

25th Restoration commemorative issue



Kathryn Harrison

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was always at the little office, which was moved up to the cemetery. Dad, Jackie and Norbert Johnson were there a lot. Norbert wasn't a Tribal member, but he was a good friend who was very intelligent and contributed a lot in the early years. His name is never mentioned at Restoration celebrations and I'm not sure why.

"Norbert, if you're reading this, thank you for the work you did. You haven't been forgotten.

"I was 14 years old and I remember Dad was always busy, always working (on Restoration). When their efforts finally became a reality, I was 21 years old."

When the Tribe returned to Congressman Les AuCoin with census in hand and local support, the Tribal effort moved on to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield's office. AuCoin and Hatfield had previously shepherded the Siletz Restoration effort through to a successful conclusion.

From a place on the Siletz Tribal Council, her mother's Tribe, and a period of helping their Restoration succeed in 1977, Kathryn Harrison returned to Grand Ronde, the Tribe of her father, in 1980.

"It was the Elders here who said, 'You need to come home,'" Kathryn says.

Kathryn came back to Grand Ronde with a job as an Enrollment clerk and, with her experience, pitched in on the Grand Ronde Restoration effort.

She participated in the visits to Congress. In Kristine Olson's biography of Harrison, "Standing Tall," she quotes AuCoin saying: "I had this uncanny sense as Kathryn was talking - and I know that this sounds melodramatic - that Kathryn's words to me at that meeting were like echoes from her ancestors. I can't put it any other way. She had a moral force that I couldn't just ignore, even if you wanted to."

Ultimately, much of the Harrison family became involved, including son Frank (now passed on), who served on Tribal Council for three years. Son Roger designed the Tribal logo. Daughter Patsy Pullin, who lived in Alaska at the time of Restoration, has worked for the

Tribe's Social Services Department as an Employment and Training Coordinator since 1999 and has been promoted to Program Manager for Public Law 102-477, the Employment and Training program and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Like a lot of Grand Ronde parents, Kathryn Harrison worked hard for Restoration at the expense of her family.

Her daughter, Tribal member Karen Askins, now 41, remembers many days asking, "Mom, are you going to be home tonight?"

And Kathryn remembers that she was away too much and that before Restoration Karen already had dropped out of high school for awhile.

"I felt bad," says Kathryn, and tried to make up for it. "I took her to see history being made. I brought her to the congressional hearings for our Restoration in Washington, D.C. I thought, 'I can tell her what to say,' but she was a 16-year-old and didn't listen to a word I said."

Here is what Karen said before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on Oct. 18, 1983:

"Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

"My name is Karen Harrison. I live at 6715 Ash Avenue in Grand Ronde, Oregon. I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. I am 16 years old and a junior at Willamina High School, Willamina, Oregon. Through the Title IV program I have taught classes in Indian culture and heritage to Indian children, ages 6 through 12, at the Grand Ronde grade school.

"Becoming restored is something altogether new, but important to me.

"All my life I have only known Termination.

"People ask me what Tribe I am and when I tell them, they've never heard of it. That, in itself, would mean a lot to me: for people to know I am part of the Molalla Tribe of the Grand Rondes, and how proud I am to be a member of my Tribe.

"Younger children of the Tribe feel the same as I do. Becoming restored is important to all of the young people of the Grand Ronde Tribe.

"The passage of our bill, HR 3885, will make us as one again, a whole, a people, to be known again by our government as Indians."

The extra work took its toll on many families.

"I hated how the Tribe took away from family life," says Doug Colton. "It took my mother away from us. At the same time, we knew that the work she was doing was important, and that it was for all of our families.

"This is going to have a payoff in the end in the way of health care and education," she told us."

But just as it made life difficult, the hard process brought many Tribal members into the effort, increasing the overall Grand Ronde family.

Doug Colton, for example, is now Facilities Maintenance supervisor for the Tribe. His brother, Mike, is Slots Supervisor at Spirit Mountain Casino.

