

Resurrected Marriage Ordinance sparks discussion

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

A routine first reading of the revised Tribal Marriage Ordinance sparked discussion about same-sex unions and an unsuccessful attempt to table the ordinance at the Wednesday, Aug. 12, Tribal Council meeting.

The Marriage Ordinance, which was repealed more than a decade ago, has been updated and would allow couples to marry in Tribal Court. It appeared before Tribal Council for a first reading, a process that then solicits input from the membership before coming back to council for consideration.

However, a non-discrimination clause in the revised ordinance, which states that a Tribal marriage license cannot be denied on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, color, gender, gender expression, national origin, disability and military status, would allow same-sex couples to marry in Tribal Court and turned a usually routine matter into a lengthy discussion.

Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr. moved to table the first reading, saying he favored an advisory vote from the membership before Tribal Council decides on such an important social issue.

“This impacts many generations,” Giffen said. “We all were raised differently and I think an advisory vote by the membership would be, in my eyes, the best way to go with this because each generation has their own opinion of this law. For nine people to make a decision, which encompasses so many different generations with so many different philosophies, isn’t the correct way to proceed with this.”

Tribal Council member Chris Mercier said that Tribal Council rarely, if ever, votes to table a first reading of an ordinance and that Tribal members concerned about the ramifications of the ordinance’s non-discrimination clause will have 30 days to voice their concerns.

Mercier also pointed to the recent Supreme Court decision that ruled the ability to marry is a constitutional right.

“What this is doing is this is providing a service to our members,” Mercier said. “You can get married in our Tribal Court and we’re not going to discriminate against anyone who wants to get married in our Tribal Court.”

Mercier also said that Tribal Council can proceed with the first reading of the ordinance and pursue an advisory vote if a majority so desires.

The non-discrimination clause also received comments from audience members who said they favor not allowing any marriages in Tribal Court if the updated ordinance means allowing possible same-sex marriages.

Others said they are concerned that the membership at-large will not realize the ramifications of the non-discrimination clause in the updated ordinance.

Giffen’s motion to table the first reading failed in a 5-3 vote and the updated Marriage Ordinance will be advertised in two *Smoke Signals* seeking membership comments before returning to Tribal Council for a vote.

Tribal Council Secretary Toby McClary encouraged Tribal members to comment because comments are seriously considered and do al-

ter proposed changes to ordinances.

Currently, Tribal members cannot get married in Tribal Court, but they can divorce if it is uncontested.

In late 2004, proposed amendments to the Marriage Ordinance revised it to clearly define marriage as a “consensual union between one man and one woman.” During the Feb. 16, 2005, Tribal Council meeting, the ordinance was repealed in a 5-2 vote, removing Tribal Court’s ability to perform all marriages.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved resolutions that add General Manager Dawn Doar as an authorized signer on Tribal bank accounts and a line of credit and removed former interim General Manager Rick George as a signer for those accounts;
- Declared Sept. 11 as the next per capita payment date;
- Appointed Molly Leno to the Powwow Special Event Board with a term ending in March 2017;
- Approved paying \$2,662 in membership fees to the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments and its Economic Development District;
- Approved a capital contribution to Ilihi LLC not to exceed \$430,000 that will be used to fund costs and expenses related to the foreclosure and sale of MicroGREEN Polymers’ assets. The auction of MicroGREEN’s assets is set for Wednesday, Sept. 30, in Arlington, Wash.
- Held a first reading on amendments to the Personnel Management Ordinance that would modify the Tribe’s random drug testing process to only require random drug testing of employees in safety-sensitive positions;
- Adopted amendments to the En-

rollment Ordinance that, among other changes, provides procedures for removing names of living individuals from the Restoration Roll who did not meet the Grand Ronde Restoration Act requirements and provides procedures and standards for finding reasonable doubt of a member’s required lineage, including a definition of “reasonable doubt” and a process for requiring DNA evidence;

- And approved enrollment of one infant into the Tribe.

