

Family Comes First

■ Tribal member Jeremy Haller recently earned his Journeyman Electrician license after a 5-year apprenticeship.

By Ron Karten

As a kid, Tribal member Jeremy Haller's ambition was "to make as much trouble as I could," he said in a recent interview at his new home in Keizer.

It doesn't take too long to see that that may be the only thing he wasn't so successful at.

In middle school at Willamina, he was chosen to go to the White House for an environmental conference. He shook hands with then Vice President Al Gore.

"My whole family was loggers," he said. "I wanted to tell him, 'What are you going to wipe with if you don't cut down the trees?'"

In high school at Willamina, he played both offense and defense for the Bulldogs' football team. In his senior year, as a member of the league's All-Star team, he went to England where it turned out that the team played a bunch of English pub teams.

"They were ruthless," he said. "We played on sand. It was the worst turf. They'd say, 'I'm going to kill you, you bloody American.' And then, we'd go to the pub and they give you dinner and it was like we were best friends. We traded footballs and jerseys."

"He hung out with his grandpa more than me," said Tribal Elder Val Grout, Jeremy's grandmother. "With me, I was just grandma. But he was a good kid. I couldn't ask for a better grandson. He never gave me any problems." When Jeremy was 4-5 in there, Jeremy and his sister, Valerie, stayed for a year with Val and her husband, Pete Grout. "I always tell Janelle (Tribal member Janelle Haller, Jeremy's mom) that I had him during his formative years. That's why he turned out so good."

Jeremy exchanged the compliment with his grandmother. "Every year," he said, "we try to get Val a sentimental gift to get her to cry." Most recently, it was a collection of photos of her husband, Pete, who has passed on.

Sandie remembered what has since become a fun family memory of Grandma Val lining all the kids up

around the coffee table for one misdeed or another and then going around the table and giving each a whack on the behind.

Jeremy remembered driving around town with his grandfather. "We'd be out and around the town," said Jeremy,

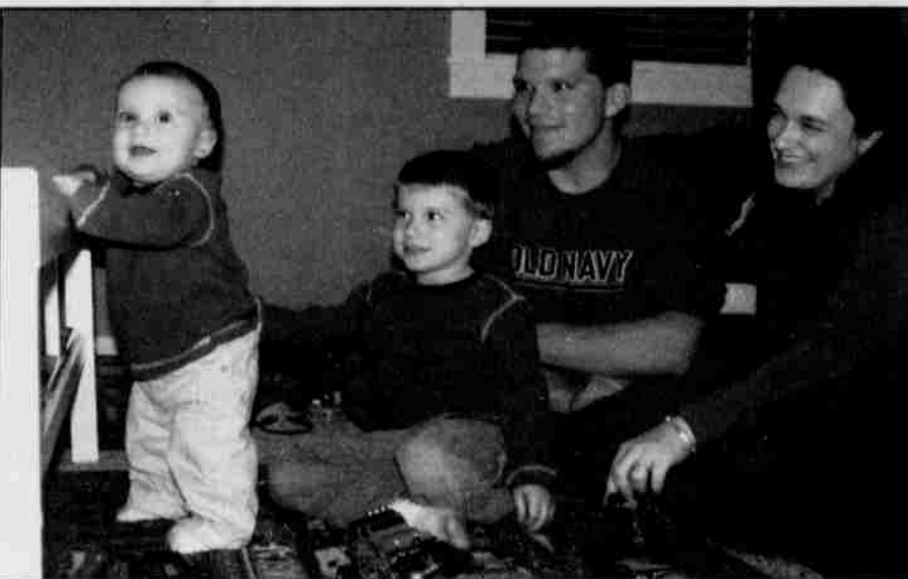


Photo by Ron Karten

Successful — Tribal member Jeremy Haller (3rd from left) watches his sons Jaden (standing) and Jacob with his wife Sandie. Haller attended a 5-year electrician apprenticeship and has recently earned this Journeyman Electrician license.

"and he'd yell out the window (to girls walking) 'Jeremy Haller loves you!'"

Jeremy's revenge came one night at a Sheridan stop light. There was a woman on the corner there, he remembered, "with more hair on her upper lip than I could grow and I yelled out, 'Pete Grout loves you!' Grandpa turned every shade of red," he said.

"My family is half crazy," he said. For his great grandmother's 90th birthday, the family got "a stripper dude" to perform.

Jeremy also remembered fishing with his dad and grandfather in Alaska for a week. They caught halibut, salmon, went clam digging. His grandfather, Pete, had wanted to go to Alaska before he died, and this, Jeremy remembered,

was the family's gift to him.

Jeremy also wanted to make sure the story included family from all sides for his love and compliments. Sandie talked about how Jeremy is the same way with his neighbors: "Jeremy's the first one to jump in to help the neighbors across the street," she said. "He dug all the fence posts. He mows our lawn and then he mows their lawn."

Haller has been a hard working, money making type from his early days. In his early teens, he worked with Tribal Elder Merle Leno helping prepare the pow-wow grounds. One

he said.

