Program News

Protect Yourself and Loved Ones: Get a Flu Shot

Curt Fluestch, RN, Clinical Nurse Manager

The flu season is here. Don’t forget to get your flu shot! Getting the vaccine not only protects you, it protects those you love. The Chehalis Tribal Wellness Center has the vaccine for those ages six months and older. It is especially important to be vaccinated if you are pregnant, or are planning to become pregnant during the flu season, if you are 50 years or over, if you have a chronic condition such as diabetes, asthma, COPD, chronic bronchitis, rheumatoid arthritis, or HIV; are a transplant patient, or have coronary artery disease; or if you are a resident in a nursing home.

For those of you who have been lucky enough to get the flu this year, here is what it is like: High fever (101-102 degrees) lasting 3-4 days, headache, severe aches and pains, fatigue and weakness, often lasting 2-3 weeks, extreme exhaustion, stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough and chest discomfort, often severe. If that doesn’t sound bad enough, listen to these complications: bronchitis and pneumonia, both of which can be life threatening.

All of us at the Tribal Wellness Center deeply care about your health and strongly encourage you to come in to get your flu shot. We wish you a very happy, flu-free New Year!

Tribes’ Drive Helps Local Food Banks

During the Christmas season the Chehalis Tribe held the third annual food drive. This drive was spearheaded by Joyce Thomas. There were about 10 boxes filled with non-perishable donated items. The food and cash donations were divided between the Rochester and Oakville food banks. Each person who donated was entered into a raffle and won prizes.

“The food was delivered to the Rochester and Oakville food banks. Jerry Pinn said, “This is a good feeling, being able to help out. They helped my family when we were in a time of need.” 1 donator of food that I enjoy eating, not just canned vegetables.”

“Thank you everyone. This food drive will happen the same time next year. Check for flyers and the November tribal newsletter.

Tribe’s Looking for Volunteers to Help with Hatching

The construction phase starts soon on our tribal hatchery. Some of the things we need volunteers to help with are cleanup and pressure washing prior to painting the exterior of the building. We will have an informational and volunteer gathering meeting on February 10 at 5:00 PM at the fish hatchery building. Please call Andy Olson, Fish Biologist, for more information at 360.709.1859.

Near-Record Snow and High Flood Waters Met by Well-Prepared Tribe

By Fred Shortman, Editor

During the Christmas season, we were hit by three serious snow storms that gave us an accumulated 16.5 inches of snow. The roads were treacherous. County road crews were busy maintaining SR-12 and other main roads. Our Chehalis Tribal Construction crew cleared parking lots and Elder’s driveways. They also sanded the roads which greatly assisted the drivers who dared to venture out. The heavy snow fall did cause some damage to the End of the Trail II roof and collapsed the ABC Fireworks loading dock. We were very fortunate that was all the damage that the heavy snow did.

The weather began to warm up, the snow started melting and a large amount of rain fell. The combination of these conditions put the Chehalis River on flood watch. Initially the flood was predicted to be worse than the one 13 months ago in 2007. Floods are not new to our community. We have seen many of them throughout history. So, we are very familiar with flood preparation and being stuck on our little one-mile island for a few days.

The Chehalis River is a very dynamic river. It is spring fed and has one dam, which is located on the Skookumchuck River. The river is the second largest watershed in the State of Washington, next to the Columbia, and occupies 2,660 square miles. How our reservation is impacted depends on many conditions, including how much and where the rain falls. We are definitely impacted by what is called the “down stream effect.”

Our Emergency Management Team met on Wednesday, January 7, to discuss the plan of action to eliminate any danger to human life. They started contacting those who live in the lowland areas to prepare for the impending flood. The team provided volunteers, including tribal staff, to help raise household items and move vehicles to the Tribal Center parking lot.

See Flood, page 4

New Building Saves Money, Improves Services

By Fred Shortman, Editor

Many improvements continue to happen around the Chehalis Reservation. There’s a new pole building being built on Niederman Road. Office and work space is sorely needed for the Public Utilities and Maintenance Departments. The outside of the building was built by C & B Metal Building. The building is being finished, and will house groundskeeping, public utilities and building maintenance.

Staff with carpentry skills taught groundskeepers Correna Young, David Bird, and John Bird carpentry skills to finish the interior of the building. Correna Young said, “This is where I get to learn paint and taping.”

The tribe saved a lot of money by finishing the building in this manner. The new facility will help the tribe save even more money. “We used to pay sixty dollars an hour to get the mowers fixed,” said Joshua Terry, Maintenance Department staff. “Now, the crew will be able to do repairs in-house. Plus, we’ll be able to buy items like light bulbs in bulk, saving driving time and money. With the extra space, we’ll be able to assemble items like lines of piping, in the garage portion of the building, making for quicker installation.”

