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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Olson publishes Tribal history book



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder and former Tribal Cultural Resources Manager June Olson sits at the desk in her Happy Valley home where she wrote her recently released book "Living in the Great Circle, The Grand Ronde Indian Reservation 1855-1905."

'Living in the Great Circle, The Grand Ronde Indian Reservation 1855-1905' due out for Christmas

By Ron Karten
Smoke Signals staff writer

Through the collections of many first- and second-generation Grand Ronde Tribal people, Tribal Elder June Olson has produced a volume of Tribal history that starts with the times of the treaty signings and the removal of Tribal peoples to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s and continues through the first years of the 20th century.

Olson, who now lives in Happy Valley, started the Tribe's Cultural Resources Department in 1996 and served as its manager until 2005.

"When I first became interested in Tribal his-

tory, (Tribal Elder) Don Haller was the family historian," Olson said in an e-mail. "He had been actively collecting historical material along with the late Merle Holmes since the early 1970s.

"Sometime in the late 1980s, the two of them allowed me to go on a trip with them to the regional archives in Seattle where they introduced me for the first time to archival research. This experience set the course of my life."

Being hired to build a cultural resources program for the Tribe in 1996 gave Olson the opportunity to collect Tribal history in every form, she said.

"After spending years sorting through thousands of historical records, talking with Tribal Elders, listening to old audio-taped interviews

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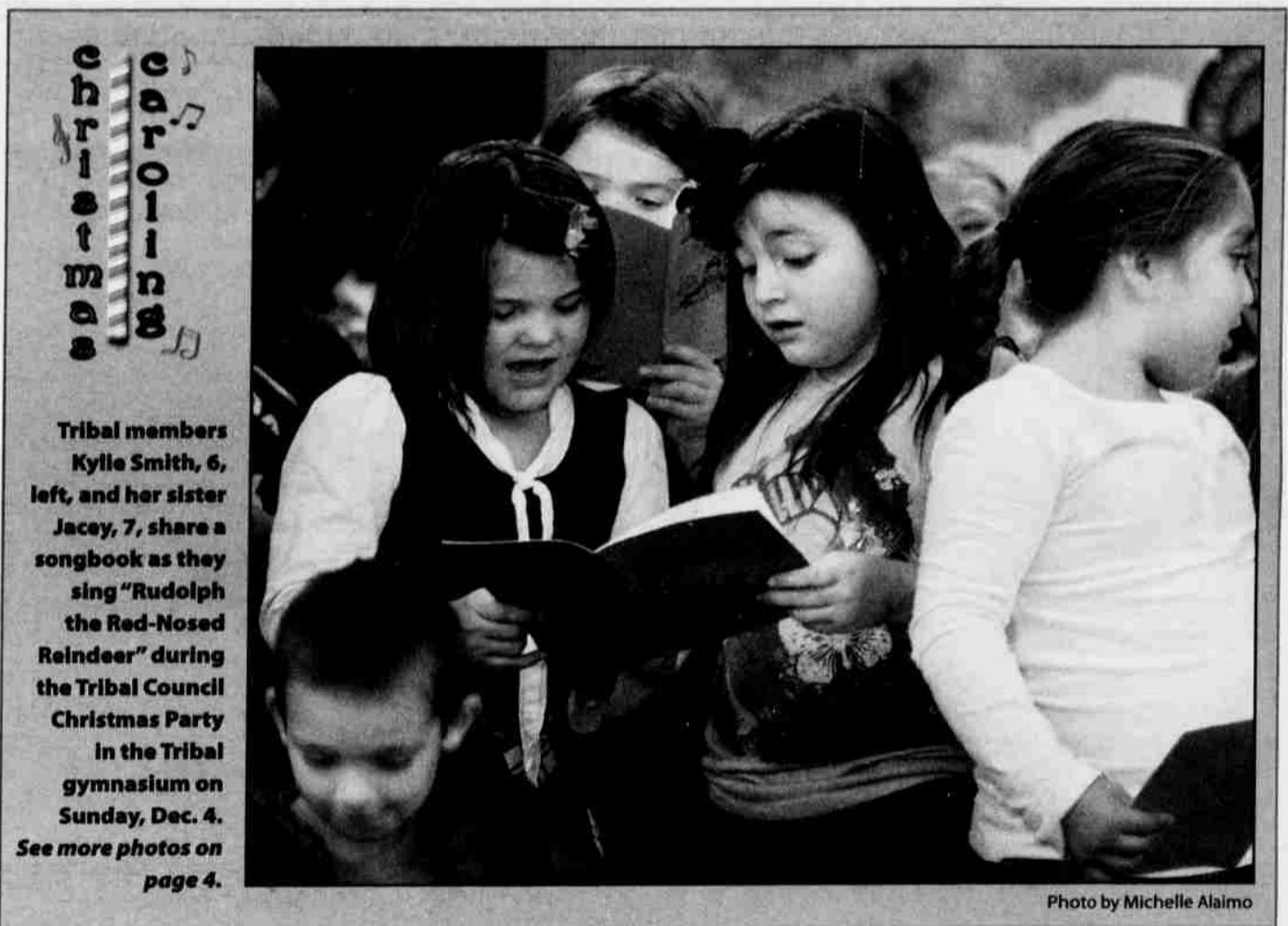
Kennedy, Giffen attend Tribal Nations Conference

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy and Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr. attended the third annual White House Tribal Nations Conference held at the Sidney R. Yates Auditorium at the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., on Friday, Dec. 2.

The goal of the event, according to the White House's Web page, is to provide leaders from America's 565 federally recognized Tribes the opportunity to interact directly with members of the Obama administration.

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Tribal members Kyle Smith, 6, left, and her sister Jacay, 7, share a songbook as they sing "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" during the Tribal Council Christmas Party in the Tribal gymnasium on Sunday, Dec. 4. See more photos on page 4.

Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Bruce Thomas honored by Potlatch Fund

Tribal member receives award for work at Spirit Mountain Casino

By Ron Karten
Smoke Signals staff writer

Every year since 2005, the Seattle-based Potlatch Fund has named five Northwest Indian leaders for awards honoring great leadership in such areas as culture and economic development.

And each year, following the November

awards ceremony, the granting agency posts videos of the award winners speaking about the interests and talents that led up to the awards.

This year, Tribal Elder Bruce Thomas, Spirit Mountain Casino's first chief executive officer, had this to say:

"I've always loved business, loved finding a win-win situation and creative ways to succeed."



Bruce Thomas

Thomas was honored with the 2011 Antoine Minthorn Economic & Community Development Award. The ceremony, held Nov. 21, honored Thomas for his work setting up Spirit Mountain Casino, said Potlatch Fund Director of Development and Communications Lawrence Leake.

"Setting it up in a way that did not (turn over control to) outside management," said Leake.

"The idea is to highlight the work that is being

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