

‘This is a wonderful day, a great day’

**RESTORATION continued
from front page**

ticipate in the celebration, albeit remotely.

“It’s unfortunate that because of an invisible enemy we don’t get to gather together, join together and celebrate Restoration,” George said. “Our Restoration was a long, hard-fought battle and we prevailed. Today, we are coming to you virtually and it is wonderful to be able to sit next to our Tribal Council chairwoman and to be able to introduce her.”

“This is a wonderful day, a great day,” Kennedy said. “I’m thrilled to be here and celebrate this 38th Restoration.”

Kennedy also introduced the other seven members of Tribal Council: Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Secretary Michael Langley, Kathleen George, Jack Giffen Jr., Michael Cherry, Denise Harvey and Lisa Leno. Additionally, she welcomed past Tribal Council members in attendance.

“Thank you for all of the work you have done and for not giving up,” she said.

Kennedy also reflected on Nov. 22, 1983, when the Tribe was restored by the federal government, and all of the work that had gone into the battle to achieve it.

“It is a joy to commemorate this time,” she said. “It’s such an important time for our Tribe and there was so much effort, hard work and coming together to bring us to this day.”

She noted that in front of the Governance Center there is a bronze statue of key Restoration figures Marvin Kimsey, Margaret Provost and Merle Holmes, and referred to them as the “backbone of Restoration.” Kennedy also recalled how Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison testified in front of Congress.

“They said, ‘We’re not going to take this anymore. We are Grand Ronde Indians so let’s go ahead and renew our Tribe,’ ” Kennedy said. “Grand Ronde Indians, I was one of them, said, ‘Yes, let’s do this.’ I am so happy about this and so pleased. We are restored and we are blessed. Today, we are here through the hard work of our visionaries and all of our Tribal members who came together. I want you to think of that. Tell the story to your young people so they know it didn’t just happen. With the help of our Creator, we stand here today.”

Kennedy also mentioned Oregon legislators who aided in the Restoration effort: Rep. Elizabeth Furse, Sen. Mark O. Hatfield and Rep. Les AuCoin.

“We are so thankful and I wanted to mention them,” she said.

Tribal Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrel-



Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy speaks during the virtual 38th Restoration Celebration.

son gave a brief historical overview of the Tribe, which included information on treaty areas, a segment of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund educational video and historic photos.

After some technical difficulties, Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer spoke briefly, saying it was a “profound honor” to be included.

“What you have accomplished with all of your projects and bringing people together, it is important to acknowledge the immense power and persistence of Native people.”

Kathleen George talked about where the Grand Ronde Tribe is today.

“We are stewards of our own lands, and on our lands our people hunt and fish, and they are filled with pride. ... There are so many forces that have tried to pull our people apart. I am humbled and honored to see our Tribal members support each other in a world that seems focused on division.”

Restoration was held online again due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Tribal restrictions on large gatherings.

“On Nov. 22, 1983, Grand Ronde’s federal recognition as a Tribal Nation was restored when the Grand Ronde Restoration Act was signed

into law,” a message on the Tribe’s website said. “Every year since then, we have gathered as a Tribe, a community and a family to celebrate this historic day. It is with great sadness, that we announce that for the second straight year, the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing us to hold our annual Restoration Day celebration virtually.”

After speeches and reflections were concluded, attendees had the opportunity to participate in several short, breakout sessions with Tribal members Travis Stewart, Greg Archuleta, Jordan Mercier, Francene Ambrose, Bobby Mercier and Stephanie Craig, who discussed topics such as food sovereignty, storytelling and art.

Before the Restoration event began, Mercier, Leno, Cherry, Jon George and Kathleen George conducted a raffle via Facebook Live at 10 a.m. Prizes included Visa, Amazon, Shell, Best Buy, Shipwreck Beads and Target gift cards, along with game tables, saddle blankets and security cameras. Winners will have their prizes mailed out. Additionally, small gifts are being sent out to Tribal members, but due to supply chain distribution issues, there was no timeline for when the items would be mailed out to the

membership.

Those who have not yet registered for a gift can do so by visiting www.grandronde.org, click on the “Restoration Celebration Virtual” link and below there is an online form to fill out. Additionally, the video presentation and the raffle event can be viewed on the site.

On Nov. 22, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed House Resolution 3885 restoring the Grand Ronde Tribe, which had been terminated 29 years earlier, to federal recognition. His signature on the bill officially ended the dark time of Termination.

Every year since, the Tribe has held a celebration. It includes a meal, giveaways, speeches, dancing, drumming, singing and a Restoration Powwow. Approximately 200 Tribal members, family, friends and elected officials traveled to Grand Ronde in 2019 for the event held in the Tribal gym. Approximately 70 people logged in for this year’s virtual event.

“Thank you to the members for attending and being involved in your Tribe,” Kennedy said. “I offer my thanks to our Creator for keeping us well. Enjoy the day and appreciate each other. We are stronger when we stand in unity.” ■



Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer speaks during the virtual 38th Restoration Celebration held on Monday, Nov. 22.



Screenshots by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Canoe Family drummers perform in achaf-hammi at the start of the virtual 38th Restoration Celebration held on Monday, Nov. 22.