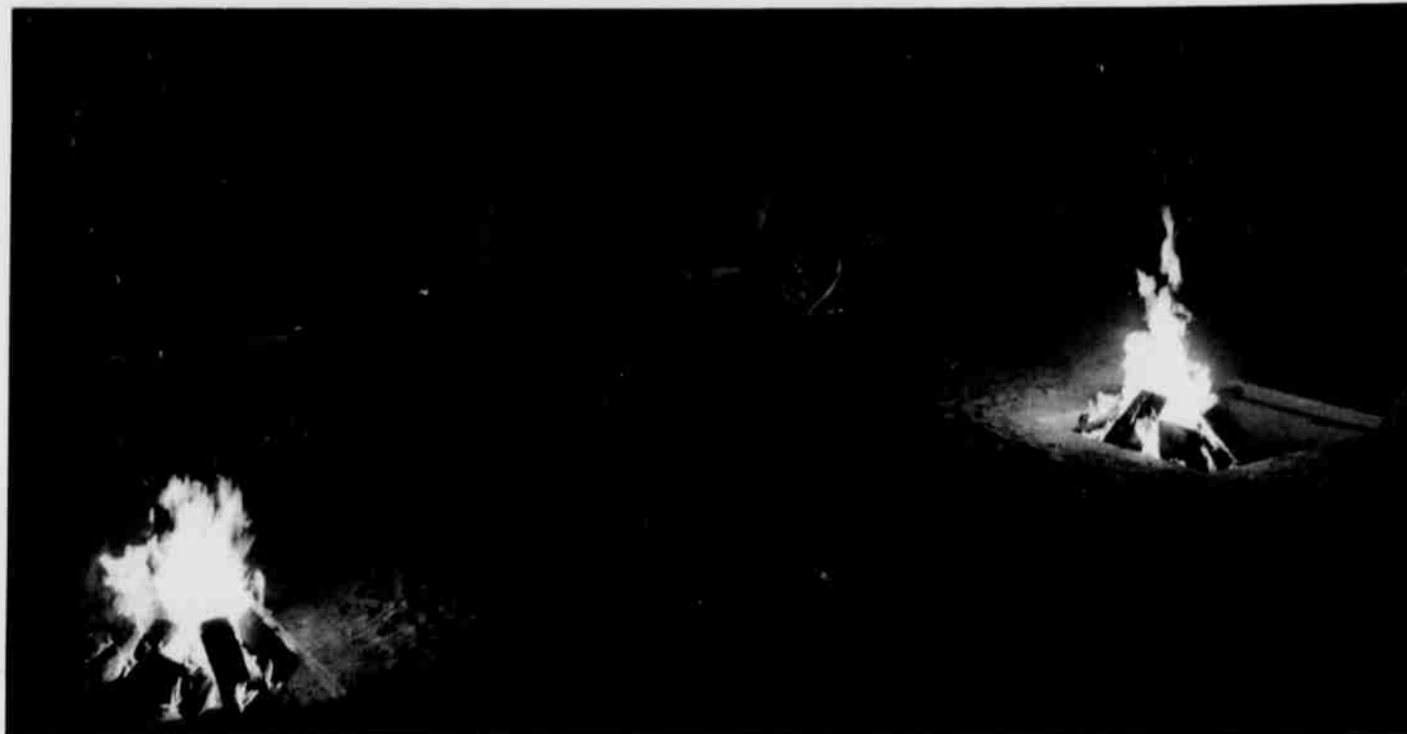


Nearly 400 in attendance for Restoration celebration



Bobby Mercier, Tribal member and the Tribe's Language and Culture specialist, speaks during the plankhouse ceremony that started the events to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the Tribe's Restoration on Tuesday, Nov. 22.

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These annual celebrations honor "those who made the sacrifices so we could be here," Mercier said, sentiments that echoed throughout the day.

The two-hour start at the plankhouse paved the way for a noon meal and program that stretched through most of the afternoon with memories and raffles for nearly 400 in attendance. A Walking On video remembered Tribal Elders and members lost during the last year. At 4 p.m., a Restoration powwow began that stretched into the night.

