



SOUTHERN OREGON INDIAN CENTER

Newsletter for January – June 2026

www.soindiancenter.org

This is our new addition to our website, our Newsletter, posted twice a year at six-month increments. So, this newsletter is from January to July, and the next one will be from July to December. We will be recording and sharing most of all our activities and doings throughout the year. We encourage your support and membership by filling out our online application form at \$20 per person per year. Your membership donation helps support the printing and advertising of all our events, the cost of paper goods, coffee, etc. used at our potluck social gatherings, rental fees at the places we gather for events and other added costs that might arise. Flyers and information for our social gatherings and events will be posted on our website, Facebook page and sent to your emails. All families are welcome, you do not need to be Native to be a member, however we do ask for respect and your interest in Native culture and traditions that help to keep our vital history alive with the encouragement of our elders and 7th generation youth. There are many traditions and ceremonies that are practiced in different ways throughout our country and it is not for us to say what or how to practice them or if they are right or wrong. We are open and supportive of many Native individuals that have become part of our SOIC family through the years as nonprofit organizations since 1989.

JANUARY 2026

On January 25th, we met at the Grants Pass Boys and Girls Club with 21 visitors and a wonderful potluck. Our guest speakers were Benson Landford and Tom Smith.

Benson gave an interesting talk on awls and shawls with an array of these items and relics on display. Benson has a wealth of education and knowledge of many Native artifacts.

Lots of informative history and ways of usage of these items. Benson has shared many artifacts from his extensive collection through the years, and I don't think we have seen all of them yet!

Tom brought his collection of reproduction primitive tools and weapons. Wow! Lots of knowledge was shared about how these items would be used and implemented when hunting or



protecting oneself. Tom has admired these items since his early years, which brought him to reproduce them for himself to enjoy. He has researched and studied most of each item meticulously to reproduce the exact result.

Again, we have not seen Tom's total collection from all his years of recreating these wonderful hands-on tools and weapons, however there's always another gathering in the future.

FEBRUARY 2026

February 13th, we started one of our monthly fund raisers which was held at the 2nd Friday Art Walk at the Phoenix Grange- 209 North Main St. We call our fundraiser "Fry Bread and Friends".

We sold (dessert) Fry Bread with your choice of toppings: Cinnamon sugar and butter, Blackberries or Strawberries with whipped cream. Everyone enjoyed them so much we had only seven (7) left from a whole ice chest full of about 90! Some folks bought them plain to take home and make their own Indian Tacos, which was a surprise to us.

Many of us were looking for coffee but there was not a nearby coffee stand. So, the following month you got it! We made Indian Tacos to sell as well as coffee and other drinks.

Thanks to Kathleen LaFleur-Flemming for setting us up for this monthly event. Thank You to Sandi Albin-Wunische, Jenet Johnsen, Connie Saldona, Pavin Hlavinka helping at this event and to Chelsea Milner for the artwork, designing and printing up our flyers. Thank you to all those from SOIC that made it out to support us and enjoy our fried bread desserts and all the art displays from local artists here in the Rogue Valley.

February 15th, we met at the Grants Pass Boys and Girls Club with 15 visitors and one child that enjoyed yet another hearty potluck. Thank you to all those that contribute a meal to our festivities.



Benson out did himself once again with a great display of many sets of moccasins. They ranged from many different tribes with beautiful beadwork patterns and unique styles. Colorful florals and interesting geometric designs on adult to child size moccasins. In appreciation that we have Benson to share these wonderful items that we can gain some knowledge and history of the Native Tribes that possibly wore these moccasins.

Chris Rogers volunteered to share her experience searching for and collecting rocks. When she goes rock hunting—or “rock hounding,” as she calls it—she looks for the rock that stands out. Some finds may seem ordinary, but then one special rock makes the whole hunt worthwhile. For Chris, it is not the biggest rock that makes the day; it is often an agate, one of her favorites. Agates with visible water lines are especially exciting, even when they are small—sometimes as tiny as a dime. Jasper with agates running through it, known as Jaspagate, is another amazing find. Chris is still hoping to find Medfordite, a rock believed to occur only in Southern Oregon. She also reminds us not to overlook thunder eggs and rocks that are millions of years old. When one is cut open, you may be the first person ever to see what is inside—a thrilling thought. In short, Chris loves nature and all the gifts the Creator has given us to enjoy. As you visit mountains, meadows, oceans, rivers, streams, and forests, look around: beauty is everywhere, and you may be shown the find of the day.



MARCH 2026

March 13th, we held our second fund raiser for "Fry Bread and Friends" for the 2nd Friday Art Walk at the Phoenix Grange. This time we sold coffee, our NDN tacos with the works and/or fried bread with



butter, and cinnamon sugar. Once again, they were a hit so much that we got noticed by the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce and they videotaped us assembling the NDN tacos. We have not been back, but we hear they have been asking when we are coming again. All in all, these fundraisers have helped us a bit to get ahead to finance our Veterans Powwow in June. Thank you again to Kathleen for setting us up for this event and to all our volunteers and our SOIC members coming out to support us by enjoying our "Fry Bread and Friends" menu.

