

# 'It was written over a period of about a month'

TABLE ROCKS continued  
from front page

was especially poignant to Ham given that his great-great uncle was murdered in a Takelma village nearby after the Natives fled Table Rocks for their former home due to hunger, cold and disease.

Given time constraints for the entry, Ham chose to rework the song he had written to honor his uncle and other Takelma people who were killed.

When Ham composed the piece last year, he lived in Medford and was able to visit Table Rocks frequently during the writing process.

"It was written over a period of about a month," he says. "I would go up to Table Rocks and ask if I was doing this OK. I think a big part of my thought process during it was oral history. (Rewriting) it brought me back to how it felt seeing Table Rocks every day. Down there I learned that the red-tailed hawk mascot of Southern Oregon University was inspired by a Takelma story of how Table Rocks was formed."

When Ham found out his poem had been selected, he recalls it felt good looking at his finished work and remembering the original song.

"I remember, like everyone, my life was making a lot of really good strides pre-pandemic. I remember thinking, 'Everything's coming up Joseph!' Then the world ended. I felt like I lost my own private battle having to come home from the Rogue Valley, just like my ancestors did. But my life has so much depth and love right now, that it reminded me that they were the ones that made Grand Ronde a home for me in the first place when they had to say goodbye to theirs. I

Red Name – Lupton Massacre circa 1855 by descendant

*Tukwila chutes  
Camas roots  
Lamprey on the bank  
It's a good day  
They'll come into camp drunk tonight  
Try to scatter us in a hurried flight*

*Old women spit venom  
From their throat  
They hang my uncle's  
Up from an oak*

*Nobody remembers you but that's OK  
Because I get to talk to you everyday*

*Table Rocks in the morning  
It's time, grandma, say goodbye*

*They can hear our red name  
All up and down I-5.*

could come home to Table Rocks for them, but our ancestors sacrificed to make Grand Ronde our home."

Ham currently works as a temporary accounting clerk for the Tribe and hopes to join the Cultural Resources Department in the future. He says he felt it was important to share his reflections on Table Rocks with others so that its original inhabitants would be remembered.

"I find it really important because growing up in and around the Grand Ronde community, it made me realize that so much of western Oregon Indigenous culture had been compressed into this little community," he says. "For tiny communities like Siletz and Grand Ronde and others, it is crazy to think we hold and represent all this tradition of half the state."

Molly Morison, The Nature Conservancy's Oregon Preserves manager, said that poetry is another form of storytelling that offers deep connections to people's hearts and minds.

"Maybe it is the rhythm, imagery, the succinct thoughts – I'm not sure," she says. "But Joseph's poem encapsulating the Takelma people and descendants' past and present relationship with the Table Rocks, and all the emotion within it, has stayed with me since I first read it."

The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management have organized public spring hikes at Table Rocks for 35 years. The number of hikes and diversity of topics have increased over time to include many aspects of nature and culture including the arts. Hikes are led by volunteers and have included representatives from the Grand Ronde, Siletz and Cow Creek Tribes, as well as BLM and Nature Conservancy staff members who are knowledgeable about the topics.

"And we have a great team of

creative volunteers who help organize and run the series," she says. "One of my star volunteers, Kathy Kudo, came up with the idea for poetry-themed hikes a few years ago. We reached out to the Oregon Poetry Association for poets to lead hikes where people could read poems and write some too along the way."

Although the in-person guided hikes were canceled again this year due to the pandemic, Morison and others didn't want people to miss the opportunity to learn something about the Table Rocks while they walked. The "Signs of Spring" project emerged as a new self-guided experience for the trails.

"This year, in honor of National Poetry Month in April, we put out a call to local poets for submissions related to the Table Rocks and nature with the idea that we could place the poems along the trails to inspire reflection and learning," Morison says. "We wanted to make sure Indigenous voices were included."

She sent an announcement to Dr. Brook Colley, chair of the Native American Studies Program at Southern Oregon University, in the hopes that some of her students might participate. In turn, the announcement was forwarded to both the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes.

"And then Joseph e-mailed his wonderful poem to me," Morison says.

Ham's poem was displayed throughout April. He says considering some of the derogatory names that still exist for southern Oregon Indigenous landmarks, this one is a win as far as representation goes.

"The eradication of us as a people is still imprinted into the consciousness down there," he says. "But that's changing, people are looking for a way home through us and that is a good thing. ... I also have a lot of gratitude to The Nature Conservancy for purchasing so much of the area in the 1970s to save Table Rocks from overdevelopment." ■


## Health & Wellness Center hours

The Health & Wellness Center is pleased to add additional access for patients during holiday weeks on Thursday mornings. The clinic will be scheduling patients at 8 a.m. every Thursday preceding or following a holiday closure. Urgent care also will be available during this time. ■

## GRAND RONDE GAMING COMMISSION POSITION

The Grand Ronde Gaming Commission is seeking applications to fill one commission position starting June 2021 and expiring June of 2024. The Tribal Gaming Ordinance requires this position to be filled by a Tribal member. The Grand Ronde Gaming Commission regulates all gaming-related activities associated with Spirit Mountain Casino. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. Commissioners may not hold elective or managerial Tribal positions, and may not be employed in or own any interest in or gamble in a gaming operation authorized by the Tribal Gaming Ordinance. Commissioners are independent contractors and expend approximately 30-40 hours per month to fulfill their responsibilities. The commission generally meets on the second and third Fridays of each month. Appointment is contingent upon successful completion of a background investigation. Applications may be obtained by calling Kathy Doane at 503-879-2393 or by e-mail at [kathy.doane@grandronde.org](mailto:kathy.doane@grandronde.org). Closing date is 5 p.m. May 7, 2021.

For more information about the Gaming Commission, please visit our webpage at [www.grandrondegaming.org](http://www.grandrondegaming.org). ■



**Tribal Veterans Service Office Veteran Outreach Event**  
**\*Memorial Day\***

*Honoring families of Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Veterans who have walked on...*

*Let us express our gratitude and pride for those who served; those who put their lives on the line; and the families who supported them. We raise our hands to acknowledge and honor the service of the Veteran in your family and their memory. hayu masi.*

To Receive a Memorial Day gift:

1. Be a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) Tribal Member **or** a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde family member **with**
2. A CTGR Veteran in your family who has made their journey (from any service era) **and**,
3. Submit a photo, biography, story, or information about your tribal veteran **and/or** their military service **by May 21, 2021** (to TVSO office by mail/email).  
(All information submitted is kept confidential and will not be shared).






In return:


The first 100 submissions get to choose one of the following gifts:

- ♥ A gardening tool kit for the veterans gravesite (15 available) **or**,
- ♥ A picture frame for the veterans photo (15 available) **or**,
- ♥ A 4x6" American flag with a silk flower (40 available)
- ♥ 5.5x8" Military Branch flags (a few of each branch, 30 available)

Gift pick up will be during Memorial Day Week. Individuals who sign up will be contacted to set up a date/time for drive-through pick-up.

Arrangements can be made if you would like your gift mailed.



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