"We want the children to see us praying," said Mercier, "seeing us taking care of the things that need to be taken care of. Each of us is a reflection of all that they went through."

The plankhouse ceremony also included drumming, songs and prayers by a group of culture-centered youth, including members of

the Grand Ronde Canoe Family.

Tribal member CeCe Kneeland remembered that she was 23 when she heard that the Grand Ronde Tribe's Restoration was accomplished on Nov. 22, 1983, when then-President Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law.

"I was sweeping the floor when I heard it," she said.

She offered the group "a little bird song" that her grandmother taught her when she was small.

Tribal member Kevin Simmons introduced his family.

"This is a good place. This is a healing place," Simmons said. "There have been warriors, and there still are warriors."

He called today's warriors "briefcase warriors."

"We have built a home for our children," said Mercier, "but that doesn't mean our work is done. We tell stories about how our ancestors came here in the wintertime, but they did not ask, 'What can I have?' Instead, they were teaching

their young that the right question is, 'What can I do?'

"We have children in the city who don't know who their parents are or where they come from. I met a young lady in Tigard who couldn't even point the way to Grand Ronde. Those are the kind of people we need to reach out to. A people coming together — that makes our people strong."

"I started to cry when I woke up this morning and realized what day it was," said Tribal Elder and former Tribal Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison. "There were a lot of crossroads that could have taken us the wrong way."

"Everybody helped everybody," said Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg, referring to the days before Restoration. "And when we didn't have the money, we found a way to do it. Charity starts at home. Reach into your pocket. Reach into your heart and make sure we take care of our own."

Tribal member Marcus Gibbons came out with his sons, Osprey and True, both Tribal members.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Describing the reservation where he grew up as a place where "alcoholism was rampant" and "it was the murder capital of the U.S.A.," he said, "But we were always given these ceremonies; and learning how to pray in sweat lodges. The path that brought me here is the path of all my relatives."

"I dance and I pray and I dance and I pray and I dance and I pray," said Marcus.

"I put my hands on all of these boards before we built this longhouse. Every day we came up here and prayed. It's who we are. I dance and I pray for every one of us."

This year marked the first that Tribal Elder Ed Ashman had been inside the plankhouse.

"I learned more in two hours here this morning than I ever knew before," Ashman said. "I'm so much at peace in there."

Before a lunchtime meal of ceremonial elk stew, salmon and broccoli salad, Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council member Val

Tribal members from left, Orin John Allen, Leah Brisbois and Deitrich Peters participate in Grand Entry of the Tribe's 28th Restoration Celebration in the Tribal gymnasium on Tuesday, Nov. 22. Peters was the arena director for the powwow.

Grout and Harrison each gave an invocation.

Then, the Tribal contingent that filled the gymnasium split up for lines at buffet tables on either side.

Kneeland and royalty members sang and prayed.

Many gifts, up to and including a large-screen television, were raffled off during the afternoon.

Special guests included Steve Colms, director of Environmental Studies at the University of Portland; Chris Finks, a board member of the Maritime Heritage Association, which is working to build a Maritime Heritage Center in Portland that would include the Tribe's story; and Matt and Janel Bennett, owners of Sybaris Restaurant in Albany. Matt put on fundraising



Tribal descendant Austin Verdino, 3, picks out beads as he makes a bracelet, with the help of his uncle, Tribal member Mike Schmid, during the Tribe's 28th Restoration Celebration in the Tribal gymnasium.

For more photos visit the Tribe's facebook

member Isabelle Grout, and Grand Ronde Royalty, Nakooa Moreland, Senior Miss; Iyana Holmes (Junior Miss); Amelia (Little Miss) and Amaryssa (Princess) Mooney; and Makenzie Aaron (Princess).