Also included in the Aug. 12 Tribal Council packet were authorizations to proceed to submit a comment letter on the Astoria Marine Cleanup Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, to purchase 405 additional school supply gift cards and to move forward amendments to the Elders’ Retirement and Supplemental Income Program Ordinance for a first reading.

Tribal Council member Jon A. George joined Land and Culture employees Jordan Mercier, Bobby Mercier, Kathy Cole and members of the Canoe Family in the cultural singing and drumming to open the meeting.

In addition, seven Māori youth from New Zealand and Holland who are visiting the Tribe performed a traditional dance and then introduced themselves to Tribal Council. George, accompanied by Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Martin and Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi, gifted the Māori visitors with necklaces and a gift bag.

The meeting, in its entirety, can be viewed on the Tribal website, www.grandronde.org, under the News tab and then click on the Video link. ■

Wedding first ever held in casino courtyard

WEDDING continued from front page

ered himself.

Tribal Elder Lew Younger officiated the wedding in front of about 35 family members as Clint and Olyvia exchanged their vows to the song “Unchained Melody” played on a cell phone.

Younger had the couple hold their right hands throughout the ceremony. When he pronounced them husband and wife, they shared a kiss to the applause of those assembled.

According to Younger, Clint and Olyvia’s wedding was the first ever held in the casino’s courtyard.

“I’m over the top,” said Clint. “I’m shocked. I’m absolutely shocked. It didn’t register until I saw everybody.”

The bride wore a floor-length white dress with platform red shoes and she carried a red bouquet. She wore a white lace veil.

Olyvia’s sister, Monica, and her daughter Bailey were maids of honor and each wore a mid-length red dress with brown cowboy boots and white bouquets.

Bailey’s daughter Samora was the flower girl and wore a full-length white dress with brown

cowboy boots and a red sash. Samora dropped red rose petals from a basket she carried.

Brandy, the best Labrador retriever in the wedding party, wore a pearl necklace and a white ribbon over a black coat.

Clint’s best man, Pedro Gonzalez, wore a gray shirt with a black tie and a red rose corsage.

Clint wore his khaki work shirt and black Spirit Mountain baseball cap before changing into a black dress shirt and red tie for family photos.

The wedding party included Clint’s mother, Tribal Elder Violet Folden, and Olyvia’s parents, Maria and Antonio Perez, who made the trip from California.

“I knew he would take it in stride,” Violet said. “She is very good to him.”

“They were planning to do this



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Clint Folden reacts to seeing his family and realizing his fiancée Olyvia Perez planned a surprise wedding ceremony at Spirit Mountain Casino on Wednesday, Aug. 19.

for a long time so my daughter just decided to surprise him,” said Maria. “I was very happy for her and for both of them because I know they have a lot in common and they are going to make a good life. She (Olyvia) is a very good person. She has been preparing things for

a long time.”

The wedding was originally scheduled for three days later on Saturday, Aug. 22, but Olyvia had other thoughts.

“I’ve been planning this for about two months now and he had no clue,” said Olyvia.

“I had no clue,” echoed Clint. “She was giving me all this stuff to do. I told Gladly (Tribal Elder and Clint’s aunt Gladys Hobbs) ‘That’s why she was giving me all this weird stuff to do. She was keeping me busy.’”

“It was hard to keep it a secret,” said Gonzalez. “He thoroughly enjoyed it and he is happy. Everybody that knows Tony knows he is pretty down to Earth.”

Asked if she had confidence in him to pull off this type of wedding, Olyvia said she did.

“As far as he was concerned we were going to get married on Saturday,” said Olyvia. “I would not have married him if I wasn’t. I love him. He’s a keeper forever.”

Clint’s new wife then took the reins quickly.

“He’s going to go back to work now,” said Olyvia.

Albeit just a little late from his normal 30-minute lunch break. ■