

# High Flying

■ Tribal member John Waters is almost through his air traffic control and pilot requirements; it won't be long until he is directing traffic overhead.



Tribal member John Waters, above, is on the telephone, up in the school's air traffic control tower. To the left is a shot of the radar screen, and all the planes he will one day be keeping out of each other's hair.

Photos courtesy of John Waters

By Ron Karten

Tribal member John Waters, 26, expects to graduate from the Community College of Beaver County near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, next May. He'll have an Associate of Science Degree in Air Traffic Control. By the end of next December, if all goes as planned,

he'll have completed his commercial pilot's rating at the Pan Am International Flight Academy in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, and be ready to start directing air traffic.

"I've always been fascinated by anything with aviation," he said during a break from Christmas

shopping in Chicago recently. "I knew I'd be there somewhere. I thought as a pilot but as I did some research, I decided that air traffic control was a better career for me. The pay is better for air traffic controllers. They have a better schedule (unless you choose to work the night shift). You're home every night. A pilot is gone on the road for two weeks of every month."

His mom, Tribal member Deborah Waters, told him in his last years of high school that he should talk to the Tribe when he started looking at colleges and for college aid. The Tribe has been helping the Waters family with John's college education ever since.

Waters called Tribal member and Education Specialist Bryan Langley "a tremendous help," but Langley said that he didn't have to do much.

"John is a very responsible student who continues to excel in his chosen course of study, Langley wrote in an email. "John is one of those students that require very little work because he had a plan for success and works hard to achieve his goals."

It took Waters three colleges to find Beaver County's Air Traffic Control (ATC) program, but once he discovered that it was the most comprehensive program in the country, it was love at first sight.

Among other things, Beaver County Community College offers control tower and radar labs. "Take a smaller city, the amount of traffic would qualify them for (a facility rated) ATC-6. We're trained at an ATC-12 facility. Chicago's O'Hare Airport is an ATC-12 facility," he said.

And once Waters is done, this is one of 12 programs in the nation that offer direct placement into Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ATC towers. It is the only program that has an operating control tower and requires a pilot's license to graduate. The

program complements pilot training programs offered up to and including the commercial pilot rating.

"Aviation is like a second language," said Waters. "There are certain ways that you say everything. I could send you books on phraseology. When you talk to pilots, they're looking for certain words in certain orders. If I'm talking to five different planes at one time, you don't have time for a conversation, so all the words have to be precise and ordered. You have so many planes doing so many different things that some of the most important things we learn are phraseology."

Although Waters has never been out to the Tribe, his folks try to get out here every year. But Waters has been involved in Indian education activities in Michigan since grade school. "They have a really nice program," he said.

With a 4.0 accumulative college grade point average, Waters is the top student in his class, and has added a class leading to the Certified Weather Observer license, that will allow him to expand his professional abilities by providing weather reports for airports.

"It's a big benefit to me since I can also work in flight service."

Through the academy, Waters spends a lot of his time in the air with a Piper Archer plane. Waters has earned his Private Pilot license and is working on the Instrument rating. Still ahead are the Multi-engine and Commercial ratings.

Then, through an agreement between his school and the FAA, graduates land on the FAA's direct hire list.

"We get to pick five states to work in. I've visited a lot of different towers," he said. "I'm putting Portland down as one of my choices. I'm going to put Oregon down. Also Washington, and possibly California. I want to be a little closer to the Tribe," he said. ■

# A Move To Finance

■ Tribal member Kalene Contreras finds her calling.

By Ron Karten

After Termination, Tribal member Berle Contreras left Grand Ronde to find work (through beauty school) in San Francisco. After Restoration when the casino went up, her daughter, Tribal member Kalene Contreras, left San Francisco to find work back here in Grand Ronde.

"I wanted to get closer to my mom and to work at the casino and for the Tribe. I guess you could say, I've been trying to find my home," she said. She has since been a black jack dealer and she did the "soft count (the bills)" at the casino. She also has been a secretary in the Social Services Department, and now, "I think I finally found my home in Finance. I love numbers."

As the department's new Accounts Clerk, Contreras said, "I do

the filing, the mail, take payments for phone bills, sewer bills. I write receipts for any checks that come in. There's lots of filing. I don't mind the paperwork. It keeps me busy. I like this job because there are a lot of different duties and I like to stay busy doing different things. Then I don't get bored."

She started in this position at the end of November and still has not "touched on all of my duties. I still have more to learn, so it's pretty exciting."

Over the years, Contreras has been masterful at finding opportunities through the Tribe. Most recently, she took on temporary work handling the Tribe's central phone desk, a job she got through the Tribal Work Experience program.

And each job has its stories. At the casino, she recalled the "little

rituals" people had before they'd bet or raise. "You'd laugh daily," she said.

"They always had a good luck charm, too."

"The cards are still going to be the same when they come out," she said, "but if it works for them it works for me. I just love working with the public."

Family and Tribal activities are a large part of Contreras' life. Her son, Tribal member Raymond Duran, 22, of Willamina, has two children, Tribal member Daysia, 1, and a step son, Anthony, who is 7. There is also a baby boy due in February. Contreras also has a daughter, Lea Pratt (Hupa), 17.

Contreras and Daysia and Anthony, too, danced together on the floor of the gym during the Restoration Pow-wow. "Now that I don't work weekends," she said, "I'm able to go to all of the meetings and gatherings at the Tribe."

Before coming to Grand Ronde, Contreras was a letter carrier in Alameda, California. "It took its toll and like I said, I was coming



Photo by Ron Karten

Tribal member Kalene Contreras

here to find my calling. When one door closes another opens. I know it. When the Records Clerk job opened up and I didn't get it, I knew something better was coming along, and then the Accounts Clerk opened up." ■