

Contest Powwow eclips

More than 330 dancers register for numerous dance categories

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Building on the popularity of last year, the 2018 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow attracted 337 registered dancers during the weekend of Friday through Sunday, Aug. 17-19.

Attendance marked an increase of 62 dancers over last year's 275, even without the added bonus of a total solar eclipse that occurred in 2017.

Powwow Special Event Board Chair Dana Ainam said that several new dancers had registered to compete in the 28 categories ranging in age from 6 to more than 65.

"The weather for this weekend is absolutely perfect," Ainam said. "We have had a lot of new people register and also have lots of returning dancers. Generally, people love this and want to come back."

Key to having people return year after year is making them feel welcome, Ainam added.

"The most important thing we can do is take care of people when they are here," she said. "No matter what happens, we need to be good hosts so our guests can remember this community positively."

It seemed as if Ainam's mantra had the intended effect, with Friday evening's 7 p.m. grand entry taking 17 minutes to complete as dancers filled the úyxat Powwow Grounds Arbor.

Grand Ronde dancers won four prizes, led by Leah Villa who took second place in the Junior Adult Women's Traditional and Nacoma Liebelt who took second place in the Junior Boys Traditional. Kaleigha Simi captured fifth place in the Junior Girls Jingle and Leevi Johnson



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Nacoma Liebelt competes in the Boys Traditional dance category during the 2018 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at úyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 18. Liebelt placed second in the category.

took fifth in the Junior Teen Boys Traditional.

A total of \$55,800 was awarded for the dance categories.

Royalty Pageant

Contest Powwow activities began at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 17, with the Royalty Pageant and Queen's Brunch Raffle held in the Atrium at the Governance Center.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George was the master of ceremonies and Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy gave the invocation.

This year's Royalty Pageant judges were Tribal Elder Leonette Galligher, Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Director Shawna Ridgebear and Youth Prevention Coordinator Cristina Lara.

The only contested position on Royalty was for Little Miss Grand Ronde with Grace Allen and Sophia Grout vying for the title.

Senior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout and Junior Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi were unopposed. Tiny Tot, an honorary position, had four participants: Jameson Turner, Aubrey Campbell, Gracie Macon and Kalea Liebelt.

That evening, Sophia Grout was crowned Little Miss Grand Ronde at úyxat Powwow Grounds after outgoing Royalty for 2017-18 gave speeches and held giveaways in appreciation for those who had helped them during the past year. Outgoing Royalty were Senior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout, Junior Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi, Little Miss Grand Ronde Sophia Grout, Junior Warrior Nacoma Liebelt and Tiny Tot Jameson Turner. Grace Allen also was crowned Little Miss Princess.

It was the right night to have the last name Grout, as past Tribal Council member and grandmother Val Grout won several of the raffle prizes.

Outgoing Royalty members, led by Cultural Resources Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier, did one last dance around the arbor. Incoming Royalty did the same following the coronation.

Friday Grand Entry

Powwow began with the various contest drum groups – Southern Express, 4 Bands, Buffalo Hill, Bad Soul and 4 Horses – each taking a

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turn before grand entry. Drummers were competing for a combined \$19,000 in prize money.

Friday's grand entry was led by Tribal Elder Alton Butler and Wayne Chulik (Tlingit) carrying in eagle staffs.

As host drum Cree Confederation pounded out an honor song, Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr. carried in the U.S. flag, Tribal Elder Raymond Petite carried in the Grand Ronde flag, Tribal spouse Richard VanAtta carried in the MIA/POW flag and Al Miller carried in the Oregon flag. They were followed by other veterans, including past Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno. Next came Tribal Council members, Tribal Royalty from various Tribes and Contest Powwow contestants.

All nine Tribal Council members marched in Friday night: Kennedy, Vice Chair Chris Mercier, George, Denise Harvey, Jack Giffen Jr., Brenda Tuomi, Kathleen George, Michael Langley and Lisa Leno.

Kennedy offered the invocation and welcomed attendees who packed the bleachers and filled many of the chairs set up around the arbor, while the smell of sage wafted through the air.

"This is a powwow that has been going on before Restoration," she said. "Our maintenance people did a good job locating the bees' nests, but please be careful because we want you to enjoy this weekend."

Grand entry closed with Royalty members of various Tribes introducing themselves to the crowd and



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Matisse Sohapp, left, competes in the Girls Jingle dance category during the 2018 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at úyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 18.