



PHOTO BY PAUL TRUSS

Stephanie King, age 12 and Goldie Bly, age 5, wait for the Grand Entry to begin at the 2003 Grand Ronde Pow-wow.

Pow-wow Is About People

■ Members of many Tribes travel to Grand Ronde to become one nation, again.

By Ron Karten

On the way into this year's Contest Pow-wow, a sign sought food donations for parking. As a result, more than 300 pounds of food ended up on the shelves of the Grand Ronde Food Bank, according to co-manager Michaela Kimsey.

This is the kind of initiative that Tribal Elder Les Houck probably appreciated. "I'm a traditionalist," he said just outside of the Elders' seating facility. "I'm not a fan of Contest Pow-wows. They bring in more dancers but I would like to see it return to Potlatch, where things are given not taken."

Which is not to say that the Houcks were not enjoying themselves. "It's been getting better every year," said Houck. And the Elder seating was "better than ever."

Houck and his wife, Katherine, have been dedicated fans of the Grand Ronde Pow-wows since the Tribes started hosting them, and have a special reason for favoring these events.

"People," said Katherine.

"It's almost like having a family reunion," said Les. "We still have 75 percent of our relatives here on the Rez."

Dancers of all ages could be seen everywhere. Among them was Jim Malatare, a Cree from Arlee, Montana, who competed in the 50-and-over Traditional Dance. Malatare is on the Pow-wow circuit, which for him started in Chicago in June, he said, "then all over Montana and Idaho."

But his visit here was about people, too. "I come to visit my niece," he said. He planned to be in the area a week in all.

"Pow-wows are getting bigger," Malatare said, "they're getting better, and they're getting fantastic drum beats." In Arlee, he said, they get 500 dancers. "One of the biggest in Montana."

Stanson Yazzie, 39, a Navajo living in Klamath Falls, dressed in Men's Fancy regalia. Yazzie has been on the pow-wow trail since March this year and plans to continue dancing through December. Between weekday job obligations making bathtubs, he dances almost every weekend. "Maybe I miss one weekend a month," he said.

And Yazzie trains in the most serious way. He runs five to six miles every day — "Got to be in condition," he said — and even reviews videotapes of his own dancing and the dancing of others to stay at the top of his game. He placed third in his class.

Justine Began, 13, a Yakama and Warm Springs Indian from The Dalles, also follows the pow-wows to compete as a Teen Jingle Dancer.

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Spings Indian all dressed in orange, had himself a spot in the grass which was the equivalent of a front row seat. Yallup came in the company of probably a dozen family members in folding chairs all around him, according to his mom, Tamara, who also said that the family came in support of Rainy Creek Drum, a family drum group. "We pow-wow every weekend," she said.

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In all, 231 dancers competed in 20 dances with top prize money being \$100 in the junior categories, \$700 in the teen categories and \$1,000 in the adult categories.

The weather was near perfect for the weekend event — a little too hot, if anything — and the crowds were everywhere — five deep around the pow-

wow grounds and busy but not overcrowded in the circular path between the stands and dozens of vendors. Forty craft vendors and 15 food vendors set up stands, according to information provided by the Pow-wow Committee.

Business was "about the same" as last year, according to John Gordon, husband of Tribal member Renee Gordon, and one of 13 volunteers at the Pow-wow Committee's shirt and raffle booth. As one might expect on such a hot day, Gordon added that "not as many sweatshirts" had sold, but it wasn't long before real buyers moved in on a new wave of buying.

Donald Kieffer, of Native descent and from the Spokane Reservation, is among many Indians throughout the region and across the country whose

the primary incentive, many come with other things in mind, and many find other interests once here.

Shiela Ross, retired from a 20-year career on Capitol Hill, had come west to visit with her former university roommate, who lives in Dundee.

She had come from an International Lung Cancer convention in Vancouver, BC, and as a two-time survivor of the disease, Ross is now an advocate for services for those with lung cancer. "There is a high incidence of the disease among Indians, but it's not much talked about," she said by a vendor sharing information about Indians and addiction. The big money goes into smoking cessation, she said, though the disease is still prevalent, and risk of getting the disease remains high even for those who quit smoking 20 years ago.

Also at the pow-wow, with a booth of their own thanks to Tribal Council, was the Schulte family, many of whom are Tribal members. They raffled tickets to raise money for a heart-lung transplant needed soon for 18-year-old Tribal member Amanda Jones-Schulte. Amanda's grandmother, Peggy Schulte, is a Chickasaw from Oklahoma. They raised more than \$1,000 for the effort.

The Tribal Color Guard, as always, led the Grand Entries, presented the colors in high style and at the end of each day, retrieved them. Absent for the first time this year was Marre Norwest, who retired from his Veterans' duties after the Veterans' Pow-wow in July (See *Smoke Signals* 8/1/03 issue).

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