Jackie Mercier Colton Whisler put together the first issue of *Smoke Signals* in the early 1980s. The first issue found in Tribal archives is dated January 1982, according to Tribal archivist and member Penny DeLoe. In a section updating activities of the Tribal Council is the line: "Dedication & Commitment of the Tribal Council is and will continue to play a very important role in reaching our goal of Restoration in the new year of 1983."

"I'd get the paper," says Patsy Pullin, who was living in Alaska at that time, "and call my mother and ask, 'What does this mean? What does that mean?'"

"I remember the excitement in Mom's voice, but I didn't really understand it."

It was a time when the Colton boys were barely in their teens. They remember the days before Restoration when they were dropped off between Mount Hebo and South Lake to pick huckleberries up in the hills as part of their contribution. The Elders used to make jam out of the berries, and sold it to raise money for the effort. Their mother, meanwhile, went to meetings or stood at bake sales to make money for postage and travel for the Restoration effort.

Tribal member Debby Larsen, 40, daughter of Tribal Elder Candy Robertson, remembers berry-picking Sundays when the Colton boys used to scare her and her sisters by telling them that there were bears nearby.

"She was gone all the time," Debby says. "I remember her going to Washington, D.C."

"I also remember the general meetings at St. Michael's (Church)," says Tribal member Angie Blackwell, who served on Tribal Council for three years, two as vice chair. "We were always the dishwashers, even Mychal, (Candy's youngest daughter)."

"I was the little one," says Mychal, "making Dad chicken soup out of the can."

"Leaving the home was a little scary," Candy says.

"Most of the time," says Patti Tom Martin, "the only time you could get together or be together was at a funeral. And then you would see people. Which is not the happiest of occasions, but at the same time, it was a happy occasion because you'd see old friends and relatives. What everybody shared was the fact that we always came to the cemetery."

"The reason we kept coming together was to honor our dead,"

says Kennedy. "The wisdom of our Elders is still there."

President Ronald Reagan signed the Grand Ronde Restoration Bill on Nov. 22, 1983.

"We were elk hunting on the day the bill was signed," says Margaret Provost. "We heard it on a little radio we had with us."

"I was 21 years old," says Tribal member Colleen Branson, who also was on that hunting trip. Colleen is daughter to Marvin Kimsey, niece to Margaret Provost. "We were elk hunting in Eastern Oregon. We were all standing around the campfire and my sister, (Tribal member) Virginia (Roof), came out of her camper with a portable radio in her hand yelling, 'He signed it! He signed it!'"

"Dad just stood there holding his cup of coffee staring at the fire with a look on his face that I will probably never see again. I can only imagine how he must have felt at that moment."

Kennedy was living in Burns. "When I heard it was a great, joyous time," she says. "But you remembered the hardships. When you worked so hard. You felt like crying."

In Grand Ronde, the tiny cemetery building was filled with recognized Tribal members who were "yelling and cheering" about the success, as Tribal Elder Candy Robertson remembers it.

"Yahoo!" as Tribal Elder Russ Leno recalls.

Kathryn Harrison rode up and down Grand Ronde Road honking her car horn.

"I think it was Angie that called us," says Reyn Leno, of his daughter, Angela Fasana, 36 today, who was working as an intern for the Tribe that day. "I heard when I came home from work."

"Restoration Day was wonderful," says Tribal member Margo Mercier, whose children, Tribal members Solomon and Sam George, are descended from two chiefs: Solomon Riggs, chief of the Umpqua, and Joe Hutchins (Hudson), a chief of the Santiam Kalapuya who signed the Kalapuya Treaty in 1857. "We gathered at the cemetery building; 30 to 40 of us. It was the only place we had. We had champagne. It was the happiest day of my life."

Health care was "the biggest issue for all of us," says Reyn Leno, and health care benefits started "pretty much right away," he says.

"My first recollection of the benefits," says Shonn Leno, "was how many hunting tags we got."

"I knew it was a big deal," says Mychal Leno, "but I didn't fully comprehend what it was all about."

"They got involved," says Candy Robertson, her mother, "and then

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