

Umatilla prison's first powwow digs into the roots

By PHIL WRIGHT
Staff Writer

People sang, danced and drummed Saturday in Umatilla, on the inside of the high prison fence.

Two Rivers Correctional Institution held its first powwow, attended by 63 inmates, more than 50 guests and 27 representatives from American Indian tribes and organizations. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and others provided salmon, huckleberries and traditional foods for the event. Prison administrators even directed staff overseeing the powwow to forgo uniforms for a more casual approach, including khakis, polos and shorts.

Naomi Strawser arrived in tribal regalia representing Lakota Oyate Ki, an American Indian culture club that originated with inmates at Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. She said she advocates for alternative forms of justice and the need for Indian inmates to have a relationship with their culture. Without that, she said, they don't know who they are. Building those bonds, though, connects them to a greater community.

"I think it helps give heart and hope," she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY PHIL WRIGHT

Inmate Paul Stover waves sage smoke over fellow inmates during a smudging ceremony Saturday in preparation of the first powwow at Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla. Stover said engaging in such cultural practices reduces criminal thinking and behaviors.

"This gives people a road back home."

Inmate Paul Stover echoed that notion. He is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and handled most of the smudging, or cleansing ceremony, for participants and guests.

"I know for me, it's one of my Zens," he said, "it takes me away from inside these walls."

TRCI already has a sweat lodge and a beadworking program, he said.

Two Rivers chaplain Jaime Cardona said planning the powwow took almost a year and served as

an incentive for inmates to behave and work toward a goal. Many of the men taking part in the ceremony invited family, Cardona said, and they did not want to get in trouble and then miss out on their culture and their loved ones.

Patricia Jordan is executive director of Red



STAFF PHOTO BY PHIL WRIGHT

Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla, held its first powwow Saturday, complete with donated traditional American Indian foods, drumming and a few ceremonial dancers. TRCI had 41 American Indian inmates in July, according to state prison demographics, but other inmates also participate in Indian traditions and ceremonies.

Lodge Transitional Services, a nonprofit that helps American Indians leaving prisons make better lives for themselves. Two Rivers officials and inmates said Jordan was instrumental in making the powwow a reality. She has been a religious services volunteer with the Oregon Department of Corrections for 16 years and helps prisons start American Indian programs.

"We believe that culture is best practiced," she said. Jordan said that helps Indian inmates find

an identity and a path out of crime and addiction.

She and fellow Red Lodge volunteers Mable Jackson and Sarah Franks also made fry bread Saturday for the festivities. And Sunday they headed to Ontario for a powwow at Snake River Correctional Institution.

Franks recalled a speaker at another prison powwow who encouraged inmates to join the dance circle. He told the crowd that not joining the circle is what landed them in prison in the first place.

IN BRIEF

Pomona Grange hosts annual picnic

The annual picnic of the Umatilla-Morrow Pomona Grange is this weekend.

All members and friends are invited to attend the fun-filled gathering. The event begins Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at Boardman City Park, located west of the Greenfield Grange Hall, 209 N.W. First St., Boardman. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to share.

The event will feature a relaxed time for visiting, information about the grange and a short meeting. Although there are some benches and tables at the park, people may bring their own chair or blanket.

For more information, call Doris Reid at 541-567-8663 or Scot Jacobson at 541-278-0615.

Homemade breakfast benefits IMAC project

The public is invited to bring a hearty appetite and enjoy a breakfast fundraiser to benefit the Irrigon Multi-cultural Arts Center.

The meal is Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 195 N.W. Opal Place, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

Money raised will assist the nonprofit group in developing a regional arts center and preserving Irrigon's 1921 school building. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

Nazarene church books teen activity

As students are preparing to return to school, Hermiston Church of the Nazarene is planning a teen event.

The Teen Back to the Books Video Scavenger Hunt is Sunday from 5-8 p.m. at 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. All area teens are welcome to attend.

For more information, contact 541-567-3677, hermistonnaz@gmail.com or visit www.hermistonnaz-arene.org.

Discussion focuses on climate change

A discussion about climate change and what individuals can do to reverse its global ramifications is planned in Echo.

After sitting on the fence about global warming, Pe-

ter Haug began researching the topic and taking online courses. A retired journalist, systems ecologist and ESL teacher in China, Haug has become a climate change educator. He will speak Thursday, Sept. 1, from 6-7:30 p.m. at Echo City Hall, 20 Bonanza St. The presentation is free.

For more information, call Joe Ramos at 509-366-3980.

Nazarene church collects school supplies

People can help students in need in the community by donating school supplies to Connections Overflow.

Hermiston Church of the Nazarene will accept donations through Sunday Sept. 4, which will be distributed to local families. The church is located at 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston.

Basic items needed include No. 2 pencils, eras-

ers, loose-leaf notebook paper, crayons, glue sticks, spiral notebooks, child-size scissors, pocket folders, colored pencils and markers, pink pearl eraser, boxes of tissues and antibacterial wipes.

For more information, contact 541-567-3677, hermistonnaz@gmail.com or visit www.hermistonnaz-arene.org.

Counseling group set for stepmothers

A counseling group designed to provide support and information for stepmothers is being offered in Pendleton.

Presented by Psychological Services of Pendleton, the sessions begin Tuesday, Sept. 20 from 6:30-8 p.m. and run weekly through Oct. 25. Coffee and snacks will be provided. However, child care is not available.

The fee is \$10 per session and those planning to attend need to pre-register.

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Victoria from Australia, 17 yrs. Enjoys spending time with her family and younger siblings. Victoria plays volleyball and is excited to learn new sports while in America.



Giorgio from Italy, 16 yrs. Loves to play baseball and spend time with his dogs. Giorgio also plays the guitar, and his dream is to join a drama club at his American high school.

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Founded in 1976
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For privacy reasons, photos above are not photos of actual students.

For more information, including where the sessions will be held, call 541-278-2222.

Veteran's event seeks community partners

An upcoming networking event for veterans is seeking participation by others in the community.

Community leaders and representatives of area organizations that provide health care, educational and voca-

tional support, home loans, burial and memorial benefit, are invited to attend.

The Rural Veterans Resource Fair & Vietnam Veterans 50th Anniversary Commemoration will provide an overview of resources for local veterans. It is hoped the event will be a catalyst in joining efforts from the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs with local agencies to reach out and advocate for veterans in the community.

The event is Thursday, Sept. 29, from 2-8 p.m. (with a veterans town hall at 6:30 p.m.) at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. The program will include presentations by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Health Care.

For more information on how to get involved with the event, contact Linda Skendzel, Morrow County Veterans Services, at mcvets@co.morrow.or.us or 541-922-6420.



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