

Round dancing



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Baylee Lafferty DuMarce, 1, second from right, is led by her cousin Tribal member Shilo Fechtner, right, in a dance during the 7th annual Agency Creek Round Dance in the Tribal gymnasium on Friday, March 20. The dance also took place on Saturday, March 21.



Tribal member Bobby Mercier, middle, drums and sings along with other drummers and singers during the Round Dance.

Unmarked grave sites

We need your help — If anyone knows the location of an unmarked grave or knows the name of someone who was buried at the Grand Ronde Cemetery and their grave has not been marked, contact Mike Larsen, Facilities Manager, at 503-879-2407. ■

Pet rounds



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Veronica Gaston pets Vader, a 3-year-old German shepherd with the Polk County Sheriff's Office, during his visit to adult foster care's Black Bear Lodge on Wednesday, March 11. Vader lives and works with Deputy Gregg Caudill, who brought the dog for the visit. In the background are residents and Tribal Elders Bob Gregg, left, and Clarice Ellison.

Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness starts

Nationwide trip starts at Chemawa to visit 23 boarding school sites, seek apology from U.S. government

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

A 40-day, cross-country journey to bring awareness about the Native American Boarding School era in U.S. history kicks off Saturday, May 16, at Chemawa Indian School in Salem.

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness, organized by White Bison Inc. of Colorado Springs, Colo., will promote healing from the intergenerational trauma that still affects many American Indian and Alaska Native people.

The journey to boarding school sites will conclude on June 21 at the site of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, PA. The journey itself will end at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., on June 24.

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness will offer presentations at each of the 23 sites and each presentation will include learning material, ceremony and the opportunity for local and regional communities to share their knowledge of the issues and history of their particular site. Some of the boarding school sites are still in operation as upgraded modern schools while others ceased operation during the 20th century.

Another objective of the Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness is to request an apology from the U.S. government for the abuses and atrocities to American Indians and Alaska Natives committed on its behalf during the boarding school era. Both Australian and Canadian governments made such an apology to its indigenous peoples in 2008.

People feeling strongly about the need for an apology by the government can sign the petition at www.wellbrietyjourney.org. The petition also is being circulated throughout Native American communities so that individuals may express their feelings by signing copies. The petition will be presented to President Barack Obama on June 24.

The boarding school era began in 1879 with the opening of Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Although U.S. government policy about the culturally repressive nature of Indian boarding schools changed in 1934, the destructive practices of boarding schools continued into at least the 1960s.

Both Bureau of Indian Affairs' schools and those run by diverse church denominations continued to suppress free expression of Native culture and spirituality until about 1970. The resulting historical trauma is now understood to be a root cause of most present-day problems affecting Native American individuals, families, communities and Tribal nations.

Chemawa Indian School opened in 1885 and the school had its peak enrollment in 1926 with almost 1,000 Native students. Today, it is the oldest continuously operating boarding school in the United States, according to the school's Web site.

In addition to Chemawa, the Wellbriety Journey of Forgiveness will visit the Warm Springs Agency Boarding School in Warm Springs and the Fort Hall Indian Boarding School in Fort Hall, Idaho, before heading east and south across the country. ■

Youth Canoe Club

Every Wednesday 4- 5 p.m.,
Youth Education Building

Contact Lisa Leno at 503-879-1471 or Travis Mercier at 503-879-2143 for more information.

2009 Tribal Marketplace dates

- 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.