'I was really interested in looking at wildlife observations. Lewis and Clark wrote the first and most detailed written documentation of a large part of the United States."

Andrea Laliberte, doctoral candidate

OSU student maps L&C wildlife observations

By Theresa Hogue
CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

RYAN GARDNER/GAZETTE-TIMES

Andrea Laliberte was surprised to see the amount of detail in Lewis and Clark's journals. They preserved information about every place they visited and many of the animals they saw along the way.

CORVALLIS — Brownsville resident Andrea Laliberte used to go horseback riding along trails once navigated by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, but she never knew she'd take more than a scenic interest in their travels.

Laliberte, a doctoral candidate in forestry at Oregon State University, had completed a master's degree in rangeland resources at OSU, and was looking for a Ph.D program that suited her interest in GIS (geographic information systems) and spatial analysis. GIS maps provide layers of detail in much more complexity than an ordinary map, and can provide information on everything from geographical features to landmarks to lakes.

Forestry professor Bill Ripple convinced Laliberte to stay at OSU and pursue a doctorate, and he suggested a dissertation topic that sparked her interest.

"I had a discussion with the professor and he had an interest in Lewis and Clark. He gave me the seed (of the idea)," she said.

"I was really interested in looking at wildlife observations. Lewis and Clark wrote the first and most detailed written documentation of a large part of the United States."

Laliberte decided to examine the wildlife populations of the United States during Lewis and Clark's era and to plot that information on a map of the United States showing every campsite the expedition stopped at along the way. Her best and most daunting resource was the 3,000 pages of journals she had to pore over to retrieve that information.

"Then I started building a spreadsheet of where and when they spotted wildlife," Laliberte explained. "There were 506 campsites where Lewis and Clark slept every night. I put the coordinates to the GIS and it gave actual locations of their camps. I tied their observations to each camp."

While the explorers jotted down notes of hundreds of animals, Laliberte focused on nine of the most prevalent, which were seen throughout the trip.

"I was interested in recording where wildlife was seen," she said. "It's really changed over the past 200 years, and humans' relationship to wildlife. I could see there was a relationship, because the more people there were, the less wildlife."

Parts of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Laliberte said, took the travelers into country fairly untouched by any settlements.

"It was really the Garden of Eden. There were lots of bison, elk and deer."

Laliberte compiled her work in an interactive map linked to the College of Forestry at OSU, allowing visitors to click on any campsite Lewis and Clark stopped at and find out detailed information on the animals observed.

While much of the observation of animals was based on the eyes of hungry travelers, who sampled everything from dog to otter on their trip, Laliberte said the men kept a record of everything that flew, walked or crawled past.

"They were definitely living off the land, and they sent out a hunting party every day," she said, "but they kept track of everything they saw and provided definite numbers."

Laliberte gives credit to President Thomas Jefferson's mandate for the details that Lewis and Clark observed.

"Their objective was to find a waterway to the Pacific, but they were also asked by Jefferson to look at the land and the people. They wrote this down very diligently, and that's why it is so valuable."

She also was impressed with the scientific details of the journal.

"Clark made a map with such detail he was very little off, and he did it with dead reckoning."

Using the information provided by the explorers and transferring that into an easily accessible format is only part of Laliberte's work.

"The journals are very valuable," she said. "There's a lot of information we don't have anywhere else. What would Lewis think today if he saw it on the computer?"

Laliberte is now working on the second section of her study, expanding the range of animals, and looking at how 44 species' ranges have changed in the last 200 years. The explorers would likely not recognize the world today, as species have diminished, shifted and at times disappeared.

ANDREA LALIBERTE

Age: 44
Residence: Brownsville.
Occupation: Doctoral candidate in forestry, Oregon State University
Hobbies: Hiking, horseback riding, gardening.
Family: Husband Marc

ON THE NET

Andrea Lalibert's interactive wildlife map of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
www.cof.orst.edu/cof/fr/research/lewis&clark/index.htm

Laliberte's map shows the campsites where the Lewis and Clark party stayed along the trail. For more information, see the On the Net box located on this page.

'At my grandmother's you had to speak Chinuk or you didn't eat. You had to know everything that was on the table.'

