

Where Are They Now: A Glimpse at the Success of the 2004-2005 Hatfield Fellow

By Angie Sears

Joseph Hostler, Grand Ronde Tribal member and 2004-2005 Hatfield Fellow, has always had an interest in politics. Even as a child he recalls watching the news to see what was going on.

Of course, this could stem from having a family that was heavily involved in Tribal politics. His father, a member of the Smith River Rancheria (a small Tribe in California), served on Tribal Council for his Tribe, and his mother, a Grand Ronde Tribal member, has run for Tribal council several times.

Hostler has always tried to follow his parents' example and take a leadership role whenever possible. This is how he came to apply for the Hatfield Fellowship and ended up spending nine months in Washington D.C. working with Native American Affairs and learning his way around on Capitol Hill.

Hostler, a graduate of Humboldt State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Management and an emphasis in Tribal Management, spent his fellowship working in Congressman Greg Walden's office. Walden is the House Representative for Eastern Oregon.

Hostler feels lucky to have been placed in an office that deals with Native American Affairs. And even more so that at the time of his placement, the office was in the middle of a staff turnover that involved the Native American and Environmental Affairs portfolios, which allowed him to step up and help out.

"A big part of what I did is brief the congressman, his staff and the commission about upcoming Native American bills. And whenever Tribes came (to D.C.), I acted as a host for them, I sat in on meetings, and I followed up on their requests," said Hostler.

"They allowed me to work on the things that I wanted to, which was rare. So I chose to work on Native American Affairs – any kind of proposed laws that affected Tribes, I got to research them, brief the office and the congressman, and then do

outreach for the Tribe. I was like a legislative assistant to the office and that was nice.

"For the nine months that I was in the office, I pretty much took over the Native American portfolio and the new guy did the Environmental portfolio. He helped me out a little



Tribal member Joseph Hostler

and I kept him in the loop of stuff. And when I left he took over the Native American stuff."

Hostler learned a lot about professionalism and work ethics while in D.C. The staff welcomed him and took him "under their wing," he said. They taught him everything he wanted to learn and they got along great; however, they didn't always see eye-to-eye on issues.

"Congressman Walden is a republican and I'm pretty liberal; I'm a democrat. And so I didn't fully support some of the work I did because ideologically I didn't agree with it, but they were always welcoming," he said.

Hostler was grateful for the opportunities and benefits he gained from the Fellowship, and was equally grateful for the benefits it provided

for congress. The Fellowship allowed him the opportunity to teach members of congress about native culture, Tribal issues, Tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, as well as giving them exposure to Native people and to the Native perspective.

He believes the biggest goal of the Fellowship is teaching leadership, and teaching future leaders how to excel in Washington D.C. and how to interact with the U.S. government.

"It is so overwhelming to go to this big city and be around all these powerful people. I see it all the time. Some Tribal leaders come and they're overwhelmed. They don't know how to act; they don't know how to ask for things; how to present their self; and they don't know how to get around the Capitol. They are just uncomfortable with it. And some people are veterans at it.

"There are some chair people who have been representing their Tribe for 20-30 years and they've been to D.C. umpteen times. They're familiar with the Capitol and they know who's who," he said. "I think this program helps teach leadership to future leaders. ... And it's valuable whenever those people are ready to become leaders for their Tribe."

For now, Hostler has returned to California and perused his passion for science. He is currently working as a water quality biologist for the Karuk Tribe, which is located on the Klamath River in Northern California.

The Tribe is working on decommissioning some of the dams on the Klamath River in an attempt to improve the water quality, the fish runs, and the salmon fishery for local Tribes.

Although he is not currently utilizing his political ties or his newly learned skills, he does have plans to do so in the future. He feels that the experiences he gained from the Fellowship will be beneficial for a future career in teaching, Tribal leadership, Tribal Council, or just about any career he chooses.

Hostler made the decision to step away from the political scene for a while because he wanted to be close to his family, his culture and his community. He recalled an experience in D.C. when he was riding alone on a subway that travels directly from the House of Representatives to the Capitol Building.

"I was going to a hearing and I was in a car all by myself. I was feeling kind of alone; I was a long way from my family. ... I had this feeling like my ancestors were around and I just kind of had this feeling like I wasn't alone. It was kind of nice. I felt that even though I was 3000 miles from home I still had my ancestors with me. That was one thing that I learned over there," he said. "I stepped out of my world and went into a different world and I still felt good. ... I still had my culture and I still had my ancestors with me. I knew that back home I still had a community and it made me feel good."

One thing he would like to see is more Tribal people getting involved with the Fellowship. When he finished his term there wasn't another Fellow to take his place due to a lack of applicants. He fears it is because not enough people are informed about the program. And those who do know about it don't understand what it's all about. He would like to encourage anyone who has even a slight interest in Native politics to apply and learn about the opportunities available to them.

"I think it was Bodie Shaw (a past Fellow) who told me to be open," said Hostler. "You have to be open to learn and open to whatever opportunities pop up. Don't have any preconceived notions, and don't be prejudice towards anybody or anything. Just experience it and make the most out of the opportunities that come up." ■

Tribal Member Pam McDaniel Gets Her G.E.D.

By Ron Karten

Tribal member Sabrina Pam McDaniel can change out the starter in a car and when the washer goes south, she can install a new element in twenty minutes. But when it comes to reading and math, she just never has gotten it. At least not until recently.

"I'd turn around and ask my neighbor what the teacher meant, and pretty soon, I was in trouble again," she said recently from her daughter's place in Grand Meadows. There wasn't a lot of time to talk because she was due pretty soon at her housekeeping job with the Tribe, but she did want to thank Joanne Carr, Tribal Adult Education Coordinator, the teacher in her life who made a difference.

"I never had a teacher like Joanne," she said. "She's a teacher who knows what you need. She knows how to work it. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have

my G.E.D."

And from Carr's point of view, McDaniel's success rests on two excellent attributes: "it was just her sheer determination to do this," said Carr. "She just kept at it and kept at it. She was a real inspiration to other people (wanting their G.E.D.) She carried around a notebook with percentages and times tables in it, and she'd keep consulting it, or she'd ask, what about this, again? And the other thing is that she had a sense of humor about her own struggle."

"She needed it for her family, and her job," said Carr, "and I think she's really happy now working full time."

As of this spring, McDaniel has her



Tribal member Pam McDaniel

general education diploma and is now six months on the job for the Tribe. She turns 50 this year all through her studies, she worked with grandchildren running around.

She dropped out of Molalla High School in ninth grade, she said, and ran through a series of jobs – from shearing Christ-

mas trees to housekeeping for many years for her father's business, and eventually, she ran into a deadend self-medicating with alcohol and drugs.

"I couldn't find help out there," she said, "like the Tribe found for me."

She came out to Grand Ronde to live with her daughter, and learned that

the Tribe would not hire her unless she was working toward her G.E.D. Though she was at it for three years, she said, "I only got serious about it in the last year."

"I've had G.E.D. classes since I was 18, but they always stick you in a corner. Here, we have open discussions and everybody's in the same rut. I still don't read and write well," she said, "but it's not like I'm dumb and stupid."

In her time in Grand Ronde, she has done more than study.

"She's an exceptional beader," said Carr. "She has been beading since the age of 12. It was passed down from her mother and her aunt. And she was really helpful for getting people to come into the room. Pam started the beading class, and maybe somebody didn't want to do math or sentence structure, but they'd come in to make a choker with Pam, then I'd have the opportunity to encourage the rest of it."

She also has volunteered to help kids getting their G.E.D.s.

"If I can do it, they can do it. That's for sure," she said. ■