

2009 Contest Powwow was more, more, more

Organizers say annual event featured increase in dancers, attendance and vendors

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

This year's Contest Powwow was gigantic, with more attending, more dancing and more vending than at any previous powwow.

Held Aug. 14-16 at Uyxat Powwow Grounds near Fort Yamhill State Park, the powwow featured \$36,725 in prize money from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Spirit Mountain Casino for which 263 registered dancers competed in 20 categories.

The Grand Ronde, Yakama and Muckleshoot Tribes all were scheduled to hold powwows on the same weekend. Then, the Yakama Tribe postponed its for a week, and the Muckleshoot Tribe postponed its for two weeks, said Tribal member and Powwow Committee member Anthony Quenelle.

"And it was the biggest turnout in Grand Ronde ever. That's what everybody wants," Quenelle said, "a good turnout."

Tribal member True Rimer, 12, was among Grand Ronde Tribal members who had been "preparing my new moves" for the Boys' Traditional Dance contest. He displayed them outside of the big tent.

Winners among Grand Ronde contestants were Tribal members Marcel Allen Jr., second in the Junior Boys' Grass dance; Nakoosa Moreland, fourth in the Teen Girls' Jingle; Leland Butler Jr., fifth in the Teen Boys Traditional; and Leah Brisbois, third in the Women's Traditional.

Fred Hill (Umatilla) served as master of ceremonies, Patricia Ike (Yakama) as head judge and Freddie Ike Jr. (Yakama Rock Creek Wasco) as arena director.

Blackstone and Perfect Storm



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Men Fancy dancers take part in the evening Grand Entry of the 2009 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow on Friday, Aug. 14.

from Canada and the Mandaree Singers from North Dakota were scheduled as Host Drums, but Blackstone could not attend and Red Bull from Saskatchewan filled in.

Thirty-three drums, in addition to the host drums, attended and played, said Quenelle.

The weather more than obliged for Friday night's Grand Entry. Tribal Elder and Marine/Army veteran Steve Rife led the dancers in with the Eagle staff, as he has for the last 12 years.

A warm sun and beautiful breezes

followed him in. When it turned a little chilly as the sun went down, lines formed in front of vendors selling coffee.

"Every night's a good night to be a coffee vendor," said Rita Barber (Menominee), of Boring, as she served up a big hot chocolate for \$1.50. Her mother, Eileen Schultz (Menominee), originally from Wisconsin and now living in Arizona, and visiting, enjoyed the evening from a lounge chair at the booth.

Even at 8:40 that first night, a line of cars with their lights on continued to arrive.

Saturday and Sunday were traditional hot August days, but not as intensely so as in some years, and the breezes kept coming. On Saturday afternoon, Rife led Grand Entry along with Chief William Hauser DePoe Jr. (Siletz), from the family after which DePoe Bay is named.

"These sacred grounds," in the words of Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy, were covered in soft green grass for the fourth powwow held at Uyxat.

In her invocation Friday night after Grand Entry, Kennedy called the Tribe "a humble and grateful people."

"Fort Yamhill is up the road," Kennedy

said, "and the fort up there was used for just what forts were always used for in those days, but we're still here, and we're still contributing to our people and our community."

Tribal members Eric Sabin and Hope Lafferty attended with 3-year-old Ethan, already a grass dancer, and the two latest Sabins — Tidus and Ekias, three weeks old, and already at their second powwow. The week before, Sabin and Lafferty took the twins in their double stroller to the Siletz powwow.

Tribal member Lonnie Martinson and his wife, Chris, of Milwaukie, strolled the powwow grounds on Saturday afternoon.

It was only a few years ago that Martinson, the son of Tribal Elder Una Birchum of Salem, got back in touch with his mother. Adopted out nearly at birth (see *Smoke Signals* story in the Aug 15, 2006, issue), it took Martinson and Birchum almost 40 years to find each other again.

And now, Martinson, who comes to almost every powwow with Chris and his mother, was looking forward to the Bobb Reunion on Sunday, where he was thinking about again taking on the horse-shoe throwing prowess of Tribal member Sam George.

And George was looking forward to it as well. He said he has been throwing horseshoes for 16 years. "I learned a lot from my dad (Tribal



The 2009-10 Grand Ronde Royalty, from left, are Little Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout, Senior Miss Grand Ronde Halona Butler, Princess Kallie Provost and Junior Miss Grand Ronde Nakoosa Moreland at the 2009 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow.

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