mother Earth."

Natives have become disconnected Stone said, for a number of reasons. But the most common problem he has seen, and quite possibly the biggest cause of most Native social ills, is compounded into one four-word phrase: *Post-Colonial Stress Disorder* (PCSD).

The disorder is actually not unique to aboriginal cultures. In fact it has also been noted in the Aborigines of Australia, the Maoris of New Zealand, and even in Post-Victorian Hong Kong. PCSD is, to use Stone's words "the intergenerational cumulative losses of culture, language, land-based spiritual practices, and dignity combined with racism and oppression."

Stone said Natives are passing the

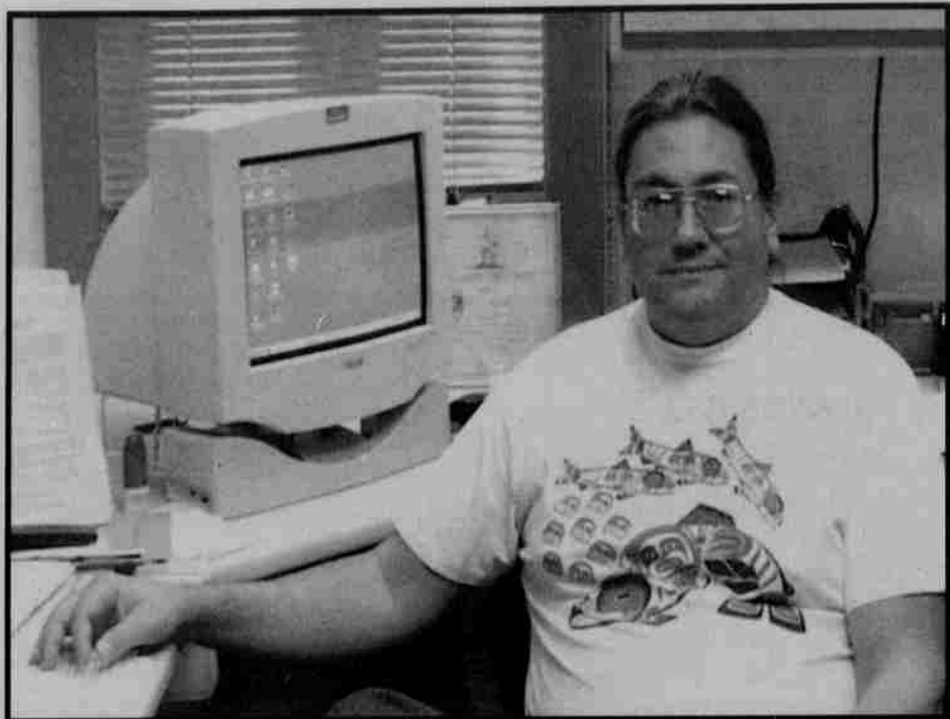


Photo by Chris Mercier

**HEALER** — Dr. Joe Stone, the Tribe's new Behavioral Services Director, wants to see a return to Tribal roots and culture in Grand Ronde. "We've gotten away from our culture," said Stone. "We need to reconnect, recapture our ceremony, our beliefs, our love for Mother Earth."

symptoms of PCSD on.

"You have seven generations under tremendous depression," he said. "And children being raised with very negative feelings."

Basic history of the United States shows that Natives and European invaders engaged in almost innumerable conflicts, yet what is forgotten and unrealized beneath it all is the long-term psychological effects the wars and subsequent assimilation invoked.

After watching thousands of their people die by assorted smallpox epidemics, many Natives had to confront the lesser known "boarding school era," — a time that Stone believes to be critical in cultivating PCSD.

Boarding schools sprung up throughout the country during the early parts of the 20th century, and many Natives were forced into them. The objective of this was assimilation, and not surprisingly any sort of activity that was interpreted as "Indian," such as speaking a Native tongue, was quickly banned. In short, Natives were increasingly deprived of their culture and thus iden-

tity. And to top it all off, they were basically given a confidence-crushing final blow with the Indian Termination Act in the 1950s, all but assuring them that the United States government considered Native culture not worth preserving.

That era, Stone said, introduced a few social aberrations that were virtually unknown to Natives, like physical and sexual abuse, racism, and the monstrosity known as alcoholism, all of which have sadly been passed on through the generations since then.

"Alcohol was introduced into Native culture as a form of self-medication," Stone said. "It gave them inflated egos, which they needed because they were so often put down, through racism and being unable to accept themselves."

Natives, he said, are "very susceptible to addictive behavior."

It is the same addictive behavior that brings Stone to Grand Ronde, and likewise forms the crux of his mission in the Behavioral Health program — to build a program that helps people.

## Health Care Professionals Tag-Team to Build Program, Heal People

By Chris Mercier

It would be unlike the humble Dr. Joe Stone to say he is alone on this mission of establishing a model Behavioral Health program. No, he has the help of the resourceful Sidney Brown, also a Blackfeet Tribal member, to help him.

Brown was hired one year ago as a consultant to implement a new program for chemical dependency for Grand Ronde Social Services. She also worked in Rapid City, and came to Portland in 1966 to work for the Native American Rehabilitation Association.

As a fellow Certified Addiction Counselor, she runs her own private practice in Beaverton, and on Tuesdays works at Chemawa. Together she and Joe Stone hope to have the newly relicensed Behavioral Health program fully staffed as soon as possible.

"Native people deserve the best," Brown said.

Brown is personally responsible over the last year for instituting a new DUII (Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants) program, a new Intensive Outpatient Chemical Dependency program and an Intensive Adolescent program. She personally

*"Our task is to build the next generation of providers. We want to build a program that truly helps people. We're right at the forefront of this healing process."*

~ Joe Stone



Photo by Justin Phillips

Sidney Brown

believes that this program could be among the best in Oregon.

"We have some of the best policies and procedures in the state," she said energetically. "This is emerging as a model program."

Stone and Brown both embrace the notion that inserting a component of Tribalism into the treatment program will likely produce favorable results. Similar programs have been used with other Tribes, in Klamath Falls for example, with notable success.

"People respond very well to Native methods," Brown said.

An example Brown uses is that of the Cree of Canada, titled "The Five Little Devils." People use their hands to remind themselves of how not to

be. Fold the thumb, stop caring. Fold the finger, feel inferior. Fold the middle, envy. Fold the index, resentment. Pinky: jealousy.

"After you've folded all your fingers, what do you have?" Brown says, holding her fist up.

"We're not only looking to provide Tribal members with the opportunity to seek treatment," Stone piped in. "But we also want them to reconnect...to look into their culture."

One way in which Natives have been led astray, Brown said, is that they have adopted the notion that success and self-actualization is achieved "pyramid style." That is, they are taught to rise above others. Yet most Native beliefs, Brown claims,

are grounded in unity, with everyone part of a circle, a community where neither success nor failure removes them, and every person contributes.

Stone and Brown are hopeful that more people in Grand Ronde will become increasingly receptive to their approach. For that reason, Brown has recently started a "Talking Circle" for women. Also of Cree origins, the Talking Circle is a form of group communication where all the participants sit in a circle, smudge themselves with sweetgrass, cedar or sage, share their experiences, and most importantly, listen. The Talking Circle is held every Wednesday at the Health and Wellness Center from 4-6 p.m.

Needless to say, both Stone and Brown bring a unique approach to their positions, and are eager to get the ball rolling.

"Our task is to build the next generation of providers," Stone said. "We want to build a program that truly helps people."

"We're right at the forefront of this healing process."

### Women's Talking Circle

Every Wednesday from 4 to 6 p.m.  
Health and Wellness Center