

'I wish my mom and dad could have been here to see this'



Tribal member Anthony Quenelle, left, helps Jeffry Martinez, right, prepare his bustle before Martinez participates in the 26th Restoration Celebration Powwow on Sunday, Nov. 22. Quenelle was the Restoration powwow master of ceremony.



Tribal Elders Kathryn Harrison, left, and Margaret Provost, right, present former Oregon Gov. Vic Atiyeh with a Pendleton blanket during the 26th Restoration Celebration in the Tribal gymnasium on Sunday, Nov. 22. Atiyeh was governor during part of the Restoration effort and supported Grand Ronde in regaining federal recognition as a Tribe.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

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Chair Reyn Leno, "is you can see the transition from old to young keeping it alive."

Tribal member and Cultural Protection Specialist Eirik Thorsgard gave the first plankhouse blessing.

"I'm excited to see people in here," Thorsgard said. "I see people from Chinook, Coos, from all over."

The Grand Ronde Drum played from behind the wall, behind Thorsgard, at the end of the plankhouse. After the song began, the Canoe Family emerged. First, they danced with paddles in hand.

"The paddle is an extension of us," said Tribal member and Language and Cultural Specialist Bobby Mercier. "They are leaving those bad things behind with every stroke."

Later, describing girls dancing back and forth, imitating the motions of weaving, Mercier said that the dance elicited memories of aunties making baskets. "All our history is tied up in those baskets," he said.

"We had hopes and dreams and visions (for this plankhouse)," said Tribal Elder and former Tribal Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison. "I want to thank all the young people that are down there. We know you are representing us well."

Inside, said Tribal member and Tribal Network tech Wendell Olson, "It looked like a step back in time."

"Just watching this takes you to a place that you only see in old-time sketches," said Tribal Elder and Tribal Librarian Marion Mercier.

You could hear the Grand Ronde Drum outside, even in the parking

area of Uyxat Powwow Grounds. Following the canoe song was a celebration song, a love song and a blue heron dance.

People came from many directions.

For Native storyteller Ed Edmo (Shoshone/Bannock) and his wife, Carol, "A huge rainbow brought us in," said Carol. "It was right over the plankhouse. It was a bright, bright purple. Quite amazing. Then we hit a rainstorm."

The Edmos have been strong supporters of the Grand Ronde Canoe Family. They were out at the Community Center recently for a Canoe Family community dinner.

Ed also has started a Portland canoe family modeling itself after the Grand Ronde family.

"Ed pulls each year," said Carol, "at least a little bit."

"We really feel welcome by the

Grand Ronde Tribe," Ed said.

"You can feel our ancestors in here," said Cindy Gullede, who came from Battle Ground, Wash., to be with her mother, Tribal Elder Janet Phillips, who was seated a few seats down, for the holidays. "And you're so happy that you can still walk in their footsteps."

Phillips is daughter of Tribal Elder Pearl Langley Lyon, soon to be 98, who sat nearby.

Also in the group along the back wall of the plankhouse was Tribal Elder Bernice Jensen, 92, of Portland, who was in for the holidays visiting her son, Tribal Elder Bob Nagel.

While the fires burned hot in the center of the plankhouse below, Elders who needed easy access on one hand, but who, on the other, couldn't get down the steps to be near the fire, held the top row.

"I wouldn't miss it," said Jensen, "even as cold as it is. Just say, 'We're tough Indians.'"

"I wish my mom and dad could have been here to see this," said Tribal Elder Marilee Norwest. Tears came to her eyes.

"I'm glad it's in my time," Harrison said.

"This cost a lot to build," said Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen, Jr., "but it's priceless."

"The whole opening ceremony was very powerful," said Tribal Council member Toby McClary. "The atmosphere was powerful. Through the songs and dances, we were reaching out to our ancestors."

Tribal member Janele Gut-

Halona Butler, Tribal member and Senior Miss Grand Ronde, dances in a jingle dress dance during the 26th Restoration Celebration Powwow.



errez, who helped on the Restoration Celebration Committee, called it "an incredible moment."

"I'm not too familiar with the old ways," said Tribal Elder Herman Hudson Jr., 84. "This must have been before my time."

