

'Alcohol no doubt is a terrible addiction'

LARSEN continued
from front page

helped her to see through the veil of her alcoholism. With King's help, Larsen turned her life around — for the first time.

The year was 1985.

"This change began with me finding someone who cared, and also the counseling," Larsen says.

Her eyes mist up with tears as she recounts the time lost to addiction, time that will never be granted her again.

There is still time, she says, to make new memories, time to spend with loved ones and to remember loved ones who have passed.

In 2003, King, who became Larsen's life partner, passed on.

"I was brought to my senses through the love and caring of my lifelong companion Carmen," Larsen says. "If it were not for Carmen's help back in 1985, I would not have been able to stay clean and sober for so many years. I was clean and sober for 18 years."

Yet with the death of King, Larsen relapsed and was back on the road to self-destruction.

"My life at the time seemed to be spiraling in a downward direction so much so that even gambling had become a serious problem, and yet I just did not seem to care," Larsen recalls.

"Alcohol no doubt is a terrible addiction and it ruins lives left and right, but for me it was gambling as well. I worked to gamble. Not only did I work everyday and long hours, but then I gambled and drank the rest of the day away, when I could have been spending that time with my family.

"I was the first one to tell others 'Never drink and drive,' and yet as I continued to drink I also continued to drive. Three DUI's between 2004-06, a car wreck as well as time spent in jail may have helped me decide on New Year's Day in 2007 that I needed to quit drinking."

This time Larsen reached out to counselors from the Tribal Behavioral Health program in Grand Ronde.

"I started down a long road two

years ago and can say I have continued on that road to present day," Larsen says. "In fact, I have successfully completed all my classes as of July 2008."

Not to say that it was not a long road and that it was not a lot of hard work because it was, Larsen says.

"I have worked continually with the Behavioral Health program and its team of drug and alcohol counselors here in Grand Ronde for over two years, and I still go back in every once in a while for their support," she says. "They are a wonderful team of counselors and they do not back down.

"They are good at their jobs and they know when someone is just trying to pull something over on them. They can be just as hard-headed as the rest of us.

"It took two years of treatment for me to learn that it isn't the act of picking up the drink or the action of pushing the button that creates the relapse. Picking up the drink or pushing the button is the final act, not the beginning."

Today, she says, "There are things that I can do that make a difference."

Her two grandchildren, for instance. "I am here to make a difference in their lives," she says. "If I would have continued down the road I had been on, I may not have been here for them.

"These addictions are very selfish and create self-centered monsters, and I was living a very self-absorbed life at the time."

Larsen says one of the most important messages she could send today is, "Be true to yourself." For me, she says that also has a spiritual meaning. "I am thankful that the Creator has given me the strength to be true to myself and to continue on with my journey."

"When I look in the mirror," she says, "I want to see somebody I like, or Elvis."

Larsen says she feels that sharing her story is important.

"It's not only about triumphs," she says, "but it lets others know that help is there if you take that step and choose to be accountable for your own actions." ■

2009 Tribal Marketplace dates

- March 7 & 8
- April 4 & 5
- May 2 & 3
- June 6 & 7
- July 4 & 5
(Possibly 7/3 for the three-day holiday weekend)
- Aug. 1 & 2
- Sept. 5 & 6
- Oct. 3 & 4
- Nov. 7 & 8
- Dec. 5 & 6

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events.
Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet.

OPEN FOR COMMENT

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT ON GRTHA'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority (GRTHA) receives grants under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, as amended.

HUD provides these grants to Indian Tribes and Indian Housing Authorities for the development and operation of low-income housing in Indian areas. To be eligible for the grants, the Housing Authority must submit an annual Indian Housing Plan that meets the minimum requirements of the Act, and submit regular performance reports to HUD.

Grand Ronde Tribal members are hereby notified that the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority has prepared the Draft 2008 Annual Performance Report (APR), and public comments are encouraged. All comments will be incorporated into the final report.

Copies of the 2008 APR are available by calling GRTHA at 503 879-2401, or 800-422-0232, ext. 2401.

Copies may also be e-mailed or picked up at the GRTHA office.

Comments must be submitted to GRTHA by 5 p.m. March 25, 2009.

Canoe Family slates meeting

The Grand Ronde/Chinook Canoe Family will hold its monthly meeting from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 7, at the Tribal gymnasium.

Lunch will be provided and attendees are encouraged to bring a dessert.

The Canoe Family Board Meeting will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Youth Education building.

For more information, contact Tribal Youth Program Coordinator Lisa Leno at 503-879-1471 or via e-mail at lisa.leno@grandronde.org. ■

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY'S NATIVE AMERICAN ENLIGHTENMENT ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

7TH ANNUAL SOCIAL DANCE

SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2009

ONE FELDHOUSE SPARKS ATHLETIC CENTER
FREE ADMISSION
GRAND ENTRY 4PM

DANCERS AND DRUM GROUPS WELCOME
RAFFLE - GRAND PRIZE: FURLETON BLANKET
NATIVE ARTS/RAFT AND FOOD VENDORS
PRIZES FOR 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD PLACES
DIRECTOR: DAVID WEST; HOST DANCE: STEVEN BUTTE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS AT 503.370.6265

All Christian Concert

Tribal Gym Grand Ronde
Come Worship with us
6 P.M. Saturday, March 14

Featuring
Russ Hosley, Russ Neal, Rex Haller,
Cindy Larson, PO Soul Entertainment,
Mark Anthony Jones, Ben Bauman,
and more

Taco Soup made by Margo Mercier. Suggested donation price \$5 for concert & \$2 for taco soup.
All donations go towards Lighthouse building and ministries. Please bring canned food so we can help out our local food bank

Any questions call Cindy Larson 503-876-2999