

Native American Music Awards Honor Grand Ronde Tribal Member

■ Jan Michael "Looking Wolf" Reibach was thrilled to compete though he did not win.

By Ron Karten

"Native music not only survives," said Jimmy Lee Young. "It grows and it thrives!"

He accepted the 2005 Native American Music Award (NAMMY) for best Single of the Year: One Voice One Cry.

"It starts with the Creator," said Litefoot, who took home the NAMMY for Artist of the Year. "I was told I would never do anything for my people with rap," he added, now vindicated. After the NAMMYS, Litefoot was to start on a 40-state, 211-reservation tour in support of his album, Native American Me.

"See you on the Reservation," he said.

This year's venue, the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Fort Lauderdale on the southern Florida coast, hosted some 800 at \$100 a ticket, including performers, fans and press to honor Indian Country's top musical stars.

The range included blue grass, rap and symphony; the talent swung from music to ventriloquism to comedy.

Crystal Gayle and her sister, Peggy Sue (both Cherokee), performed Sacred Ground, a newly written piece, for the first time that evening. Rita Coolidge (Cherokee), already recipient of a Native American Music Awards' (NAMA) Lifetime Achievement award, and Rapper Buggin Malone (Oneida and Potawatomi) presented. Micki Free (Comanche, Cherokee), who won this year's best Pop/Rock Recording, told the audience, "We're gonna rock tonight," and then brought the house down with a medley of greats at the evening's end.

Free (See *Smoke Signals*, 12/15/02) played with band members, Dennis Tieken on drums and former Cheap



Photo by Ron Karten

Recording Artist — Jan Michael "Looking Wolf" Reibach posed before the awards ceremony with his Native flute in front of the Seminole's Classic guitar sign.

Trick bassist John Brant, who joined him when he performed in Grand Ronde in 2002. Tieken arrived with one of his twin sons, Trenton, who has formed a band with his brother, Trevin, called TiekenTwins, and already, the young pair have put out their first CD by the same name.

In Grand Ronde, the highlight of the

night was Tribal member Jan Michael "Looking Wolf" Reibach, nominated his first time out for a NAMMY in the Blues/Jazz category.

On his excitement level before the show, Reibach rated it at, "Way!" Afterwards, when the award went to Cecil Gray & Red Dawn Blues Band for their CD, Indian Harmony, Reibach started looking ahead to this year's work.

"My new CD, entitled A New Day, is now being released nationally," he said afterwards in an email. "It is Native flute with contemporary accompaniment such as gentle guitar, drums and classical piano. Later this year, High Spirits — a label out of Arizona will be releasing a CD I recorded for them as well. The nominations this past year have brought attention and a certain expectation from the Native music industry. This is an exciting time. I am looking forward to see where the music takes us now."

He attended the awards ceremony with Vernon Kennedy (Burns-Paiute), also a member of Reibach's band that last year put together Native Blues, this year's competing CD, produced by Cedarfeather Productions.

"I felt pretty good about it," said Kennedy. "I said, 'Wow,' we're nominated. Even though we didn't win, I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing."

"It is an honor to be recognized by the Native American Music Awards and I am so thankful to everyone for their support," wrote Reibach. "Also, I appreciate the guitar tracks by Vernon Kennedy and Michael "Standing Elk" Reibach. Their talents contributed greatly to the CD's success."

Standout performances between awards came from Li'l Dre (Navajo), a 12-year-old rapper from Shiprock, Arizona and ventriloquist, Buddy Big Mountain, who brought his dummies, like Awesome Fox, back a bunch of times, once giving his dummy the opportunity to belt out Frank Sinatra's My Way, and later, performing an unbelievable throw-your-voice rendition of Geoff Mack's and John Grenell's, I've Been Everywhere, Man.

Windtalkers and Smoke Signals movie star Adam Beach (Saulteaux from Manitoba, Canada) and singer Jana (Lumbee) emceed the event. Beach kept up a buzz about Jana's appeal; Jana's replies were smiling, but not exactly encouraging.

"I met so many nationally known recording artists and producers. Many of them asked questions about our Tribe," said Reibach. "It felt good to be there."

