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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Kennedy testifies before Senate

Indian Affairs Committee holds hearing after almost four-hour delay

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy testified on Thursday, Feb. 2, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in support of Senate Bill 356, which would amend the 1988 Grand Ronde Reservation Act to streamline how the Tribe takes former reservation land into trust.

The Senate bill was introduced by Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley, and co-sponsored by fellow Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden. The House of Representative's companion bill

was introduced by Oregon Rep. Kurt Schrader and is supported by Reps. Peter DeFazio and Earl Blumenauer. All three are Democrats, as well.

Senate Bill 356 also is supported by the U.S. Department of Interior.

The proposed amendment to the Grand Ronde Reservation Act would end the current two-step process that requires the Grand Ronde Tribe take each piece of former reservation land into trust with approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and then request that it be designated reservation land by Congress.

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Courtesy photo

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy testified on Thursday, Feb. 2, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in support of Senate Bill 356.

Chess Club another gambit for local youth

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Not since 1997, when IBM's chess computer Deep Blue defeated reigning chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov, has there been this much excitement in Grand Ronde over one of the world's most difficult board games.

"The queen can move in any direction," says Tribal member Cohen Haller, 6, one of more than a dozen Grand Ronde kindergarten through fifth-grade students who play in the K-5 chess program. "I like learning all the different ways they move."

"So, Cohen," says Matt Bucknell, from the side of one of the games being played in the K-5 section after school on a recent Thursday afternoon. "You have these pieces here that are awesome. See if you can move one of them to put Dakota in check."

"It takes a lot of strategizing," says Tribal member Dakota Ross, 10. "You've got to think about your moves. Strategizing really stretches your intelligence."

Ross says that part of his strategy is to get his bishops out there to protect the more valuable players.

Tribal member Jacob Holmes, 6, likes the idea that he can beat his cousins at the game. He also says the excitement of the game gives him more energy.

Since October, the Tribe's K-5 students have been participating in the Portland-based Chess for Success program that brings them together to practice twice a week

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Perfect balance

Tribal member Olivia Hughes is 'wheelie' good on a unicycle



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Olivia Hughes, 8, performs with the unicycle club from Salem's Liberty Elementary School, the Liberty Hot Wheelz, during halftime of the Portland Trailblazers game against the Charlotte Bobcats at the Rose Garden in Portland on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

On Feb. 1, there was a rout at the Rose Garden. The Portland Trailblazers ran all over the cellar-dwelling Charlotte Bobcats and by half-time the score was 61-35.

It was then that Tribal member Olivia Hughes, 8, a second-grader at Salem's Liberty Elementary School, and the rest of the Liberty unicycle club, Liberty Hot Wheelz, rolled out on to the court and displayed their senses of balance.

Thirteen students from second through eighth grades, with one wheel under each of them, with basketballs and plastic hoops on the side to fiddle with, cycled back and forth across the court, up and over ramps, with small unicycles and five-foot "giraffes," miraculous not just that they got up on the unicycles and stayed up, but that nobody ran into anybody else, coming and going as they did.

One fellow, seemingly stopped by traffic, jumped his unicycle up and down like a pogo stick while others circled around with tricks of their own.

This brainchild of Liberty Physical Education teacher Kevin Derowitsch has set Liberty aside from the rest of

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