

Tribe's 23rd Restoration Celebration



Tribal members True Rimer (l), 9, and Dakota Rock, also 9, talked about what Restoration means to them.

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Dakota Whitecloud, coordinated the event.

The new Cultural Resources website — Ntsayka Ikanum/Our Story: A Virtual Experience (see *Smoke Signals*, 9/1/06 and 11/1/06 issues) received another airing through a projector at the end of dinner in the Community Center.

Educational Specialist and Tribal member Leslie Riggs and Cultural Collections Coordinator Lindy Trolan demonstrated how to traverse the giant website, and showed a bit of all it has to offer.

Outside of the big hall at the Community Center, Cultural Resources set up a few laptops so Tribal members and others could check out the website design on their own, or get help with details

needed to traverse the site.

After dinner, at 3 p.m., Grand Entry started the 23rd Restoration Pow-wow and lasted into the evening.

Tribal Elder and Veteran Gene LaBonte resigned chairmanship of the Grand Ronde Honor Guard, and Veteran Norris Merrill stepped down from the vice chairmanship. Tribal member and Veteran Ryan Korn was elected Chairman and Veteran Gus Smoothingbord, Vice Chairman.

All were part of the posting of the colors.

Drum groups came from all over — eight in all. Eagle Beak from Grand Ronde, Northwest Connection from Eugene and Portland, Thunder Horse, JÓH'ONÁÁI EI, Navajos from Keizer, originally Arizona, Coyote Creek from Amity, Anii Nijii from Salem, Round Stone



Nora Kimsey, 97, was honored as the Tribe's oldest Elder. Sitting to Kimsey's right is her daughter, Myrna Brandon, both Tribal Elders. Nora will celebrate her 98th birthday on December 2, 2006.

Photos by Ron Katten

from Siletz and 4 Directions, a Nez Perce drum from Portland.

Nora Kimsey, 97, and Hubert Mercier, 95, were honored as the oldest Elders. Kimsey attended. Mercier doesn't get around much, anymore.

Fifty three Tribal Elders and members died in the last two years. Tribal Elder Louise Madieros read their names.

The Tribe also hosted 28 foreign students from Linfield College. They came from as far off as Mongolia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Japan.

"Very different," said Tamir Lkhamsuren, of Mongolia, about the pow-wow. He is on a four-year course at Linfield that he intends will end with a degree in computer science. Other students were staying in Salem for only a semester or two.

"The class was studying Native Culture in America," said Sandra Lee, English Language and Culture Program Coordinator at Linfield.

"And they all wanted to come."

"I made sure they got out and danced," said Tribal Elder Tom LaChance. "That they felt at home. They had a good time."

Dakota Whitecloud said more than 300 attended, "the best Restoration Pow-wow turnout ever."

"All I can say is thank you to all those who volunteered. There are about a dozen," she said, "and some were not even connected to the Tribe. We couldn't have done it without them. They did a wonderful job."

"We're still here today," said Tribal member and Education Specialist Bobby Mercier in an opening prayer. "Our children are growing up in a rich community because of our ancestors."

"We've come a long way," said Tribal Council Chairman Chris Mercier. "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

"Although things change," said Whitecloud, "some things remain the same." ■



Tribal Chair Chris Mercier expressed his gratitude for all the Tribe has become over the years.



Tribal member Kyoni Mercier, left, laughs with Tribal member Sam George during the Restoration meal held at the community center.