

## TRIBAL MEMBER NEWS



Lisa Brown and Alyssa Scott, 10, work on Alyssa's elk hide and deer hide-fringed regalia with nahset (clam) shells for the New Year's Nadosh or Feather Dance on Dec. 29.

### Siletz Beader Uses Craft to Help Youth

by Cate Montana, *Indian Country Today* (reprinted with permission)

Siletz, Ore. – Lisa Brown's business is beads. But her passion is using traditional beadworking to help the young people of the Siletz Tribe learn traditional values and ways.

By day, the 40-year-old Siletz member works for the tribe as a youth prevention coordinator. At night, her dining room table gets cleared, the scissors, beads, and elk hide come out, and Brown can be found helping women and young girls of the tribe make the traditional regalia necessary for them to participate in the tribe's semi-annual solstice Nadosh, or world-renewal Feather Dance.

Brown started her beading business, Water of Life, five years ago. But unlike most entrepreneurs, she is not so much into the business of making money as she is into making a difference for her people.

Water of Life has three parallel applications. The simplest is economics.

Through Water of Life, Brown sells commissioned, one-of-a-kind traditional necklaces, headbands, pouches, purses, and other kinds of beaded materials. Each piece is a labor of love. Because she has a regular job,

Brown can only take on a few commissions at one time.

Most of her sales come through word of mouth, the Internet, and from booth sales at pow-wows. Occasionally, the tribe permits sales at the tribal administration building on the reservation.

At pow-wows, Brown doesn't charge the usual 50 percent commission from other Indian artists. Instead, she charges each artist 5 percent to 10 percent to help defray her own costs and asks that they help run the booth with her. A former Native American Business Network (ONABEN) business counselor for her tribe, Brown uses the booth time for coaching up-and-coming artists and artisans.

"It's a good deal for them and a good deal for me," she says. "I get help. Plus they learn how to do sales. They learn how to market their product and that sort of stuff."

The second role of her business is cultural. Through Water of Life, Brown helps tribal members who want to participate in tribal dances learn how to create their own regalia. She also creates regalia for others – which is no small task.

### ATNI and Other Highlights

by Rosemary Breon Landis

As a means of improving communications with our tribal family, Chairman Dee has requested that all Council members write articles this year that highlight their Council activities and duties. I also will submit confidential articles to Nesika Illahee.

This month begins the third year of my term. I will continue to work hard for all of you. After committee assignments, I'll be more program specific. Bureau and Indian Health self-governance issues will remain a priority for me. We met with BIA self-governance, area office, and regional area representatives to discuss tribal options regarding changes in the regulations for financial assistance and social service programs on Feb. 1.

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) held its meetings in Portland this quarter. Enough Tribal Council members attended to cover all subjects. We will work with Tom Ball from the Oregon Social Learning Center on a project with at least six other tribes. Either Jessie or I will attend the quarterly meetings.

Tribes are beginning to be involved in protecting their intellectual property by writing research codes. Colville and Siletz are the two Northwest tribes that have codes in place. Benchmarks will be set to help us with data that we need for our long-range planning.

The Education Committee continues to receive updates on Chemawa Indian School. Two positions are open on the school board, one from Idaho and one from Montana. Please suggest names to Mr. Reimer at the BIA offices in Portland. It is critical that a full school board makes decisions regarding issues at Chemawa.

The Office of Indian Education told us that the authority of the school board is **to hire, fire, and have budget authority**. It is my understanding that facilities/property has other overriding rules that govern decisions on land and buildings. The National Indian School Board Association will hold its meeting in Portland this year.

The changes to the formula that are proposed for Contract Health will hurt the Northwest. Our area depends on Contract Health instead of hospitals. Any reallocation will result in less money coming to the Northwest. Indian Health Service (IHS) workgroups are meeting in Albuquerque in March. Many ATNI tribes will attend those meetings to voice objections to the proposed changes. The tribes also have to decide how new diabetes dollars will be distributed.

The last highlight from the weeklong meetings was a consultation meeting on a BIA needs assessment regarding the location of a regional juvenile justice center. Several tribes have no place to house their juvenile offenders. Also, alternatives to sending juveniles to jail were discussed. We will be able to use this data for planning purposes.

It takes one giant elk hide, about 19 to 21 square feet, for a woman's dress and a 12- to-15-square-foot elk hide for a young girl's dress. Each one requires three to four deer hides to be cut into strips for fringe and a couple of thousand shells, pine nuts, and beads for decoration. The shells and pine nuts may either be gathered by hand, ground and prepared for use, or purchased from a supply house. Each shell, nut, and bead is individually applied and basket wrapped.

It takes Brown about eight months to make each dress and sometimes even longer for the women and girls she coaches. Although Brown keeps her fees as low as possible and does a lot of barter, the cost in both time and

materials can be prohibitive for many tribal members.

But cultural revival among the Siletz is intense. In the 1980s, the annual regional pow-wow at Siletz triggered a desire amongst tribal members to restore their ancient dances and celebrations. This in turn fueled the need for traditional regalia. Approximately 30 young women, 15 adult women, and six little girls now dance along with 25 young boys and 15 men. But Brown says the numbers of tribal members who want to dance and can't because they lack regalia is even higher.

(See Lisa on page 21)