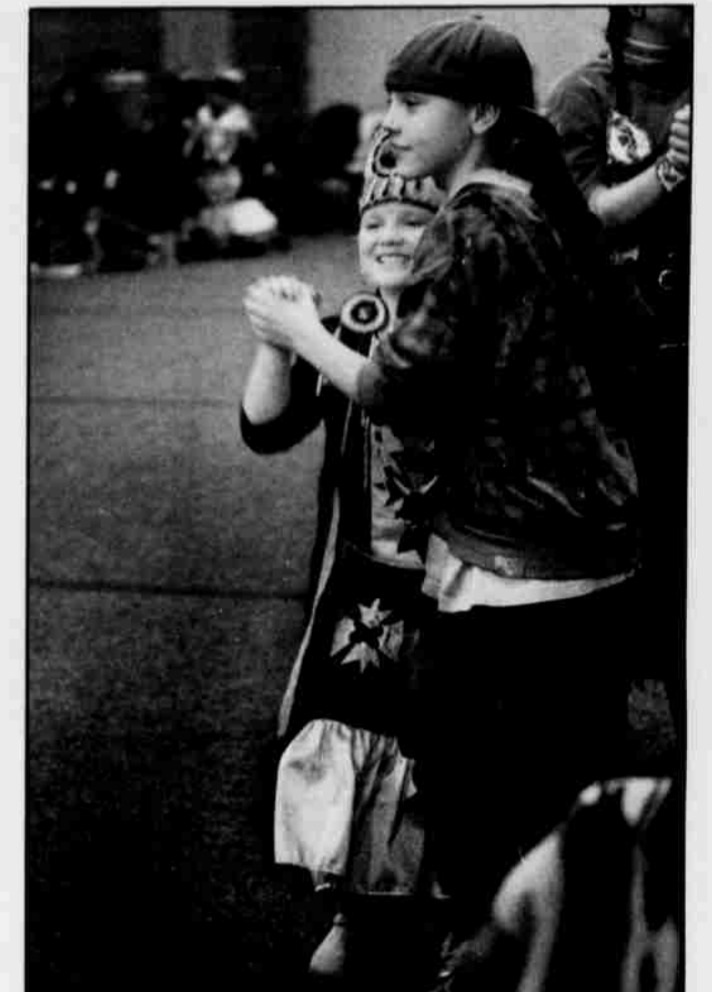
The Honor Guard included Chris Tinney and his son, Hunter, (both Lower Eastern Cherokee), Wayne Chulik (Tlingit) and Tribal member T.J. Lafferty.

Nick Sixkiller (Siletz) was master of ceremonies of the powwow. Among many introductions, Sixkiller introduced Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Pearl Lyon, who is oldest in the Tribe. She will be 100 years old in February.

Tribal member Deitrich Peters served as arena director and whip man.

Host drums included Little River (Siletz), All Nations (Burns-Paiute), Johonaaii and The Woodsmen (Grand Ronde).

"We truly honor this day," said Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy, "and we want these



Tribal member and Little Miss Grand Ronde Amelia Mooney and Tribal member True Gibbons participate in an owl dance.

traditions to continue for hundreds of years."

The Restoration celebration was coordinated by the Tribe's Public Affairs Department — Director Siobhan Taylor and Tribal member and Administrative Assistant Kristen Ravia — and a committee of Tribal member volunteers that included Sam Dala, Darlene Jones, Claudia Leno, Gladys Hobbs, Violet Folden, Kathryn Harrison, Wink Soderberg, Kathleen Tom, Bonnie Mercier and staff, Scarlett Holtz, Lisa Archuleta, Jon George and Destiny Bishop. ■

Tribal member CeCe Kneeland warms her drum before she gifts a welcoming song to the Tribe during the plankhouse ceremony that started events to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the Tribe's Restoration on Tuesday, Nov. 22.



Tribal member and Royalty Princess Makenzie Aaron, left, and Tribal member and Little Miss Grand Ronde Amelia Mooney deliver a roaster oven to its winner during the Tribe's 28th Restoration Celebration.



Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy, second row right, and Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr., next to Kennedy, participate in Grand Entry of the Tribe's 28th Restoration Celebration powwow in the Tribal gymnasium on Tuesday, Nov. 22.