March 15th, we held our Social Gathering at the Boys and Girls Club in Grants Pass with 25 participants and a wonderful potluck spread. Our first presenter for this event was Benson Landford on turbans, bonnets, and roaches. Benson gave a very interesting talk on how these items would be worn and from the tribe that would do so.



Each tribe has established their own unique design and style of wear and on what occasion they might be worn at. Again, there are many different colors and designs that might represent each tribe or a person standing rank and/or position in that tribe. I must apologize for not elaborating more on this presentation as there was much discussion I failed to make note of. However, please enjoy the many photos that are posted with this information or come if available to join us at our next event, bring a potluck dish to share and enjoy meeting many of our SOIC members and friends.

Hannah Stafford gave her presentation on the Rogue Valley Veterans Powwow Eagle Staff that was handed down to her from a former carrier, Tom Smith. Eagle staff are usually passed down to former veterans representing all military branches. Some staff are represented by a family and so would be passed down to the next



family member. Staff that are passed to another responsible party happen as that person might have retired from the responsibility or have other duties that would burden the carrier, therefore would find a responsible person to continue to meet the needs of caring for the staff. There are many ways, customs and traditions that someone would acquire such a staff. Many feathers are

attached to the staff with an array of representing merits from veterans of war or military deeds that might have been met. Many are donated with a story of honor, valor or remembrance of a fallen veteran of combat, etc. Carriers of the Eagle Staff are the first to lead in our First Nations Powwow Grand Entries, followed by our military flags carried by a veteran in duty or by a former veteran.

Most First Nations powwows are introduced to the public in this way and is a beautiful sight to behold. It's a humbling and proud feeling to witness the representations of our countries flag and those of our military branches, all our First Nations dancers proceed after the flags in protocol line up and dressed in their beautiful regalia. If you would like to see a powwow near you, please come to our annual Rogue Valley Veterans Powwow held each year on the first weekend in June at the White City VA Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (SORCC) 8495 Crater Lake Hwy. White City, OR 97503.

APRIL 2026

April 4th, we had another "Fry Bread and Friends" fundraiser at Fort Vannoy Farms for Southern Oregon's 3rd Annual all-inclusive Easter Egg Hunt for children of all ages with disabilities. This was an awesome event watching all the children run around play, and search for eggs. There were so many events this weekend and had a low turnout but all in all it was a treat to watch these beautiful children experience the wonderful activities that were available for them. Thank you to Jesse Hawkins for seeing our Southern Oregon Indian Center FB page and reaching out to me for food vending at this event. We sold our NDN tacos, fry bread with sweet toppings, and drinks.



April 25th, we held our Social Gathering at the Fruitdale Grange, Grants Pass with our "Fry Bread and Friends" available menu, in which we sold NDN tacos, fried bread with butter, sweet toppings, and drinks. We had six vendors selling their creative Artwork and music. We had 32 plus visitors and sellers at this small gathering, but it was very fun meeting new families and attendees.



Gary Burroughs entertained us with his beautiful flute music and his collection of creative art items such as flutes, wall hangings, beaded earrings, feathers, etc. overseen by his wife Rosie. Clay Martin had a variety of his outstanding Native beadwork on display and for sale along with his creative wood etched earrings, wall displays, and crystal beaded necklaces.



Greg Rogers and Christine had an array of jewelry made with an assortment of crystal, a variety of stone necklaces, earrings, beaded bracelets, hair clips, porcupine earrings and other unique Native items. Benson Lanford had his bead collection for sale, many older antiques, turn of century, and newer beads made by others from around the world.



Hannah and Michael Stafford



offered Native-themed coffee mugs and yarn-woven baskets in a variety of sizes and colors. Hannah is an expert weaver whose beautiful yarn choices and creative designs make each basket unique. Kyle

and Kayla Gaines brought North Coast–style carved items, along with handmade necklaces, shell earrings, and assorted baskets. They use many natural materials in their work, including shells, pinecone seeds, bone, antler, stone, hide, wood, and grasses, giving each piece special meaning for the wearer. I also presented my beaded and shell earrings and hand-fringed shawls for sale. In addition, I would like to mention that Benson brought a guest, Florentine “Flo” Blue Thunder, a highly respected traditional cultural figure and artist from the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. He is known for his beautiful handcrafted Lakota star quilts and for preserving and sharing Indigenous ceremonies and heritage. He plans to return around October, and I will try to arrange a social gathering near his visit.