In short, the building will save time and money and allow staff to concentrate on their most important goals: better maintenance, better service, and better safety. Thanks go out to: John Shortman, Sr., Frank Cayenne, Jr., Correna Young, Josh Terry, John Bird, David Bird, Ray Secena, Jr., and Dennis Cayenne.
How to Talk to Your Children About Waiting to Have Sex

By Lorrie Bonifer, Prevention Specialist Coordinator

As parents, we need to talk to our children early and often about our dreams for their future and our expectations that they will wait to have sex. This workshop will help you:

- Start the conversation
- Find out what topics they like
- Exchange ideas with other parents
- Use culture and tradition to support your message.

This workshop has been rescheduled for February look for flyers to at the youth center. The Chehalis tribal community is invited.

If you have any questions, please contact Lorrie at 709-7174, chicksl@chehalistribke.org, or Lorrie Bonifer at 709-7171, bh@chehalistribke.org.

Even Jack Frost Couldn’t Stop Our Annual Christmas Party

By Cheryle Starr, Events Coordinator

The community Christmas party was originally scheduled for December 20 at the Lucky Eagle Casino Events Center, but was postponed until December 27. Who would have thought this would be the Christmas here on the Chehalis Reservation? I believe it was 10 years ago when we had the last white Christmas party was delayed by Mr. Jack Frost himself. All we pulled together, got the shopping done, presents wrapped and candy bagged, and we were ready for the party. I know some of us had a hard time getting out of our driveways and even getting off the Rez, but we got to town one way or another to accomplish our task. The main roads were clear enough for the 600 community member who showed up for the festivities. People were greeted by the smiles of volunteers, Jodi Smith, Carla Myers. They provided raffle tickets and information about how to qualify for the door prizes.

People had big smiles. The Christmas spirit was in the air despite the weather. Families and friends exchanged holiday greetings and well wishes. The children were laughing and playing, awaiting Santa’s arrival.

The Casino prepared a delicious dinner of hamburgers, hot dogs, lunch, veggies, mashed potatoes, cake, pudding and prime rib. Candy Andy performed a blessing for everyone’s health and safety. Elders were invited to serve food and everyone else lined up for a great feast.

There was an assortment of activities during the party for everyone to enjoy. There were craft tables set up for the children to make. These activities are always a main attraction. Helpers handed out bingo packets and daubers so everyone could play. Things were a little different this year to help speed up the bingo games. Instead of all the different age brackets, each game winner was an adult or a youth.

Then as the announcement came over the loud speaker you could hear a disappointed “Aaawwww,” and the sound of ripping paper as the game was closed. Raffle tickets were drawn throughout the day for gifts for children and adults as the bingo game was played. At the end of the raffle, tickets were drawn until all the presents were given away.

Then across the loudspeakers came a “Ho, Ho, Ho,” as Santa announced his arrival. All the kids dropped everything and ran to get their gifts and sit on Santa’s lap to have their pictures taken. Seeing the huge smiles on the children’s faces made all the work that went into getting the party ready worthwhile.

I would like to give a BIG, HUGGE, THANK YOU to the volunteers who helped out with the 2008 (after) Christmas Party.

The children were laughing and playing, awaiting Santa’s arrival. Without your support, the children would not have been able to have this special day!

Chehalis Legend: Battle of the Snow Brothers

By Elaine McCloud, Tribal Heritage Coordinator

Long ago, snow was brought to the land of the Chehalis by the Five Snow Brothers. One year they sent so much snow that it covered the longhouses. The Animal People had to dig tunnels to get around. They decided to wage war with the evil Snow Brothers.

The night before the battle, Mouse sneaks in and is able to gnaw the bow strings of four of the brother’s bows before they awake. Only the youngest brother is still able to fight, thus ensuring victory. Now only the youngest Snow Brother brings snow to Chehalis Country. He continues to bring his share of snow to the Chehalis people, past and present. We were just witness to some snow days recently.
By Fred Sherman, Editor, and Cecilia Kayano

George Youckton grew up at his parent’s home on Howman Road where he lives now. As a youngster, he spent time helping the family. When it was berry season, George and his siblings would pick berries and sell them in Oakville to earn money for gas and groceries. They also harvested and sold carrots back. George remembers walking to the Nisqually Grocery Store in Gate City on the corner of Moon Road and SR 12 to spend some of his money. When he was milking the cows with Mel, the two brothers would compete to see who could milk the fastest. They would deliver extra milk to Luzie Johnson and other families changing 10 or 15 cents a quart.

