

# 'Trickster' publication includes Thorsgard family story

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Virginia-based cartoonist Matt Dembecki accompanied his wife to the library one day in 2007, and while she wandered off to look up her books, he ran across an anthology of trickster stories on the shelves where he was browsing.

"It had neat little spot illustrations," he said, "and the stories were kind of neat. I thought, 'I could do some experimental art with something like these.'"

And so began the idea for the book "Trickster," a set of stories illustrated in the style of graphic novels.

Dembecki reached out to Native American storytellers and all his favorite artists from across the country. One of the stories came from Tribal member and Tribal Cultural Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard, whose family has been a Native story collector for generations.

"I contacted my family to see if it would be appropriate and they agreed," said Thorsgard. "I gave him a story entitled, 'When Coyote Decided to Get Married.'"

"I wanted the stories to be authentic," said Dembecki. "It was critical to get buy-in from storytellers. I spent two years finding the



storytellers. I went to colleges and agencies. People would refer me to others."

When he had the storytellers signed up, he said, "I wanted to include them every step of the way. There are a lot of cultural issues I want to be sensitive to, but not patronizing of. What I did, when I received a story, I came up with short list of potential artists that I thought would do a good job with that story."

"The strength of the book is the various styles: cartoony, photoreal-

istic, impressionistic. It's really interesting. I asked the storyteller to pick among those I thought would be best. So again, I had the buy-in."

Dembecki has published many books over the years. His work today is heading in the direction of "nature comics and nature parables." His current effort, "Xoc," is a story about a great white shark's journey from the west coast to Hawaii, and the shark's experiences — natural and

man-made — on the way.

Thorsgard's family is keeper of what he estimates are about 10 to 12 stories, and over the years he has been intending to write each of them down. One thing or another has kept that from happening.

Originally, these stories were maintained by traditional storykeepers, Thorsgard said. "A lot of times, they would work with a lot of different families. It's kind of fallen away from that now, but in

the past, it was certain people's jobs to tell stories."

When Dembecki approached him, he had the impetus to get this one written down.

"It's really a story teaching not to lie and to be true to your heart," Thorsgard said. "And it's also a story of how lying has impacts across a greater group of people than only yourself."

Among the artists that Dembecki presented to Thorsgard was Virginia-based Rand Arrington. Thorsgard called him "a phenomenal artist. I really appreciated his style of art."

"I always thought traditional stories should be illustrated," said Thorsgard. "It makes them more accessible. And a great teaching tool for kids."

"Trickster" includes 21 stories and 22 artists. On one story, said Dembecki, two artists worked together.

Golden, Colo.-based Fulcrum Publishing, a specialist in Native American and western America books, is bringing out 8,000 first edition copies this month. "Trickster" is widely available now at chains and independent bookstores throughout the country. ■

## ATTENTION TRIBAL MEMBERS

### COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL EVENT BOARD VACANCIES

The following Committees and Special Event Boards have vacant positions.

Veterans' Special Event Board	1 Vacancy
Powwow Special Event Board	1 Vacancy
Rodeo Special Event Board	1 Vacancy

Please send completed applications to Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347.

## JUNE 5TH & 6TH, 2010

### 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL



HONORING ALL VETERANS

HELD AT THE VA BASEBALL FIELD  
V.A. SORCC  
(FORMERLY THE VETERANS DOMICILIARY)  
8495 CRATER LAKE HWY.  
WHITE CITY, OREGON

Under the Auspices of the Southern Oregon Indian Center

### PUBLIC WELCOME FREE ADMISSION

ABSOLUTELY  
NO  
DRUGS  
ALCOHOL  
OR  
WEAPONS  
ALLOWED

MCs: Bob Tom & David West  
Arena Director: Lynn Schonchin  
Head Man: Abbey Summers  
Head Woman: Vickie Butler  
Host Northern Drum: Steiger Butte  
Host Southern Drum:  
White Hawk Slingers North West  
Gourd Drum: Jononaal  
Contract Drum: West Coast Boyz

#### Saturday

Gourd Dancing 10:30 AM  
Grand Entries at 1:00 & 6:00 PM

#### Sunday

Gourd Dancing 10:30 AM  
Grand Entry at 1:00 PM

Host Lodging  
White City

541-826-0800  
http://911.lq.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
Max McHatton 541-840-2565

www.roguevalleyveteranspowwow.org

## Native name



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Jan Michael Reibach gifts Tribal member Veronica Gaston a rattle after performing her Indian naming ceremony at the cultural area on the Tribal campus on Tuesday, May 18. Gaston asked Reibach to perform the ceremony and to name her; her Indian name is Laughing Deer. For performing the ceremony, Gaston gifted Reibach a small statue of a painted wolf playing a flute and a necklace she made out of .22 shells she found on the Reservation. Gaston is the daughter of Tribal member Oren George Pichette, who has walked on, granddaughter of Jasper Lillard and Tribal member Blanche Lillard, who has walked on, and niece of Tribal Elders Norma Billings and Philip Warren.

Ulxat Powwow grounds under the big tent!

## VETERANS POWWOW 2010

July 9th 10th & 11th in Grand Ronde, OR

POWOW: 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

MEALS: 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

Free parking/camping available!  
Arts & crafts, & food vendors welcome

\*No drugs or alcohol permitted  
\*No pets permitted in the arena

ALL VETERANS, DANCERS, & PUBLIC WELCOME! FOR INFORMATION CALL CHRIS TINNEY @ 503-863-2810