Reynold Leno, tribal council vice chairman

At Grand Ronde, preschoolers learn Chinuk

By Bennett Hall
CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

RYAN GARDNER/GAZETTE-TIMES

Tony Johnson holds up an elephant for the 3- to 5-year-olds in his Chinuk language immersion class to identify in Chinuk. Watching are Goldie Bly, left, and Johnson's son, Samuel.

GRAND RONDE — Growing up in this little Coast Range community, Reynold Leno always had a few of the old Chinuk words in his vocabulary — tillicum for kin, mowich for deer, t'nah for ornery, the way his father got sometimes.

But those few words were all he knew of the language that was once the common tongue of his people, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

"I learned them words, but I didn't know they were Chinuk words," said Leno, a former timber worker who now serves as vice chairman of the Tribal Council.

"At my grandmother's," he laughed, "you had to speak Chinuk or you didn't eat. You had to know everything that was on the table."

That limited vocabulary continued to fade with time, and Leno's children learned even less of their ancestral tongue than he had. Now, though, a new generation is coming up, and the Chinuk language is beginning to make a comeback.

Leno's granddaughter is one of nine Grand Ronde preschoolers in the tribe's Chinuk immersion program. For five hours a day, five days a week, the group of 3- to 5-year-olds speak nothing but Chinuk. To judge from his granddaughter, Leno said, it's working.

"She probably knows more than my kids or me."

At the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Chinuk was used throughout the Northwest as a trade language to allow communication between various tribes, and some French and English words had already entered the lexicon through early contact with Europeans. The Corps of Discovery encountered several Chinuk-speaking tribes on their journey down the Columbia River to their winter quarters on the Oregon Coast.

The number of Chinuk speakers has dwindled greatly since then. Some tribes are bringing in teachers to keep the language from dying out altogether.

The Grand Ronde's preschool immersion program is under the direction of Tony Johnson, a member of the Chinook tribe from Willapa Bay, Wash. While traditional vocabulary drills are part of the teaching process, he said, the kids learn primarily by absorbing the language as an integral part of classroom activities, from eating breakfast and brushing teeth to singing songs and playing games.

"Our theory for teaching language is based on what the Maoris did in New Zealand and what the Hawaiians have done," Johnson said. "They have a concept they call a 'language nest.' It's basically creating an environment for the children that's culturally rich, where they're immersed in their language."

When parents enroll their children in the immersion program, they agree to take classes in Chinuk and speak the language with their kids for at least 15 minutes a day.

"It makes it a real commitment on their part," Johnson said. "We are very much interested in having families that are really going to work to perpetuate it."

'Language is the basis for who you are; it's your identity.'

Cheryl Kennedy, Grand Ronde tribal chairwoman

For many Grand Ronde leaders, restoring the Chinuk language as a living tongue is an important step toward re-establishing a traditional culture that had all but died out.

The Grand Ronde federation is made up of several different tribes, primarily the Kalapuya, Molalla, Umpqua, Rogue River and Chasta. While all of these tribes once spoke their own languages, their ancient tongues were lost after the U.S. government rounded up all the native peoples of western Oregon in 1857 and removed them to a reservation at Grand Ronde, about 35 miles west of Salem.

One of the few things they had in common was Chinuk.

"It was a lingua franca, a common language, for the various tribes that were on the reservation here," said Henry Zenk, a linguist who teaches in the immersion program.

"It's remarkable how quickly all those people began speaking it, and I think that's why later it became kind of a symbol for people."

The shared language became the foundation for a unified tribal identity. That gained importance as the government moved Indian children into English-only boarding schools, aiming to assimilate them into the mainstream culture by eliminating their own.

Over time, the original 60,000-acre Grand Ronde Reservation was whittled to virtually nothing. In 1954, the federal government terminated the Grand Ronde's tribal status, and many tribal members moved away.

June Olson, the tribe's cultural resource manager, called the loss of recognition a devastating blow.

"We not only had removal, which was a huge impact on our culture, but then we had termination," she said. "It basically scattered our people for a second time."

Today there are 4,800 Grand Rondes on the tribal rolls, but only about 900 of them live in the former reservation communities of Grand Ronde, Willamina and Sheridan. The rest remain scattered throughout 45 states and six countries.