The family had a large vegetable garden behind the house with an acre of corn, five acres of potatoes, and other vegetables to be preserved. Abe Parsons brought his horses to pull the wood for themselves just cut extra and dropped it off at the tribal center. “You didn’t get paid for the wood or stacking it. Your own good feelings were the pay,” recalls George.

George remembers there were not many tribal buildings on the reservation back then. The small tribal center was heated by wood. To supply the wood, anyone who happened to have wood for themselves just cut extra and dropped it off at the tribal center. “You didn’t get paid for the wood or stacking it. Your own good feelings were the pay,” recalls George.

After George graduated from Oakville High School, he went into the Navy. When he came back, there weren’t any more jobs at the Chehalis, so he went to Taholah to work in a canery. Mel was working in Taholah, too. The two brothers would be busy by working, fishing and playing baseball. “I was on the go all the time,” recalls George. He says he liked “long days and short nights,” then explains, “I was a little younger then.”

One fond memory was floating down the Quinault River while fishing. He still remembers how he and Mel got hooked on the entire day floating on water. He would float and fish until dark. Then, Mel and George would build a fire and the guest into the river to fish for their food. They were known as boxers, and fearless fishers, so their fishing nets were never bothered. Now, whenever George is near the Chehalis River, he thinks about the feel of a canoe on water. While George was playing on the Taholah Baseball Team, he met Mary Estell-Burngamer. The couple married and moved into a small one-bedroom house belonging to Charlie Hayden. He worked odd jobs, ran fish nets on the river and dog clams.

“We didn’t make a lot of money, but we ate well,” recalls George.

George lived on the Quinault Reservation for many years. He coached Little League and Babe Ruth teams. He helped build the tribe’s first diesel service station. He started a GED program that produced 32 graduates its first year, more than the high school. He took part in a program that provided down payments on homes in exchange for 1000 hours of labor. “Everyone pitched in and helped out. We got a lot of positive results.”

When the inspector came, he said they were the best built homes he had ever seen.

George returned to the Chehalis Tribe in 1980. He started working for housing, but kept returning to Taholah for odd jobs, including helping on the crew that blacktopped the highway from Taholah to Moclips.

George enjoys the company of family and friends at events like the Christmas Bazaar. Over the years, George has worked in the education and government assistance fields. He has been an advocate for Indian education. In the 1990s, he was appointed to the Washington State Governor’s Education Advisory Board. He has testified at the Capital in Olympia on the need for money to fund Indian education. He says, “It’s hard for us to realize that back then, there was no money.”

George’s roots are from a time when education was often self-taught. He gives this advice: “Keep learning wherever you are. Listen to people. Learn from them. If you find a job you like to do. Don’t take a job just for money. If you have a job you enjoy, you will put more of yourself into it.”

George is passing on his father’s legacy of being a proponent of education. He says, “It’s good to see our youths graduating in school and graduating and going on to get higher education. That way they will be ready to take over some management positions or develop their own companies. Education is the key for continued growth within the tribe.”

Tribal Staff Profiles: Elders Coordinator and Medical Assistant

Honoiring our Elders: George Youckton, Sr.

“...If you have a job that you enjoy, you will put more of yourself into it.”

George “Chops” Youckton was born in 1933 to Jessie Hayden and Clarence Youckton Skomkoma. His grandparents were Bessie Walker and Johnny Hayden. His great-grandparents were Charlie Hayden and Jacobs. He has three brothers: Percy, Melvin, and Marvin “Muff”; and five sisters; Irene, Clara, Edna, Lorilee, and Linda. George was married to Mary Estell-Burngamer for over 40 years. Together they had five sons: Lenny, George Jr., Allen, Robert, and Anthony. George has seven grandchildren.

Hello. My name is Nancy Romero, and I am the daughter of the late Alice Secena Medina and Manuel Medina. My grandparents are Nancy Beddow Secena and Murphy Secena.

I have been happily married to Roy Romero for 28 years. We have seven children: Michael and two twins, Nelson and Rayna, and foster children; Amanda Verna, Adam Diaz, Cody Reyav and Jared Simmons. We have been foster parents for 14 years and are blessed to have been able to help raise these kids and have them in our lives. Our latest joy is our grandaughter, Arzlieh, she is loved so much and he makes our hearts so happy.

I have worked for the tribe for the past 14 or so years as a Youth Coordinator, Elders Coordinator, Cook, staff of Chehalis Tribal Construction, and the Health Coordinator for a short period of time.

