

# 'Some people turned

RESTORATION continued  
from front page

Probst said with a smile.

Although Probst had no experience with Restoration, government or politics, she acted on faith and hard work to bring people, some with very different ideas, together. Thankfully, with the help of other Tribal members, including former Tribal Council Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison, who had previously assisted the Siletz Tribe in regaining federal recognition, they began to navigate through the numerous federal requirements to once again become a federally recognized Tribe.

"There were a lot of meetings," Probst said. "Some people turned their backs on us."

After a meeting held at the Grand Ronde Library that was standing room only, Probst said she realized the tide was starting to turn.

"They wanted to be recognized as a Tribe again ... It was a good thing," she said.

After countless hours and years of work, the group garnered the support of local, state and federal officials, as well as various organizations.

"When our bill was passed (by Congress), 400 went in and 12 passed," Probst said. "Ours was one of them."

## Restoration celebration

The Restoration Celebration began at 8 a.m. with a sacred ceremony at the atudship rock mound adjacent to the Tribal Cemetery and included prayers and singing.

Afterward, a Canoe Family procession kicked off festivities at the Tribal gym with cultural drumming and singing by Cultural Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier, Tribal Cultural Adviser Bobby Mercier, Tribal Artisan Brian Krehbiel, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris



The Grand Ronde Canoe Family sings during the 34th Restoration Celebration held in the Tribal gym on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

Mercier and Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George among many others. Tribal Youth Prevention Coordinator Cristina Lara and Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark also participated.

Canoe Family songs included "Traveling With Our Ancestors," "Salmon Song and Dance" and "New Beginnings."

"It doesn't matter what happened before," Bobby Mercier said. "When we wake up, it's an opportunity to start things the right way. It doesn't matter what happened yesterday."

Morning festivities focused on Restoration-era Elders, the pre-Restoration Tribal Council, past Tribal Council members and recognition of oldest Elders.

All current Tribal Council members attended the event.

Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr. and Jon A. George served as program emcees.

"We have come a long way and need to be very thankful for those who helped us get to where we are today," Bobb said. "What an appropriate day this is to have Restoration, on the day before Thanksgiving."

Chris Mercier recalled growing up in Grand Ronde and told those in attendance that when he was 15 he used to buck hay in a field that is now the Tribal gym.

"We are so lucky to be Tribal members and have what we do today," he said. "It is hard to believe it has been 34 years."

When Mercier thanked key Restoration figure, Tribal Elder and long-time Tribal Council Chair Kathryn Harrison for her efforts, loud applause erupted across the gym.

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"Her name is well known in Indian Country," he said.

Harrison also was honored later for being the eldest female Elder in attendance at 93 years of age. William "Wink" Soderberg was the eldest male Elder at 83.

Chris Mercier recognized former Tribal Council members in attendance, which included Bobb, Tonya Gleason-Shepek, Harrison, Probst, Reyn Leno, June Sherer and Ed Larsen.

"It's a fun job (being on Tribal Council), but not always an easy job," he said.

Bobb gave the lunch invocation and thanked the many blessings given to the Grand Ronde Tribe. Then, Restoration Committee and



Grand Ronde Canoe Family member Kailiyah Krehbiel dances as the Canoe Family performs during the 34th Restoration Celebration held in the Tribal gym on Wednesday, Nov. 22.



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