

Explaining The Mystery Of Our History

LEWIS continued from page 4

quelle Tribe. After Wasson, the project continued under his nephew, Jason Younker (Coquille).

During the two trips to D.C., each of which lasted four to six weeks, the group has collected 110,000 pages of documents.

Although there is a lot more out there, said Lewis, "I don't have a sense yet of how much to collect. Most older universities have some archives."

He guesses that the pages collected so far represent "maybe around a third" of the total out there. The recent Coquille grant keeps the project moving forward.

In the 1998 trip back to D.C., the project, said Lewis, "we had primarily Oregon Tribal members including Patti Whereat (Coos Lower Umpqua), director of the Tribe's Cultural Department at that time; Robert Kentna, Director of Culture and today a Tribal Council member for the Siletz; Denise Hockema (Coquille); Amanda Mitchell (Coquille); and Lewis.

The group sent the collected material back to the University of Oregon and organized them into a library collection in 1999. All copies are being kept in archival boxes to preserve them as long as possible.

In 2001, the group published an inventory of the collection.

"Also in 2001, we had a potlatch where we gave all of the Oregon Tribes copies of the collection," said Lewis.

The effort has enjoyed several grants showing institutional support for the project, including over \$200,000 from the primary sponsor, the Coquille Economic Development Corporation. Grants also have come from the Smithsonian Institution and

many departments at the University of Oregon.

The project needs around \$10,000 a year to maintain and access the records collected so far, said Lewis.

Since the Coquille's \$20,000 grant, Lewis received a \$5,000 grant from the Morse Center for Law and Politics to teach a class on Oregon Indian History. It will be offered during UO's winter term.

and culture. They can do their own research into what occurred between the United States and the Tribes, (into) what conditions were like. The knowledge in SWORP doesn't exist in history books with an American agenda," said Lewis.

"In next decade or so, Indians in Oregon are going to start writing their own history, sort of what happened with Kathryn Harrison's book.

out by the Cultural Department, the second edition of the Mackey book (The Kalapuyas). It was the same book with a few addendums in the back by Tribal members, so it's continuing to support the non-Indian history of Indians.

"Kathryn Harrison's book is a good start. Another book is by George Aguilar, a Warm Springs Tribal Elder, When the River Ran Wild,

published by the Oregon Historical Society.

"(The collection is) a basis for beginning to write books, and more important, a basis for beginning to write textbooks for public schools."

Many pieces of the collection comprise letters or correspondence from people on reservations. "Looking at this correspondence we can look at monthly and yearly reports of what was happening on the reservation," he said.

"This is one way Tribes can begin to decolonize from 150 years colonization by the United States," said Lewis.

Most recently, the Jacobs Research Fund for the Whatcom Historical Society in Bellingham, Washington gave Lewis a \$1,200 fellowship for a research project in which Lewis will interview Grand Ronde Tribal members.