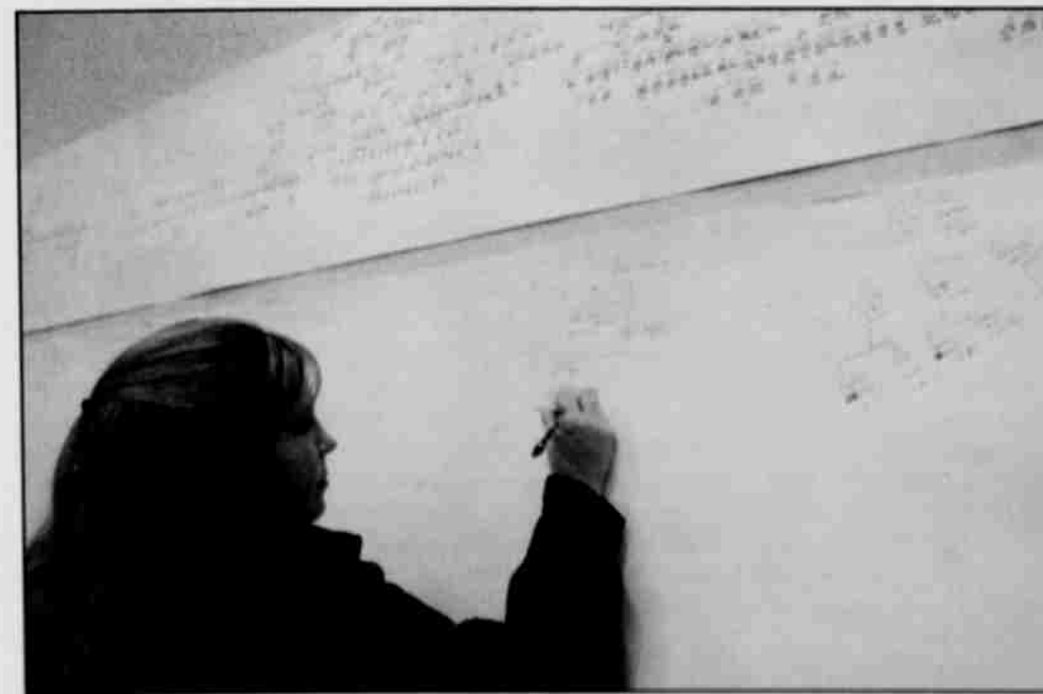
"We're blessed by the people who worked so hard for Restoration," said Tribal Elder and Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr. Tribal Councils, past and present, he said, have "put our strategies in place to put our people on the road to self-sufficiency, and now there is great hope for opportunity for future generations."

The plankhouse ceremony began a little after 10 a.m. and a little before noon the structure emptied as Tribal members headed to the gym for lunch, afternoon events and the powwow starting at 4 p.m. About 150 nearly filled the plankhouse in the morning and 426 signed in at the gym.

Tribal member Jon George emceed the afternoon events. Tribal Elder and longtime Tribal Council member Val Grout gave the invocation and Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, approaching 101, received a standing ovation.

Tribal Elders Margaret Provost and her daughter, Jackie (Provost) Many

Angela Fasana, Tribal member and Tribal Court administrator, adds family members to the Tribe's genealogy record that was on display in the Tribal gymnasium during the 26th Restoration Celebration on Sunday, Nov. 22. Fasana is the daughter of Tribal Vice Chair Reyn Leno.



Tribal member Marcus Gibbons dances during the 26th Restoration Celebration Powwow on Sunday, Nov. 22. Gibbons was the arena director for the powwow.

Hides (daughter and granddaughter to Nora Kimsey and each active in the original Restoration effort), and former Oregon Gov. Victor Atiyeh, who led the state during Grand Ronde and three other Oregon Tribal restorations, all relived some of the Restoration history for the group.

Former chair and current councilman Ron Brainard of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians attended.

Tribal Elder Betty Bly appreciated the Tribal family tree posted along one wall of the gym.

"I was finally able to prove to Reyn (Leno) that we're related," she said.

Restoration is about community, said Tribal Council member and

former Tribal Chairman Chris Mercier.

Tribal member and Native American Music Association's 2009 Performer of the Year Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach performed with his flute, guitar and voice, showing a little Jimi Hendrix in his adaptation of "Amazing Grace."

"It's an absolute honor to be Grand Ronde," he said, "but without this place and without all of you, this music doesn't mean anything at all."

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy arrived on the heels of receiving a 2009 Potlatch Fund award in Seattle for her cultural preservation work. She talked about the spirituality that brought the Tribe to this 26th Restoration.

"Our Creator smiled on us," she said.

Harrison thanked the Creator for the hard times because, she said, "It made us stronger."

Tribal member Anthony Quenelle emceed the powwow.

Tribal Elder and veteran Steve Rife led the Grand Entry, followed by a Color Guard including Chris Tinney (Lower Eastern Cherokee), Tribal Elder and chair of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Affairs Gene LaBonte, veteran Ritch Rissel (Lakota) from the Albany area and veteran Warner Austin (Eastern Cherokee) of Salem.

Scheduled drum groups included Four Directions, Dancing Again Singers, Johanna, Eagle Beak and Small Agency. Sixteen groups performed in all.

Apache Crown dancers from Chemawa Indian School performed. A blanket dance raised money for Joseph "Cheeks" Boise (Warm Springs), a cancer victim and performer with Small Agency. A cake walk made spreading sweetness easy.

"The dance arena for me is family," said Marcus Gibbons. "All one heartbeat, all one Tribe, all one nation of people. This right here to me is my way of giving back to the Creator for all He has given me. The children are a place for us to continue on and we give to the children so we don't fade away."

Showing what good hands the Tribe is in, Tribal member Isabelle Grout, 6, Little Miss Grand Ronde, summed up in a word much that has been and much that is still to come. "Awesome," she said. ■