

# Meteorite has been at museum since 1906

**TOMANOWOS continued from front page**

Ham, Louise Coulson and Jennie VanAtta; Little Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi and her mother, Shannon Simi, and Kaleigha's brother, Dominik Briant; Junior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout and her mother, Genifer Grout; Veterans Special Event Board Junior Queen Amaryssa Mooney and her grandmother, Tribal Elder Susie Lash; Angela Fasana, her husband, Aariah, and daughter, Cheyanne; Tribal Elder Barbara Steere and her son, Doug Steere; Jordan Reyes; and this year's museum interns, Justin Fasana, Michael Reyes and Jonathan Tasa.

The ceremony was led by Stewart and opened with drumming and singing by him, George and Justin Fasana.

George gave an invocation in which he thanked employees at the museum for taking care of Tomanowos. Stewart introduced the Tribal youth who are interns at the museum and they each recited part of Tomanowos' history.

Justin Fasana told facts about Tomanowos, such as it weighing 15.5 tons and that it originally was about 21 tons, but lost about six tons from rust and erosion that caused the craters in its surface.

Michael Reyes explained how the meteorite became part of Grand Ronde's history, landing in what



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Elisabeth Werby, left, Strategic Advisor and Senior Director, Foundation Support for the American Museum of Natural History, talks with Tribal Elders Louise Coulson, second from left, Jennie VanAtta, second from right, and Dan Ham before the private ceremony with Tomanowos held at the museum on Wednesday, June 22.**

is now Canada 13,000 years ago, and then being transported by the Missoula Floods to the Willamette Valley, where Tribal ancestors venerated it. The Clackamas Chinooks dipped spearheads in the water that pooled in the meteorite's craters, investing it with divine qualities.

Tasa told the history of how it ended up in New York City. It was "discovered" in 1902 on land owned by Oregon Iron and Steel Co. and was eventually sold to New York philanthropist Mrs. William Dodge, who donated it to museum.

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The museum has been the meteorite's home since 1906. In 2000, the museum and Tribe entered into an agreement that allows the Tribe to conduct an annual private ceremony with Tomanowos in exchange for letting Tomanowos remain in New York City.

Justin Fasana added that on be-

half of all of the interns that they are happy to participate in the ceremony and be in the presence of the meteorite.

Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno said it was great to see everybody and to see the meteorite. He talked about how he was part of Tribal Council when the Tribe made its original Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act claim, and negotiations and an agreement were worked out. He added that it was his first trip to New York City and to the ceremony.

Leno said it is great to be part of a Tribe that gets to recover its heritage and that the membership needs to know what that means to recover culture as opposed to the many that lose it.

"It's part of our culture regardless if we're in Grand Ronde or if we're here in New York City," he said referring to Tomanowos.

The ceremony followed. Tribal members cleaned the dust and dirt from Tomanowos with rose hip water and wiped it down with cedar boughs, both of which were brought from Grand Ronde.

Stewart said that it was time for Tribal members to say whatever prayers they have, to spend their own personal time with Tomanowos and to leave gifts, including

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**This year's delegation from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was one of the largest ever for the private ceremony with Tomanowos. Those who attended are, front row from left, Jordan Reyes, Tribal Elder Barbara Steere, Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, Veterans Special Event Board Junior Queen Amaryssa Mooney, Junior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout, Little Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi, Dominik Briant, Genifer Grout and Tribal Elder Alan Ham; second row from left, Tribal Elder Dan Ham, Michael Reyes, Angela Fasana, Justin Fasana, Cheyanne Fasana, Doug Steere, Tribal Elder Susie Lash, Tribal Elder Jennie VanAtta, Tribal Elder Louise Coulson and Tribal Council member Chris Mercier; third row from left, Aariah Fasana, Liz Leno, Shannon Simi and Tribal Chief of Staff Stacia Martin; and back row from left, Tribal Cultural Youth Activity Specialist/Tribal Artisan Travis Stewart, Tribal Council member Jon A. George, Jonathan Tasa and Public Affairs/Publications Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark.**