

TRIBAL TALK

Goom sa bye

Pine Nut Dance

It was an honor and a pleasure to sit with Tribal Elders and listen to their memories of Pine Nut Dances long ago. The team work with other departments, Tribal Elders and Tribal members was amazing to be a part of. Planning the dance became so much more than "just a job or just a dance." Thank you to everyone that worked tirelessly to make the Pine Nut Dance a success.



Tribal Elder, Steven James the Due Bay U (leader) for the Goom sa bye (ceremony) knows the youth are the future of the Washoe Tribe. Mr. James wanted to make sure the youth understand how important it is that they learn the tradition and culture of their Tribe. He took a group of young people with him to the hills as he blessed the Pine Nuts; he was with us as we gathered Pine Nuts and was at the Senior Center everyday to clean the Pine Nuts. Without his leadership, dedication and hard work we would not have the memories and the successful return of the Washoe Tribe's Pine Nut Dance in more than fifty years.

The young people that carried the knotted buck skin rope to other communities and to the Powwow with word of the upcoming Pine Nut Dance made everyone so very proud. In the quotes below you read how meaningful this was to Tribal Elders.

From the start of the Tagum Prayer to the pine nut collection for the giveaway, the running of the knotted buck skin rope and with the culmination of the Dance and feast took about a month for the whole process. This is how it was done in the old days and everything came together as it was meant to be.



Although prayers are individualistic and personal it usually conveys the same theme that there will be a good abundance of Tagum and a bountiful harvest and that the Tagum has sustained the people for thousands of years and thanks to the Creator for providing the people with the food to nourish the body and soul. The runners followed tradition by running the buck skin non-stop from one place to another. The run from Dresslerville to Woodfords is nine miles and on top of that the runners ran it again from Dresslerville to Gardnerville another six miles, the runners representing strength and stamina symbolizing Washo tenacity to survive.





Following age old traditions the pine nut gathering for the giveaway involved people of all ages collectively giving freely of their time and energy to ensure the dance is a success. Shortly after dark the people arrived in numbers to take part in the dance. Following ancient traditions the men led the ceremony with talk and then songs leading the dance. Everything was more than just a process of events but it was a linking of the past to the present and ensuring the ceremony lives into the future. And after seeing all the young people taking part we can be assured it will live on into the future for all times.

The Washoe Elders all agreed that this newsletter article be as long as needed and not to limit what this measure is about, that is how strongly they feel about it.

Vernon Wyatt- "It was great to see the young people at the dance. Their participation was so important from picking pine nuts and cleaning pine nuts for the give away to helping serve the Elders at the meal."

Edmund James- "It was awesome to have a dance; it was a huge learning experience. It was something we can call our own. It was great to see everyone there young and old work together and have fun."

Maxine Wyatt- "It was moving to watch the youth and Elders dance together."

Ophelia Martin- "The Pine Nut dance was very traditional. It taught me patience. I got over my fear of round dancing in public."

Shanice Turtle- "The dance was fun and it helped me to learn more of our Washoe traditions."

Marquita Martin- "The Pine Nut Dance was magnificent and fun, I really enjoyed being involved at the dance. It really helped me learn more about my culture."

Cloud Mitchell- "It was cool because I got to dance by the fire and it was warm. I got to hear some cool Washoe songs; they sounded good."

Damion Estrada- "The ritual aspect of this dance under a full moon was spiritual."

Reyna Moore- "I thought that the Pine Nut Dance was cool and the round dance was "tight" because everyone was singing Washoe songs."





Bethany Hinchliffe- "The dance seemed to bring the community together in a positive way. The singing, fire and weather all came together." (My snow skirt seemed to be a hit for both the Pine Nut dance and the snow!)

Christina Moore- "I think we should have been dancing around the groundhogs (aka fire) but it was fun. I fell asleep so we should start earlier but that's okay."

Liz Garcia- "The combined efforts of community members, Elders, Senior Center staff and youth (NYRC) was a wonderful experience."

Lulu Street- "I thought we were going to dance barefoot. It was cool because we danced around the fire and heard good songs in Washoe."

JoAnne Nevers- "It was an emotional and historic experience to see our young men running into the Powwow at the same time of the grand opening ceremony. The crowd was very emotional with cheers and applauding the runners as they came in to deliver the knotted buck skin rope."

Lana Hicks- "To witness something that hasn't been done in over 100 years, Lana remembered the story when



Jean Dexter’s uncle ran the knotted buckskin rope from Dresslerville to Washoe Valley, non-stop a long time ago.” “To see the pride in the young men that carried the buck skin rope knowing that they have done this extraordinary feat for the Washoe People. In turn, it gave me pride as I watched them. The runners arrived at the Powwow right at the very instant the grand opening ceremony was happening, which made it even more powerful. Traditional dancers at the Powwow came over to pay homage to the runners and fanned them with eagle feathers.” “To see so many young people at the Pine Nut Dance wearing traditional clothing and taking part in this historic event was very moving.”

Buck Cruz- “The Elders sent out a call for help with the Pine Nut Dance and we answered their call. I was very pleased to see all the people coming to help. During the run I saw an eagle circling the runners and it means that our prayers were answered; everything will become stronger. This is what the Creator gave us and for thousands of years we have done this; we did not get this from someone from somewhere else.”

John Koos- “The teamwork of Elders, youth and all the Tribal Departments made me proud. It was all good, the food, the fire, the dancers and singers.”

Lisa Sam- “It was such good turn out even with the snow; I really enjoyed it.”

Gwen James- “The whole experience working with the Elders, planning and coordinating the Goom sa bye, the messenger run and pine nut picking took a great deal of team work and time. Learning and listening to the way our ancestors, families and the Tribe try to keep our traditions alive is the greatest thing that we should all keep dear to our hearts. I’m proud of all the individuals who took the lead to make the Goom sa bye a success!”

Sharon Doan- “When we started planning the Pine Nut Dance we were a group of people working together on a project; at the end we were a group of friends that accomplished something that we were all proud to have been a part of.” Submitted by: Sharon Doan and Darrel Cruz



If you would like more information, or would like to sign up to volunteer for the 2010 Goom sa bye, please call Sharon Doan at the Senior Center: 1-866-914-9383



Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California
919 US Hwy 395 South
Gardnerville, NV 89410
www.washoetribe.us

Place Address Labels Here