

# Year in Review — 2005

By Ron Karten

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy and many Tribal representatives participated in the opening ceremonies for the U.S. Figure Skating Championships held in Portland in January this year. The Spirit Mountain Casino's \$200,000 sponsorship gave the Tribe national recognition as the only Local Presenting Sponsor of the event and for many individual Tribal members, it meant free seats to the championship's many events.

With the help of a \$125,000 grant from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Marion-Polk Food Share was able to move into new and larger space in the Salem Industrial Park in January. Marion-Polk Food Share is a major supplier for the Grand Ronde Food Bank.

Also in January, Tribal Council approved a \$10,000 contribution to Asian tsunami victims.

Bruce Lattin, Security Manager for the casino since 1995, retired in January.

The Tribal Housing Authority broke ground on new Elder Foster Care hous-

Merrill, became the first Tribal member to earn early admission when she was accepted to the freshman class at Oregon State University. Later in the year, Ashlee and fellow Tribal member Amanda Thomas became two of only five Northwest Native students to earn a Gates Fellowship that will pay for as much as nine years in college.

On February 14, Oregon's birthday, the state Legislature commemorated its Lewis & Clark history with a remembrance of its Indian heritage. Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison delivered the invocation and the Tribe's Color Guard posted the flags. February 15 is Native American Day.

Chemawa Indian School in Salem celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> birthday with a pow-wow drawing 300 in February.

Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach was nominated for a NAMMY (Native American Music Award) at the Seminole Hard Rock Café in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in February. *Native Blues*, Reibach's first CD, was produced by his own Cedarfeather Productions, and nominated in the Blues/Jazz category.

and adults need kids. "Far better than going out with the guys," said Tribal father and casino employee Mike Colton.

Tribal youth enjoyed a ski and snowboarding trip while other Tribal members took Kung-Fu classes.

Willamette University faculty and students visited the Tribe.

In April, Governor Ted Kulongoski announced a compact change with the Warm Springs Tribe. It allowed an off-reservation casino for the Tribe in Cascade Locks in exchange for four parcels of Tribal land just outside of the city of Hood River, and other considerations. Later in the year, the federal Department of the Interior blocked the change until the Tribe successfully puts the Cascade Locks land in Trust with the department.

In May, the Grand Ronde Tribes held Community Meetings to describe recent projects and discuss issues of concern in Grand Ronde, Eugene, Portland and Tacoma, Washington.

Mark Hatfield Fellow Joe Hostler worked in Congressman Greg Walden's office this year, and returned to Grand Ronde to report on his experiences in April.

Jay Leno, host of *The Tonight Show*, launched the Spirit Mountain Casino's new \$22 million, 163-room lodge expansion in April.

Tribal member Randy Dugger took over as casino General Manager in April. Dugger, who had been Guest Services Director, assumed the post from Tribal member Mike Larsen, who had served as Interim General Manager.

The Tribe contributed \$35,000, \$10,000 as a matching fund, to help with the refurbishing of St. Michael Church. Long a gathering place for Tribal members in the community, the church has fallen on hard times in recent years, but the church members — Tribal and otherwise — have been working hard to rebuild the parish and the parish community.

The Catholic Historical Society also honored the Church in April for its efforts to bridge the gap between white and Tribal cultures.

Grand Ronde Tribal member, communications pioneer and popular emcee at Grand Ronde pow-wows Roy Track passed away in April.



Native Author and Filmmaker  
Sherman Alexie (Spokane)

The 2005 Native Voice Film Festival honored the work of *Smoke Signals* Editor Brent Merrill in South Dakota in May. Merrill's film *Grand Ronde Restoration*, first shown during the Tribe's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Restoration in Grand Ronde, also competed in the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco in 2004. In South Dakota, the *Restoration* film competed in the Best Modern Cultural Film and Best Short Subject Documentary categories.

Also in May, Tribal Council members Reyn Leno and Jack Giffen Jr. lobbied the Oregon Congressional delegation for support for expanded hunting and fishing rights for the Tribe.

Also through May, the Portland Art Museum mounted a major exhibition, *People of the River*, including Native arts from Oregon Territory Tribes. The Spirit Mountain Community Fund has been a major donor for the museum.

Native Author and Filmmaker Sherman Alexie (Spokane) brought down the house in May with a speech at Oregon State University.

The Tribal Health & Wellness Center continued to promote a healthier lifestyle this year with conferences and programs that encourage Tribal members to eat right and exercise.

On Memorial Day, casino guests won a record 170 jackpots of \$1,200 or more, and a \$92,000 motor home also was given away.

Actor Floyd Red Crow Westerman and Chinese aboriginal poet Aku



Tribal Housing Authority's new Elder Foster Care housing in Grand Ronde.

ing in January. The facilities were completed in the summer. The Tribe also is building a low-income/market rate family housing development in Grand Ronde.

The University of Oregon (UO) dedicated the Many Nations Longhouse, designed by UO alumni, Johnpaul Jones (Choktaw Cherokee) in January. The light, airy facility was made with 150-year-old douglasfir trees cut from Coquille Tribal lands and \$125,000 from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund.

The Marion County Civilian Review Board honored the Tribal Foster Care program in January. The annual award honors "excellent services in the interest of children."

The Inter-Tribal Journalists Organization from Southern California honored *Smoke Signals* Editor, Brent Merrill as Editor of the Year, Photo-journalist Peta Tinda as Photographer of the Year and Staff Writer Ron Karten as Writer of the Year.

Garbage piled up on reservation lands. In January, the Tribe's Public Works Department pulled "truckloads" of the stuff from the rez.

Portland Community College attracted hundreds in January for its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Traditional Wacipi "They Dance" Winter Pow-wow.

Willamette University renewed its Native roots in a ceremony held in February. The school opened a Native art gallery on campus and initiated a Native lecture series.

Tribal member Ashlee Merrill, daughter of *Smoke Signals* Editor Brent Merrill and Spirit Mountain Casino Training Manager Vickie

Also in February, the Tribe opened a satellite office in Eugene.

The Portland Winter Hawks named March 20 "Grand Ronde Night" at the Rose Garden in Portland. The Tribe sponsored the Winter Hawks for the year and hundreds of Tribal members enjoyed many home games for the team.

Willamina High School basketball teams, both girls and boys, competed at State this year. Tribal member Meghan Zimbrick earned a place on the Second Team of the All West Valley League.

In March, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde played host to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Native Youth Leadership Invitational Conference. The Tribe's Youth Leadership Group organized the event.

Tribal Elder Don Day continued splitting logs in the traditional way for what will one day become a traditional plankhouse here in Grand Ronde.

The Tribe took possession of 24 acres of industrial land along Highway 18 in March, and intends to put the land in Trust for future uses.

This was also the year of the student shootings at the Reservation of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde sent \$1,000 in support of the community.

2005 also saw the Tribe make a concerted effort to fight meth in the community with meetings and successful efforts securing a grant to provide temporary housing for recovering meth users.

The Education Division hosted a day with the Blazers for grandfathers/fathers/sons/uncles/nieces/daughters of the Tribe — all with the idea that kids need significant adults in their lives,



Wilma Markoller (r) and Grand Ronde  
Tribal Elder Beryle Contreras

At the end of April, Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach held a concert at the Historic Mack Theater in McMinnville to raise money for Juliette's House, a child abuse assessment center in town.

Wuwu visited the Tribe in June, both to learn more about Northwest Tribes and Wuwu to share his Chinese culture with Tribal members.

Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison and Tribal members Bobby Mercier and