

# Halloween at the Tribal Offices



Tribal members Austin Little (l to r) and Nicholas Colton with Registered Nurse Barbara Christmas.

Photos by Toby McClary

## Tribe Welcomes New Public Affairs Director To Grand Ronde

■ Former *Oregonian* staffer Siobhan Taylor will work with Tribal Council.

By Ron Karten

The Mount Saint Helens' eruption of 1980 accompanied Siobhan (Shivan) Loghran Taylor's professional start. At the time, Taylor was a junior at Lewis & Clark College, and her major interests were international affairs and communications.

She brought them to *The Oregonian* in the wake of that explosion, found herself running around the eruption site — or as close as reporters and photographers could get — collecting film from photographers and running it back to *The Oregonian's* lab. Back in the office, she took news tips by phone for the staff.

"I was one of the go-fers of the newsroom," she said recently. And half the time, she'd be sent on errands to places she had never heard of before. At every turn she found herself asking somebody on some corner how to get where she was going.

That's not so anymore. Named in October as the Tribe's Public Affairs Director, today, she knows just where she's going.

"I have a mission," she said, "to bring the history, the present and the future of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to the front burner in Oregon. Everybody knows who the Spirit Mountain Community Fund is," she said. "I want everyone to know who we are, appreciate our history, respect our culture and our present, and admire our future."

"And not just the public," she said. "I want our Tribe to feel a huge sense of ownership here."

Her responsibilities at the Tribe include all publications, including *Smoke Signals* and *Council News* as well as developing the Tribe's communications strategy. She will manage consulting contracts related to intergovernmental affairs and public relations.

She is part of the Tribe's Executive Team and expects the job to evolve as times and needs change.

"I think that's reflective of the nature of public affairs," she said in an

email. "It's going to be a constantly evolving job. That makes it exciting, a little unpredictable and extremely challenging."

"She came in and right away she showed she knew how to do her job," said Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg. "She was a take-charge person and she always had all of our events planned out just right. She treats people with respect and nicely, and I'm glad she's working with us."

Taylor started at *The Oregonian* some 20 years ago as "a copy aide in the newsroom, then I worked my way up to Editorial Assistant in the Living Section and from that went on to working in the FOODday section," she reported. "After I left I continued to

write as a free-lancer on special projects and travel stories. And most recently I served as the editor for their *Downtown Monthly*, a monthly advertorial section, that covered downtown Portland, Northwest Portland and the Pearl District."

Along the way, she picked up a number of people skills.

"I'm always curious as to people's stories," she said. "I love finding common ground with people. We have more in common with other people than we think."

"At *The Oregonian*," she said, "when someone was crabby, they'd give them to me."

Her approach? "Listen to them. Find out how they feel and follow through. That's why I got into public relations and public affairs."

Following her life at *The Oregonian*, Taylor struck out in 2000 with her own public relations company, telling the stories of the Rafael House and Morrison Center Child and Family Services, both re-

ipients of the Tribe's Community Fund. The Community Fund was another of her clients. She also handled major show producers like the Portland Home Improvement



Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor

Photo by Toby McClary

and Remodeling Show.

"*The Oregonian* had taught me a lot," she said, "but I didn't feel that I was finding my best sense of self-development and fulfillment."

Working for herself also "left me with a little more time to volunteer," an enterprise she has long pursued in the schools that her children (James, 15, and Joseph, 6) attend. She also has volunteered at neighborhood associations, church council and has provided pro-bono work for other children's causes.

Though born in Ireland, Taylor arrived on Oregon's rainy shores in 1960, when still "a babe in arms," at a time when the state "didn't have many foreigners." Her mother had a sister in Oregon, and the countryside reminded the family a lot of the Limrick, Ireland that they had called home.

Taylor's sister Una was born during this visit, but the family got homesick and returned to Limrick where Taylor went to school until

she was seven.

Her father, a motorcycle mechanic and welterweight boxing champion, who by the way is still fit today at age 77, she said, brought the family back to the U.S. and Oregon as Ireland went through an economic depression. This time, though, the family took root here and, as Taylor remembers, "lived the immigrant's dream."

Although it isn't always obvious, Taylor retains, and can invoke at a moment's notice, the famous Irish brogue.

David, Taylor's husband, is an attorney and certified public accountant, a Senior Vice President in the Portland firm, M Benefit Solutions, that specializes in executive benefits. He knows first hand, she said, that when she returns to her Irish brogue, she is either "very happy or extremely upset."

"Siobhan brings a good Irish sense of humor to the Tribe," said Tribal Council Secretary Chris Mercier. "I'm thoroughly impressed by her Gaelic. Hopefully, she'll be able to convince Bono (the Irish rock star) to come out here for some PR work."

Taylor has Mark Twain, in a way, to thank for the animated bearing she has today. "In grade school," she said, "I was painfully quiet and shy," until the school's production of *Tom Sawyer*, that famous Mark Twain story. "I had a teacher that persuaded me to try out for the play," she said. "And that turned it all around."

Taylor also is a weekend Douglas fir tree farmer. She loves boating and wakeboarding, camping, hiking and horseback riding. And "there's nothing better," she said, "than the opera, or some great Irish music."

She has plenty of time to catch up on that music now that she has a 90-minute commute to and from work each day, from her home in Lake Oswego.

"It gives me time to get ready for work in the morning," she said, "and for my family when I go home." ■