

## Miss Siletz Takes Part in NCAI Pageant

by *Waleeska Riding In*

Hello! I want to take this opportunity to share with everyone my experience as a contestant for the Miss NCAI (National Congress of American Indians) pageant that took place at the end of November in Spokane, Wash.

I competed with five other amazing girls. I am proud to have had the opportunity to meet them. Because not that many girls competed, we had the chance to really get to know each other.

Saturday, Nov. 24, on the first day we arrived, there was an orientation where we first met with everyone. The other girls and their chaperones were there. The pageant coordinators explained rules, guidelines, and all that good stuff to us.

At 3 p.m., we were scheduled to go to the Coeur d'Alene casino to promote the pageant. The most exciting part of that day was when a limousine picked us up. The chaperones had to ride in the shuttle and each contestant and Miss NCAI 2000 rode in the limo. It was a 30 to 45 minute drive, so that gave all of us girls a chance to introduce ourselves and really get to know each other.

Liberty Toledo, the outgoing Miss NCAI, is 22 and goes to Idaho State University.

Sunday, Nov. 25, was the day of the Miss NCAI breakfast. Each of us girls had the opportunity to honor Liberty with a gift that was representative of our respective tribes. I gave her a key chain made of beads



Above: *Ke Aloha Alo, Miss Indian World (l); Waleeska Riding In, Miss Siletz; and Evonne Wilson, Miss Indian USA*

Right: *Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Waleeska Riding In*



and nacet shells. The interview part of the pageant also took place. In the afternoon, we had a dress rehearsal.

Monday, Nov. 26, was the Miss NCAI honor luncheon. We met people, introduced ourselves, and promoted the pageant. This also was the day of the pageant. We were judged on our speaking abilities, talent, and traditional dress. It was exciting.

The theatre where the pageant was actually held was so crowded that some of the audience had to stand in the doorway to watch. I felt so happy to be a part of it all. The new Miss NCAI is Ponka-We Victors of the Tohono

O'odham Nation and it is an honor to have competed with her.

The experience was so much more than I could ever write about it. I'm a public relations major, so one thing that I got out of the conference was public speaking experience. I'm no stranger to public speaking, but it's been a few years and the crowds seem to be getting bigger.

The Youth Commission conference was going on at the same time and as contestants, we were encouraged to go because we are considered youth (ages 13-24). With being in the pageant, it wasn't so easy to attend every panel that

I wanted to. As a contestant, we were obligated to be in certain places at certain times and sometimes we missed the really good panels that the Youth Commission had scheduled. There were various receptions and luncheons that we could attend.

I met so many incredible and amazing people and some new opportunities have opened up to me. It would have been great to win and some people were hopeful that I would win. Even after the pageant was over, people I didn't even know or hadn't met came up to me to tell me that they thought I was going to win.

At the conference when people spoke of us as contestants, they explained to audiences that it takes a lifetime to be where we are. Our daily decisions as young people affect our lives. I have great people in my life and I have had great opportunities in my past.

I want everyone who reads this to know that I was out there representing you. I'm representing the tribe and my other tribes, my family, and myself. I was myself on that stage and I did well. I am very comfortable with my performance and the way I presented myself. I am proud to have had such wonderful support.

Thank you to everyone for your continuing love, support, understanding, wisdom, and prayers. I'm glad you have faith in me because I have faith that our tribe will grow stronger.

## How Do You Talk To Your Kids About Drugs?

### Get Advice, Share Ideas with Other Parents on the Web

In today's world, talking to children about drugs is a challenge all parents face. Good Housekeeping magazine and the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign have collaborated on an initiative designed to engage parents in a national conversation about their kids and drug prevention.

In the November issue of Good Housekeeping, parents were invited to write in or log on to share advice about how they keep their kids healthy and drug free.

Parents say they understand how important it is to talk to their kids about drugs. Yet, they wonder if their kids will listen to them, and some worry that they don't always know what to say. Research shows that kids look to parents – not to friends or teachers – on the big issues.

According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, kids who learn about the risks of drug use from their parents are less likely to use drugs. And two-thirds of teens say losing their parents' respect and pride is one of the main reasons they don't smoke marijuana or use other drugs.

Log on to [TheAntiDrug.com](http://TheAntiDrug.com) or write to Good Housekeeping, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10019 to get advice or share your thoughts on parenting and how you talk to your kids about drug use.

- What have you learned as a parent?
- How do you talk to your kids about drugs?
- How should you answer the hard questions that kids ask?

For more information and free resources on drug prevention, go to [www.mediacampaign.org](http://www.mediacampaign.org).

### Parents Get Help to Keep Kids Drug Free

To provide parents and caregivers with real-life tips on how to keep kids drug free, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has produced a free drug prevention brochure in collaboration with parents and parenting experts from across the country.

Community coalitions, parents, and others involved in youth substance abuse prevention can order copies of "Keeping Your Kids Drug Free: A How-To Guide for Parents and Caregivers" via phone at 1-800-788-2800.