The mystery of Indian history continues to unfold. ■



Photo by Toby McClary

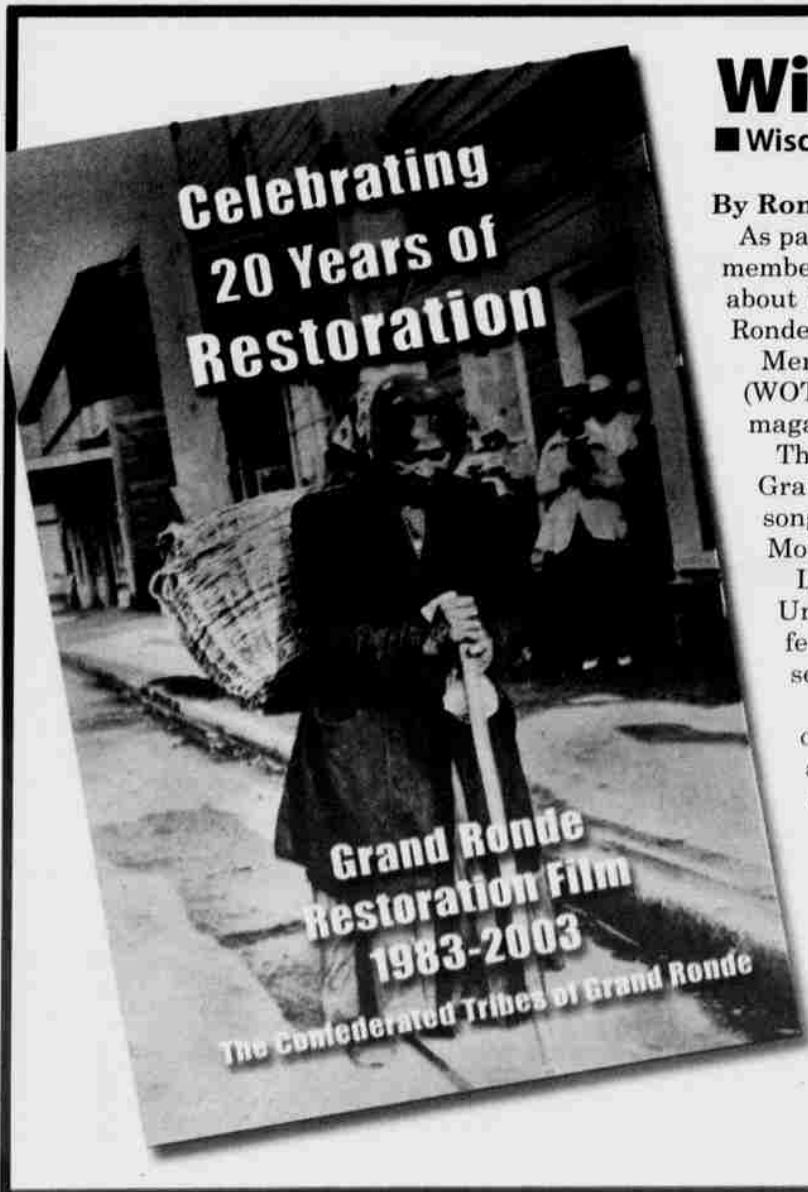
Celebration — Feather dance regalia, including woven dresses with beads and shells served as the subject of a UO class discussion about Nee-dash, an annual World Renewal Celebration, a spiritual celebration for Coastal and Valley Natives of Oregon and California, held once a year each December.

Documents in the SWORP catalogue will enable Lewis to describe events that do not appear in Oregon history books. After a century and a half of history told from dominant society perspectives with dominant society research, Lewis sees a new generation of historians working from Indian documents providing an Indian perspective.

He called it an "answer to the colonization of our intellectual knowledge." "The Tribes can recover language

It was Kathryn Harrison basically telling her own history. So now we have a more detailed recent history. We can create a more detailed history, a history almost never taught in any kind of public school.

"It's true about the Grand Ronde Tribe as well. In 1999, they hired Stephen Dow Beckham to write their history. Tribes are hiring the white historians. They have not tapped into the Native historians yet. It's also true of recent book put



Celebrating 20 Years of Restoration

Grand Ronde Restoration Film 1983-2003

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Wisdom of the Grand Rondes

■ Wisdom of the Elders' Radio Series brings Grand Rondes to the air.

By Ron Karten

As part of a program of Turtle Island Storytellers, Publications Coordinator and Tribal member Brent Merrill, a descendant of the Northern Paiute and Kalapuya Tribes, talks about the Grand Ronde Trail of Tears, the story of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde from the 1850s.

Merrill is a part of the third series of radio programs from Wisdom of the Elders (WOTE). The entire third series will include eight one-hour "American Indian Cultural magazine radio programs," according to the WOTE website.

The series features Tribes along the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Trail, including the Grand Rondes, and storytellers include Tribal Elders, historians, storytellers, artists, song carriers and environmentalists" from 13 Native nations living in the Bitterroot Mountains and along the Columbia River.

Lemhi Shoshone; Nez Perce or Nimi'ipuu; Salish, Kootenai, Flathead; Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla; Yakama; Wasco, Warm Springs, Northern Paiute; Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde; and Chinook Tribes are all included. The radio series is hosted by Arlie Neskahi (Dine, or Navajo).

The series was produced in Portland, and will be distributed nationwide via American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS), public, community and college radio stations, and on the website at www.wisdomoftheelders.org. International distribution of this series to Canada and Australia began in 2005 and continues in 2006.

Listen online at www.nativeradio.org for WOTE Series 3; Program 7: Grand Ronde, at the following times:

- Tuesday 6/13/06: 7 a.m., 1 p.m.
- Saturday 6/17/06: 2 p.m.
- Sunday 6/18/06: 2 p.m.

For more info: www.wisdomoftheelders.org

Learn more about the history of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. To order a copy of The *Grand Ronde Restoration* film, contact the Publications Department at 503-879-1358 or e-mail toby.mcclary@grandronde.org (VHS \$10, DVD \$15).