

Canoe families gather



Photos by Ron Karten

Attending the Jan. 12 Canoe Family Winter Gathering in the Grand Ronde Tribal gym were Grand Ronde's senior Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, 99, along with fellow Tribal Elders June Bolden, left, and Charlotte Gray, right.

Dancing at left are two Squaxin Island Tribal members, Aleta Poste, center, and Janessa Kruger, right. At left, in the row behind, is Grand Ronde Tribal member Cody Haller.

Ann Lewis joins Land Management Department Tribal member returns home after living in southern Oregon

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

It has been a long trail home for Tribal member Ann Lewis, who has been hired as the Tribe's new realty specialist.

Her new home in McMinnville is the closest she has lived to the Tribe. She spent her early years on the family farm in Moses Lake and attended school in Spokane, Wash.

She lived most of her married and family years in southern Oregon "on a ranch with Table Rock in front and Mount McLaughlin out back," she said in her new office in the Tribal Community Center.

Her desk has a view of Spirit Mountain.

"An experienced real estate broker from southern Oregon, Ann brings a great deal of knowledge of the 'fee' realty world to the position and has long wanted to move back near the Tribe," said Tribal member and Tribal Land Management Manager Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach.

"About three years ago, I started attending meetings," she said. "And every time I came up here, I loved it."

Tribal interests were "huge" to her mother, Yakama Tribal Elder Edna Bobb, who has walked on. Ann's grandfather, Wilson Bobb Sr., was a Grand Ronde Tribal Elder.

"My mother was very active with our heritage," Lewis said. "Those were the '60s and '70s and she was involved with AIM (American Indian Movement), and had dinner with Cesar Chavez (the farm worker leader). I remember her with a knee band (representative of Wounded Knee), protesting. We also attended council meetings and pow-wows all over."

Lewis' mother also was a storyteller in the grand Indian tradition. "My biggest regret is that I never recorded her telling stories," Lewis said. Today, Lewis said she no longer remembers her mother's stories.

"She strongly instilled (a love of

Name: Ann Lewis

Age: 48

Tribal job: Realty specialist

Family: Married to husband, Ken, and has three children, Kenneth Sequoia, a junior at McMinnville High School, Rayona Torres of Moses Lake and Felicia Lewis of Medford.

Quote: "About three years ago, I started attending meetings. And every time I came up here, I loved it."

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the culture) in all her (eight, Lewis being the youngest) children."

Because summer is time for heavy farm work, the family often sent Lewis to stay with her uncle, Yakama Tribal Elder Isaac Bobb, or her aunt Caroline Strong, also a Tribal Elder who has passed on. They were Edna's brother and sister.

"Uncle Ike" told her stories about how Indians used to read snow melt on the mountains. When the melt on Mount Adams left behind the image of a horse in full run with head up and tail straight out, the huckleberries were ready, he told her. The rest of the year, anybody could see, the scene on the mountain looked like a horse grazing (tail down, head down).

In her time in southern Oregon, Lewis also learned that when the snow on Mount McLaughlin looks like an angel, the steelheads and salmon are running.

Aunt Caroline, her mother's oldest sister, and her husband, Simon, managed an all-Indian baseball team, the Yakama Nation, and before Lewis was growing up, the family had another team, an all-girls' team. Aunt Caroline and Simon did so much with baseball in their time that many baseball fields in the area are now named



Photo by Ron Karten

after Simon.

For Lewis' part: "I shagged balls," she said.

Uncle Ike took her camping and picking huckleberries on Mount Adams.

"He fed his family, 12 kids plus me, off elk and venison," Lewis said. "And we were not that far from Toppenish and Yakima, so we'd spend a lot of time there."

"Even though we're half-Native, we're pretty much whole Native."

Meanwhile, at around the same time that Edna Bobb was protesting injustice, Lewis' soon-to-be husband, Ken Lewis, was growing up in the Moneypenny family of Long Island. The Wall Street banking Moneypenny family.

Ken's father was president of the Ivy League's Dartmouth College, which coincidentally started as a school "for the education and instruction of Youth of the Indian Tribes in this Land ... and also of English Youth and any others."

"Samson Occom, a Mohegan Indian and one of Wheelock's (the founder) first students, was instrumental in raising substantial funds for the college," the Dartmouth Web site says.

The couple met in an airport in central Washington, where Ken was a pilot. Ken built his life and business in the field, ultimately running his own company supplying pilots and maintenance services for corporate jets.

Ann built her professional life in real estate, starting out as a seller's agent. Starting in 1994, she began representing buyers, a new field at the time, with her own agency called FBO (For Buyers Only) in Medford. (Although many buyers do not realize it, real estate agents represent the seller's interests; only a buyer's agent works on behalf of the buyer.)

Ultimately, the difficulty of breaking traditional ranks among real estate agents sent Lewis back to the seller's side, and in 2000 she went back into business as VIP Real Estate in Eagle Point.

Soon after, she began coming to Grand Ronde meetings and, finally, she knew it was time to move to Grand Ronde. Ken, near retirement, is moving his business to the Hillsboro airport.

"Most of his pilots lived in Portland," she said, "so the move turned out to be win-win for us."

"She will eventually facilitate Tribal fee-to-trust conversions, and will work in all aspects of the department including leases, property management, land acquisitions and federal realty," Reibach said.

"We are very pleased to have Ann as the realty specialist. Her vast experience in fee realty and positive outlook will be very helpful to the Tribe."

The department provides five necessary duties for the Tribe: land acquisition and sales; facilitating fee-to-trust conversions and actions that require processing from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, such as leases and easements; property management; commercial leasing; and general realty activities. ■