MAY 2026

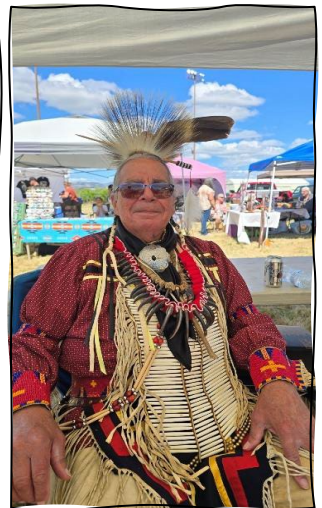
May was a very busy month as we prepared for our annual Rogue Valley Veterans Powwow. We did not hold a fundraiser or social gathering. The VA had new representatives involved in planning the Veterans Powwow, so we spent time introducing our organization, discussing event needs, and coordinating preparations for the ballfield grounds. Chelsea and I worked on layout of the vendor set up in the ballfield as well as the food booth and preparing the list of food items to shop for including a new addition to our menu “Nachos”. We also began planning for the Multicultural Camp, scheduled two weeks after the Powwow. With meetings happening on several fronts, we worked hard to stay focused and keep everything moving forward.



JUNE 2026

June was another very busy month as we worked to bring the Veterans Powwow together. Michael Palacios with Veterans Administration provided valuable support in preparing the ballfield grounds and meeting other event needs. It was a wonderful event, and those of us working behind the scenes stayed busy keeping everything running smoothly. Our “Grammas Powwow Kitchen” was so successful that we ran out of some food items during the first session. We also added new menu items and received great feedback. Vendor turnout was strong, with both returning and new vendors. Our Powwow arena staff did a wonderful job carrying out their duties. Rather than say much more, I will let the photos in this write-up tell the story. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who volunteered, vended, donated, and







June 13th, we would like to recognize our Niece and Graduate, Cambria "Touches the Clouds" Gates. We participated in her RCC graduation and are very proud of her receiving her AA degree. Looking forward to seeing what dreams and accomplishments she will be preparing and fulfilling for in her future. Congratulations! Cambria. And congrats to all those that have graduated this year as well!



June 20th, we managed to fundraise at Hathkapasuta, the Illinois River Celebration. "Fry Bread and Friends" was another success, we can't wait to return next year! We had a lot of fun and great help by Chelsea, Jasi, Andy, and Fox. Our menu was fry bread with sweet toppings, strawberries, whipped cream or butter, cinnamon sugar and/or strawberry or grape jelly. Most everyone asked for NDN Tacos! So, yep! Next year we'll come back and make NDN Tacos. We had a great time, there was a bounce house for the kids, a craft booth, good vendors, tasty food, great music, wonderful atmosphere, and lots of happy people.



The Puppets were totally awesome! Jill did a fantastic job creating these wonderful characters, the Acorn Sisters and the many other puppets. You'll have to enjoy seeing the photos, there was so much going on. All in all, it was a wonderful event, and we are looking forward to returning. Thanks to Tim and Suzanne for inviting our "Fry Bread and Friends" booth to this event.



June 22nd- 27th Multicultural Kids—Native Elders and Children Interact. Our 5-day Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon Camp was held at the Valley of the Rogue State Park. This year we had 40 children aged 10- to 13-year-olds and around 20 or so staff members and presenters of various crafts and activities with ethnic themes. The camp provided the opportunity for children to learn crafts from traditional Native elders and leaders of our community, to develop an appreciation for the environment that surrounds us and to experience how to be a respectful community member. Our activities were learning about archery taught by Michael Seibert and Hannah Stafford, acorn processing and usage by Suzanne Vautier and Tim Mondragon, edible wild plants, and healing herbs were presented by Linda Stevens. Learning through storytelling was told by Gramma Falcia McNair along with Teri Hanson on drumming. Other crafts, such as chokers and beading with Rex Montoya and Mary Mikelson. Other activities were painting feathers and/or rocks and a demonstration of reproduction primitive weapons and tools by Tom Smith.

This year for the first time we had basket weaving and a presentation by Hannah Stafford and live animals from Wildlife images (see photos). Other cultures were also represented: An Indigenous man Dagoberto Morales from Michoacan, Mexico, taught the kids to weave small usable tule mats and fans. Richard Meyers taught African drumming. The kids learned different methods of beating the drums coordinating to create wonderful music together. Danica Alexander presented deaf activities and what it is like to be deaf in society based on hearing. We had an opportunity to compare American Sign Language with Indian sign language with the help of Benson Lanford.

Our Camp cook, Tammy Dockery, provided ethnic dishes to complement each traditional presenter's background which added to the kids learning about foods from other countries and areas of the US. The themes of Camp-- respect for each other, appreciation for nature and the importance of community—were reflected in the custom of gathering in a circle three times a day to share experiences and gratitude. Multicultural Kids Camp is created through a partnership between Southern Oregon Indian

Center and Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon. (Please forgive me if I have left out any presenter or activity). I hope you enjoyed reading everything we have been up to these past six months. Thank you again for everyone that has helped at these events and continuing our Native education in our community. If you have any comments, suggestions, or phrases please let us know.

Sincerely, Terese Hall