This is one of the best jobs on the Res! I am the Elders Coordinator! What a blessing it is to work with all the Elders.

Since I have been the Elders Coordinator, the Elders have been on trips such as: NNAOA Conference in Tacoma (25 Elders), Southwest Washington Fair, the Lucky Eagle Casino and once to Hawaii (52 Elders), Ocean Casino, Eagles Landing Hotel, all of the tribes that made significant contributions for the tribe’s Elders.

I was very excited to be hired as a medical assistant and to become a part of the clinic team. I look forward to meeting you at your next appointment.

Autumn Klimek, Medical Assistant

By Andy Olson, Fisheries Biologist

The fishermen of the Chehalis Tribe had another successful Coho season this fall with many large, beautiful, fish being caught. We had an excellent price, and the fish buyer was happy to have the tribe’s Coho. Tribal fishermen all together made over $30,000 this season, catching 859 hatchery Coho and 337 wild Coho. This was a pretty good season, especially when the preseason forecast was for very low returns of Coho.

We also had over 500 pounds of smoked salmon available for sale at the Casino, Eagles Landing Hotel, all of the local retail stores and the Great Wolf Lodge. We are anticipating an excellent return next year, since we had a really high number of jack Coho return to the hatcheries and fish trap at Elk Creek near Dolly. A high number of returning jacks indicates excellent ocean survival for next year’s adult Coho.

2008 Coho Season a Success

By Andy Olson, Fisheries Biologist

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A white Ford pickup can be seen abandoned on Anderson Road during the flood. Fortunately the man was rescued by the Army National Guard. Remember, it is never worth it to try to cross flood waters. Call Law Enforcement for help.

Harry Pickernell, Jr., sets out to stay at temporary housing at the Eagles Landing Hotel. His dog, Lucky, had to stay home. Photo by Harry Pickernell, Sr.

David Youckton and Chris Richardson, Chairman, Dave Burnett, along with Teresa Keegan, a Chehalis Tribal Loan Committee member, and an employee of Sterling Savings Bank, assists the students in understanding how to improve their credit reports. She also instructs them on how to fill out credit applications and what banks and loan companies look for.

Harry Pickernell, Loan Coordinator
The activities of the Loan Program are beginning to pick up. I have two tribal families along with two tribal members who have completed the financial literacy course. They demonstrated their dedication and eagerness to learn how to handle their finances by attending all of the classes. The tribal members are Erwin Delgado and his wife Jennifer Delgado; Dustin Couillard and his wife Heather Couillard. Jolene Christensen and her daughter, Sue Bezerer.

The students were very outgoing, and not afraid to ask questions. Some were uneasy about taking this step, and discussing and sharing some bad experiences that they have had. The clan taught everyone how to avoid other people’s mistakes.

The students are working with Barb Churchill in putting out their business plans, which is also going very well. A guest speaker has been scheduled to go over their financial projections. This should happen in the next couple of weeks.

These people are hungry to start their own businesses or expand the businesses they presently have. They have very sound ideas, and are very capable of implementing their business plans.

Teresa Keegan is a Chehalis Tribal Loan Committee member, and an employee of Sterling Savings Bank, assists the students in understanding how to improve their credit reports. She also instructs them on how to fill out credit applications and what banks and loan companies look for.

Two of these parts are part of a jigaw puzzle and playfully for a tribal loan. Presently, loans are for Chehalis tribal members only. What this program receives its certification, we should be able to expand to outside areas, and to non-tribal people.

I’d like to introduce a new Loan Committee member, Shoni Revay. She is a tribal member and has the enthusiasm to learn and assist this program to keep growing.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 360-709-1631 or e-mail dpickernell@chehalistribe.org. Our program is looking forward to the round of 6-8 week classes, beginning in February or March.

Chehalis Canoe Family
Jam Session
February 14
Starts at 1 PM
at the Youth Center
Come and enjoy listening to Coastal Salish drumming, singing and dancing.

Mammogram Clinic
Friday, February 6
9 AM – 3 PM

Free snacks and incentives
Breast care information
Door prize winner gets a Pendleton blanket

For more information, call Christina Hicks, 273-5584, ext. 141

Community Bingo Night
February 24
Doors open at 4:30 pm
Dinner provided

What’s the catch? Come help the tribe complete a new community assessment. Have dinner with your friends and family while you fill out an assessment form. Then play Bingo and pick up your free raffle tickets. Great prizes!

General Council Annual Meeting
Tuesday, February 10
Starting 5:00 pm
at the Tribal Center

Watch for flyers with the agenda!