

Tribal photographer secures a place in jackpot country

Former *Smoke Signals* employee's work featured on casino slot machines

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member Toby McClary, until recently an award-winning photojournalist for Tribal publication *Smoke Signals*, can now see some of his powwow photographs on five redesigned slot machines in The Summit, Spirit Mountain Casino's room for high rollers.

And so can the rest of us. The machines, found standing along the left-hand wall toward the back as you enter, continue a tradition of creativity at the casino.

Tribal member and Slot Manager Mike Colton cites the Mystery Car Progressive and Rapid Riches Room as two other examples of that creativity.

"People from other casinos come here to model their rooms after Rapid Riches," Colton said.

McClary, now Receiving Department supervisor at the casino, took the photographs during the 2005 and 2006 Grand Ronde Competition powwows, and *Smoke Signals* published them.

Colton saw the pictures and wondered if he could use them for the casino's slot operation. He contacted McClary.

"Mike wanted something that would honor the traditions of the Tribe," said Bill Bateman, Slot Performance manager. "Toby's pictures were perfect for that."

McClary's pictures were sent to Las Vegas-based Sunkist Graphics, a company that has done other work, including specialized signage



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Toby McClary, former *Smoke Signals* photojournalist, has some of his powwow photographs on five redesigned slot machines in The Summit, Spirit Mountain Casino's room for high rollers. He took the photographs during the 2005 and 2006 Grand Ronde Competition powwows.

displays at the current Mystery Car carousel, for the casino. There was a give and take of ideas until Sunkist sent back the glass and reel strips that casino staff put together near the end of February.

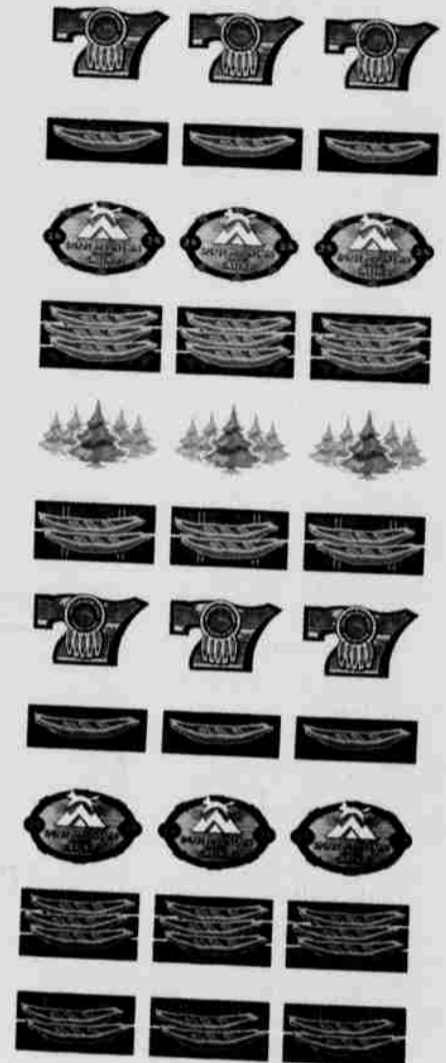
When Colton showed McClary the finished job in the slot tech room, McClary said, he was "at a loss for words."

Behind the powwow photographs, which have been retouched and triplicated on the screen, are many

northwest Tribal symbols. On the rolls, fir trees replace cherries and cedar canoes replace bars. Tribal and casino logos also come up in winning combinations.

The new slots are "modeled on one of the most popular high hit frequency games" in the casino, Bateman said. With a bet of \$2, they hold promise of a \$1,600 jackpot. With \$4, a jackpot winner takes home \$3,200.

"It gives customers a piece of Native American culture and it re-



minds them that Native American culture and the casino business co-exist," McClary said.

And the tradition will continue, Colton said.

"We're talking about doing a progressive one next," he said. ■

LaBonte appointed



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder Gene LaBonte sits in on his first meeting after being installed to the Governor's Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs at the Department of Veterans' Affairs Office in Salem on March 19. At right, LaBonte hugs his daughter, Kate Kirkland, after being installed.