

The Tribe And Spirit Mountain Casino Participate In The Portland Rose Festival Centennial Celebration

By Angie Sears

"Celebrating Our Traditions," a pow-wow themed float, won the Grand Prize in this year's Grand Floral Parade on Saturday, June 9.

Participating in the Grand Floral Parade has become a tradition for Spirit Mountain Casino and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. And it is no surprise they are bringing home a prize with this year's entry. The pow-wow themed float, draped with more than 3,700 flowers, featured a giant-sized Native American playing a hand held drum.

Grand Ronde Royalty, the Veteran's Young Warrior, and Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison rode on the float in full regalia along with the Eagle Beak drummers, who drummed and sang as they traveled down the parade route. The Grand Ronde Honor Guard and a group of Tribal dancers led them in, while another group of dancers danced along side the float. And accompanying the float on horseback was Camille Mercier and Perri McDaniel. The horses they rode were wearing traditional beaded trappings.

Kathy Bland, Sponsorship Coordinator for Spirit Mountain Casino and coordinator of this year's float, invited a representative from each of the other eight northwest Tribes to join the Grand Ronde Tribe and dance along with the pow-wow themed float. Holly Jackson, Ms. Siletz, was able to join in on the pow-wow fun, as she rode alongside the Grand Ronde Royalty.

This year's float was built by Tribal members, casino employees, other volunteers, and the staff of

Creative Concepts. The volunteers dedicated many long hours working on the elaborate details of each piece of the float.

"It's crazy; everything on the float is edible," said Cindy Duval, casino employee. "The arm band is made of dried pineapple and the belt is made with poppy seeds. It's like paint-by-number; you just put glue on it and then stick the seeds to it."



Photo by Toby McClary

This is Duval's first year helping out with the float. She said she wanted to help to see for herself how it was made and what materials were used. She continued to explain that the breastplate was made with papaya, Blue Statice (a type of a flower), wheat sticks, and white beans. The shirt is made with red pepper chili flakes, and the pants are golden millet (a type of bird seed).

While Duval describes the materials being used, another casino

employee Tawny Purtain gets stuck between the drum and arm while trying to glue poppy seeds on the belt.

Tribal member Janet Billey-Tom also helped out with the float. This is her third year as a volunteer at Creative Concepts, but she said it is only her first year to work on the Grand Ronde float. In the past she worked on floats for PGE and the Queen's court.

Billey-Tom, who was asked to walk in the parade, said she is proud to be given the opportunity to

standing design.

Gene Dent, the owner of Creative Concepts, said his staff works closely with the casino representative (this year Kathy Bland) and the Tribe's culture committee to ensure that the details of the float are culturally accurate.

"The original trees on this year's float were crooked and the culture committee was uncomfortable with that because of its significance, so we made them straight," said Dent. "It's really great that we have that relationship with the culture com-

"I would like to thank the Grand Ronde Tribe for allowing the Rose Court to come to their reservation. It was good for me to see the unity of the Tribe."

~ Mercedes White Calf (Oglala-Sioux),
Rose Court Princess

represent the Grand Ronde Tribe.

"The shells I will wear represent the Tribes that I am," she said. "I will have a basket full of willows from the reservation, and each garment that I wear represents the Grand Ronde Tribes that I am from."

Building floats for the Grand Floral Parade draws in more than just a local crowd. Arline Brill, 64 of Cincinnati, OH, has helped with the Grand Ronde float for the past three years.

Brill, a member of the One More Time Around Again Marching Band, spends three weeks in Portland every year to practice with the band before the parade. The band has more than 500 members, all of which range in age from 18 to 85, and is said to be the largest permanent marching band in the world.

Brill said she likes to spend at least two days helping with the floats and she always requests to work on the Grand Ronde float.

"I'm not Native American, but I've read just about every book about them. ... I think there's something about the way Tribal beliefs are tied into nature. It

just draws me to them," she said.

The Tribe began participating in the Grand Floral Parade in 1996, and has since entered a float every year with the exception of 2002 and 2003. Each year, a casino representative has enlisted the help of Creative Concepts to design and build the float, and each year the float has won an award for its out-

mittee so we know those important details."

The Grand Ronde have ties to the Portland Rose Festival dating back to the 1940s

In 1943, Grand Ronde Tribal member Delores Petite was selected as a Rose Festival princess by the Girls' Polytechnic high school in Portland. She was the daughter of James and Louise Petite. She was 16 years-old and was full of ambition. She was a member of the Usher Club, the Stretcher Corps (a high school first aid unit), the girls' sextet, the school chorus, and she had aspirations of being a war nurse.

1943 was during the era of World War II and the festival was referred to as the

"wartime" Rose Festival. Due to military restrictions, the Rose Festival and Rosarian functions were limited and the parade was cancelled. The girls kept busy with other events, as well as helping with war projects and comforting injured soldiers. The queen's coronation took place at the amphitheater in Washington Park and admission was the purchase of a war savings stamp for twenty-five cents.

Petite did achieve her dream of becoming a nurse. She worked in the operating room and then as a psychiatric nurse. She had three children, Jim, Danny (who passed away in 1975), and Julie. She also



Grand Ronde Tribal member Delores Petite was selected as a Rose Festival Princess in 1943.



Photo courtesy of Oregon Historical Society

Grand Ronde Tribal member Delores Petite in the 1943 Grand Floral Parade Rose Court is shown here (arrow).

See ROSE FESTIVAL
on page 7