Federal recognition was restored to the Grand Ronde in 1983, along with 10,000 acres of Coast Range timberland. Harvesting that timber helped the tribe begin to reverse many years of economic decline, a process that has been greatly accelerated since the opening of Spirit Mountain Casino in 1995.

Reversing the tribe's cultural decline has been harder, but the revival of Chinuk is seen as a big step in that direction.

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy calls Chinuk a clear link between tribal members and their historical and cultural roots.

"Language is the basis for who you are; it's your identity," she said. "If you speak the language, then of course you have a better connection. It's paramount."

For Leno, the language he grew up hearing around his grandmother's dinner table is a powerful symbol of survival. Along with the tribal cemetery in Grand Ronde, he points out, Chinuk was just about the only thing that survived termination in 1954. Since that time, both have enjoyed a special status.

"You don't do nothing with the cemetery, and you don't do nothing with the Chinuk language," Leno said.

"Those are the things that keep us in contact with our past."

Tribal Council member June Sell-Sherer reads to the pre-school age kids, in English. 'People always have a yearning, I believe, to know their roots, to know their ancestors and that helps to bring that knowledge and awareness back,' Sell-Sherer said.

Climbing mountains in his own way

By Jesse Sowa
CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

Mountain climbing has been more than just a form of recreation for Richard Mitchell. A sociology professor at Oregon State University for more than 20 years, Mitchell began mountaineering several decades ago to seek out the psychology and sociology of adventure, why it was sought and what was gained.

A member of a right-wing military survivalist group for more than 20 years, Mitchell described mountaineering as a "search to find where people push back at mediocrity."

Mitchell said he didn't initially go mountain climbing to find anything particular. It wasn't until he was back at home that he realized his purpose.

"When we do things, we make sense out of doing them," he said. He found his meaning after he returned and put down in words what he had experienced. He also used the photographs he took to find that meaning.

Using those experiences, he wrote a book, "The Mountain Experience: The Psychology and Sociology of Adventure," first published in 1983.

In the book he explains that his mountaineering adventures were more than just getting exercise or trying something new, but challenging himself.

"It seemed to be an interesting phenomena. There was no literature on it," he said.

Why did he begin mountaineering?

"Life was meaningful. There were challenges," he said. "There were mountains, and I was curious."

"There's no brags component," he later added. "But to see others achieve something and see their best quality … We so lose track of those moments.

"You use all that you have and move into some synthesis with that around you."

Mitchell noted that Lewis and Clark were not the first visitors to the area into which they were traveling.

They were far more adventurers than explorers, he said.

"They were skilled at asking for advice," Mitchell said, describing the men as negotiators and inquirers.

They went west not to conquer or control the land they were traveling to, but to bring back stories to tell.

"What an adventure, what a spirit, what an exciting time in their lives," he said. "Who would not want to join their adventure?"

Lewis and Clark were not different than a lot of other people who seek adventure, Mitchell said.

Mitchell's most memorable experiences in mountain climbing have come while spending time with family.

> *"Climbing mountains reminds us that we need to work hard. We need to be between the rock and the hard place."*
>
> **Richard G. Mitchell**

About two years ago, he was climbing a mountain slope in British Columbia with his daughter, Annie Baumann-Mitchell, now 11, and his now ex-wife, Eleen Baumann.

Nearing the peak, Mitchell told his daughter to go ahead. He wanted her to be the first to reach the top. When they got there, the emotions flowed.

"I was weeping, there were tears going everywhere," Mitchell said.