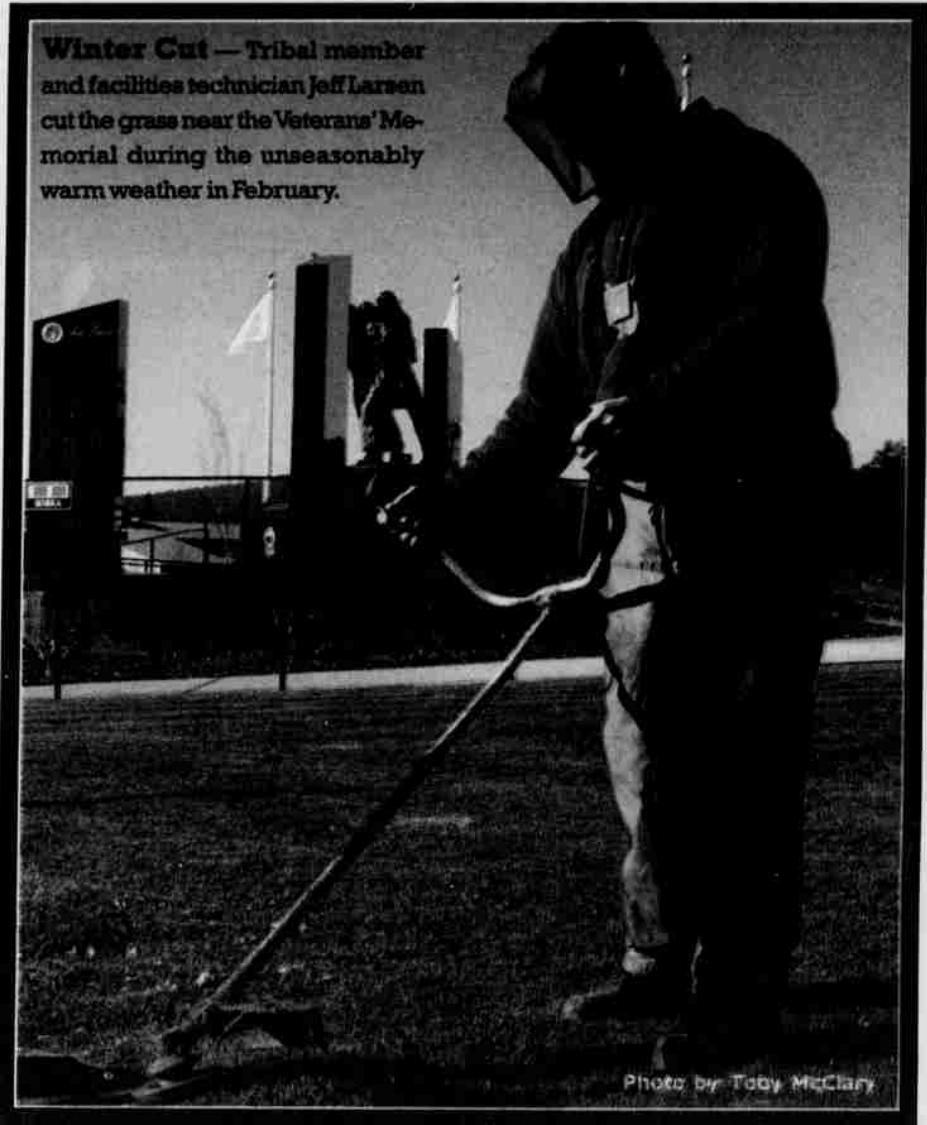
It blew my mind," said Kennedy. "All these Native artists gathering in one place. It was very interesting. Artists, singers, drummers."

Sponsor Mitchell Cypress, Chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, had one word for the night's event: "Fabulous," he said. ■



Elder To Elder — Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison (left) tells about her life and explains the history of the Grand Ronde Tribe to a group from the Oregon Retired Educators Association. The event was Thursday, February 3 in Tigard at the King City Town Hall.

Photos by Marty George



Winter Cut — Tribal member and facilities technician Jeff Larsen cut the grass near the Veterans' Memorial during the unseasonably warm weather in February.

Photo by Toby McClary