His latest success is his Journeyman Electrician's license, received May 18 this year, after a five-year apprenticeship. He studied math for the licensing test with Sandie's dad, who is an air traffic controller.

Before deciding on electricity, Haller took on another course in getting people wired — he went to bartending school and was ready for that career.

"He's always looking for his next investment," said Sandie. "He became a certified bartender and then got accepted in the journeyman's program."

"I'll have my own shop in five years," said Haller. He intends to retire by the time he's 50.

"We have a picture of Jeremy doing his work (his apprenticeship) with Jacob on his lap," said Sandie. Jacob is four now. "And we have the same picture a few years later with Jaden in his lap." Jaden is not yet a year old. "He amazed me with his commitment to get through school."

"When opportunity knocks," said Jeremy, "you have to jump."

That might not be exactly the right terminology for an electrician who also spends his time "trying to avoid getting killed," he said. "It's always on your mind. But I do a lot of new construction. The bad situations are few and far between."

He does admit to having been hit with 277 volts to the back of his hand, which looks just fine now.

"I just enjoy making electricity work, creating circuits, tying ends together." He takes satisfaction in "being able to go in and create all of the electricity and lights for the future (of a house)."

He hunts (and son Jacob has gone with him twice this year) and fishes and plays golf. He likes Texas Hold 'Em poker, which is the longest that anybody can get him to sit down for. And watch out: "I'm a huge Duck fan," he said.

"One thing I know," said mom, Janelle Haller, "is that I'll never have to worry about Jeremy. Jeremy is so grounded (No pun intended). Sometimes, it's like role reversal, like he's the parent and I'm the child."

Sandie's family always moved around a lot and didn't experience extended family life as much as Jeremy. "Here," she said, "there's not a holiday that the family isn't together." ■

Native American Author Vine Deloria, Jr. Passes At The Age of 72



Photo by Hank Adams

Vine Deloria, Jr. (l) pictured here with Billy Frank, Jr. of the Northwest Indian Fish Commission

Across the country, educators and the ranks of Indians interested in culture and history mourned the death of Vine Deloria, Jr., who died recently in Colorado. The writer, scholar and activist had retired in 2000 from the staff at Colorado University. He was 72.

Deloria is author most famously of *Custer Died For Your Sins, an Indian Manifesto*, but also many other books and scholarly articles including: *Aggressions of civilization: federal Indian policy since the 1880s*, *Behind the*

Trail of Broken Treaties: an Indian declaration of independence, For this land: writings on religion in America, *Frank Waters: man and mystic, God is red: a native view of religion, The Indian affair, Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Native Americans and the myth of scientific fact*, among many.

"Vine Deloria Jr. has contributed more to Indian Education than any other," said Ryan Wilson, president of the National Indian Education Association.

"We know our friends and colleagues in the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and throughout Indian Country will sorely miss Vine Deloria Jr.," said National Education Association President Reg Weaver, "but we want them to know they are not alone."

"NEA will not rest until every child in America, including every Indian child, has access to a great public school — and every high school graduate, regardless of their family income, has the opportunity to attend college. We are in this battle together."

"Vine Deloria Jr. was born a Lakota, he lived his life as a Lakota, and he died as a Lakota," said NIEA's Wilson. "The soul of a Lakota man

does not dwell on the past or dream of things that could be. Vine Deloria Jr. understood that his time on this earth was precious, and he cherished life in a manner that compelled him to live it to the fullest each and every day. He lived life so well and true, that few have done it better."

"Vine Deloria will always be remembered as one of the superb Tribal leaders of our time and one of the most effective executive directors of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)," said NCAI President Joe Garcia on behalf of the NCAI Executive Committee and staff.

I read all his books," said Elaine LaBonte, Tribal Tourism Coordinator. "I think he was one of the greatest Native philosophers there was. In the mid-1990s, I met him at an AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society) conference and I talked to him, and he was an inspiration to me to continue in school. I am now a Ph.D. candidate. He put a different spin on science than the dominant culture does. Very inspiring. He reminded me of my uncle."

"Vine, of the Standing Rock Sioux, was the preeminent scholar-activist of American Indian treaty law and author of several best-selling and influential books ("Custer Died for Your Sins" comes to mind)," wrote Osha Gray Davidson, a Pulitzer Prize-nominated environmental Journalist whose 2004 story for *Rolling Stone* magazine, "A Wrong Turn in the Desert," described the plight of Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa, the first Native American woman to die in combat on foreign soil. "(Deloria's) books are required reading for anyone writing on Indian issues and the environment — and, for that matter, for anyone wanting a more complete understanding of the United States."

"I had the privilege to study treaty law with him for a semester at the University of Arizona. Sitting in a small room with six other students, twice a week for three hours a shot, while Vine walked us through the legal relationship between whites and Indians from first contact through the early 20th Century was one of the great experiences of my life. Read him; you won't be sorry." ■