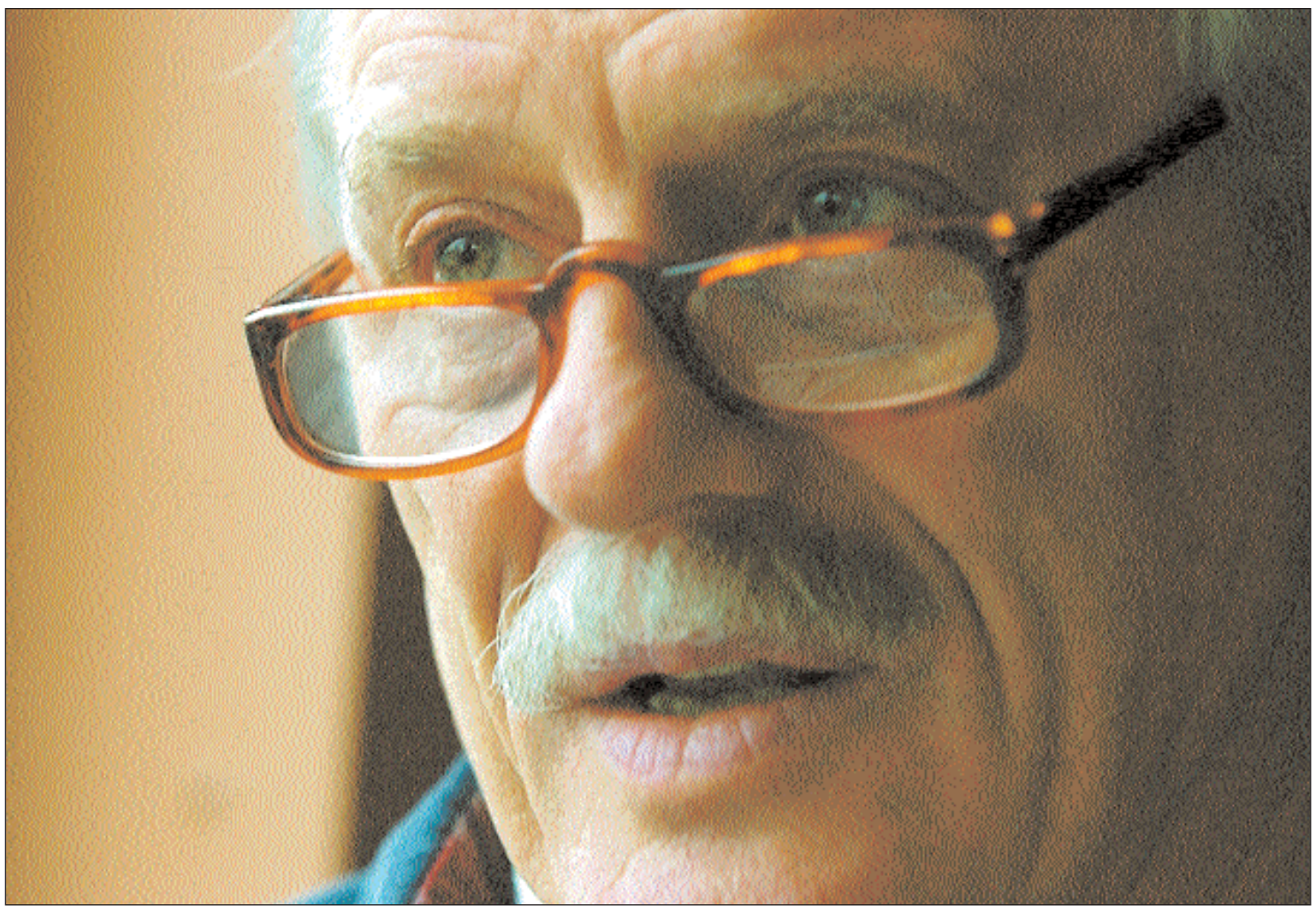
It was most moving experience of his climbing career, said Mitchell, who still occasionally finds himself climbing a mountain somewhere. "Mountaineering isn't something you own; it's something you share."

Again, he said, it's more than just an adventure. Finding what you're capable of is also important. It's an analog for a well-lived life.

"The (task) of climbing mountains reminds us that we need to work hard," he said. "We need to be between the rock and the hard place."

RICHARD G. MITCHELL JR.

Age: 60.
Residence: A resident of Corvallis since 1979.
Occupation: Professor of sociology, Oregon State University.
Hobbies: Sea kayaking and canoeing, photography, mountaineering and ski-mountaineering, international travel, the theater.
Family: One daughter, age 11, "Annie" to her friends, Katharine Ann Baumann-Mitchell on her passport.



RYAN GARDNER/GAZETTE-TIMES

Curiosity and a sense of adventure led Richard Mitchell to mountain climbing. He was even able to get his 11-year-old daugther interested.

Mitchell looks over aerial photos of Alpine and downtown San Francisco. He's working on a project comparing convenience stores in the two communities.