

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

My name is Andrea Case. I've been incarcerated since I was 16. I'm now 23 years old.

All these years, I've seen a lot of wrong happen to my Native sisters, from assault to death. For many, being locked up means being forgotten. That's what they want. And that is what they are hoping will happen to a sister named Michelle Everett.

Michelle has five beautiful children living in Virginia, too far for visits. Her family doesn't seem concerned. None of us who are locked up with her (her friends) are allowed to visit her, not even a five-minute hello. She can't smudge. Nothing.

Michelle is in the infirmary slowly dying. This prison estimates she'll live no longer than six months. What does she have to keep her spirit and hope up? For a few years, Michelle would go to the clinic with yellow eyes, yellow skin, sometimes pale like a ghost, and she couldn't eat for days. She was told there was nothing wrong, that she was OK.

Recently, she was told she had jaundice and cirrhosis of the liver, but then told she was "cured" from both. Then it was her anti-depressants doing this stuff to her. Now they don't know what's wrong with her. Her eyes are yellow, as well as her skin; she has no meat on her bones, and no energy.

This place of "corrections" won't send her to a hospital because they don't think a human life is worth the money. All it takes is some different test to diagnose Michelle's sickness. Why is this a problem? Because she's a Native woman with no outside support.

All it would take are phone calls from people on the streets to call Warden Joan Palmateer voicing their concerns. The more people call on Michelle's behalf, the more pressure Warden Ms. Palmateer has to do something.

It's a start to help Michelle. I don't know how else I can help my sister, other than asking you to show her support by writing or sending her cards. It makes me cry to know Michelle isn't getting help. I ask that you make calls on Michelle's issue, Michelle's life. I do not have the phone number to this prison. You can look it up in a phone book or call information. Please write to her and make her smile - Michelle Everett #12148924, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (C.C.C.F.), P.O. Box 9000, Wilsonville, OR 97070.

Thank you.
Andrea Case



**See the Elk Hunt
Drawing Applications
on page 10.**



Last chance!

**Be sure to
fill yours out and send
it in by Oct. 18, 2002.**

To the editor:

Hello, Grandson (Jaymon James Cole). We all love you very much and miss you. We have been trying to get ahold of you. It seems every time I find someone with a phone number, it's either a wrong number or disconnected. It seems everyone doesn't know where Jaymon and his mom live.

Your daddy (Cody Cole), grandmama (Mikie Cole), uncle (Harlon Cole), and grandpapa (Jesse Wright) sure do miss you. We send your birthday gifts to your daddy along with other gifts. We love you, Jaymon Cole. We miss you so much it hurts. Our lives without you are empty.

Remember that no matter what happens, your mommy said she would never keep you away from us. She promised because she knows how much we love you.

I know it's been a long time since we've seen you. We don't know where to go to see you, Jaymon Cole. Your family loves you and wishes to see you. I hope your mommy will let you come visit us. You're so important to us. It hurts deep down knowing that you're out there so close but so far away.

Please let his daddy, Cody Cole, see his son, Jaymon Cole. Please let his grandparents and uncle see him. Here's our phone number, 541-996-8300. A phone call is better than never hearing from you. We would love to be part of your life.

Grandson, we love you with all our heart and soul. May the Great Spirit watch over you and your family, Grandson. We love you and miss you very much.

Cody Cole

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To the editor:

Circle of Memories: I'd like to reminisce of days in Siletz when I was a child.

I started first grade in '67. Many families were poor (financially) in those days. But oh, we were rich in so many other ways.

We'd go over to grandpa and grandma's, eat pie and ice cream, and visit relatives. We'd go down to bedrock and wade in the water. I'd ask my grandpa lots of questions about the old days and he'd tell me stories about gathering roots, relatives he went to Chemawa with, and picking beans with different families in the summer. Always asking him how to say things in Indian. He would say things to grandma in Indian and then say, "Huh, Mom?" He always called her mom.

My grandparents were always busy planting a garden, picking fern, sharing their harvest with many relatives and friends. Grandpa always told me that whatever you do in life, "Do it well and always pray."

It didn't matter what time of year it was, there were always pies on grandma's freezer. Grandpa would rock back and forth in his wooden rocking chair, singing his Chetco songs. Sometimes he would sing himself to sleep. He'd pat his heart and inside his shirt pocket was a little Bible, King James Version. Sister, you have to believe in him because man is man and there's only one God.

A fire was always going, even in August. These were the days when it just seemed like time went slower, people had more time to visit with one another, you knew the names of everybody in town.

Many days, we'd fill up the house and practice dancing because someone had invited Grandpa and his dance group to a parade, pow-wow, or community function. Off we'd go and dance, and we were called "Archie Ben and his Siletz Indian Dancers."

Grandpa always shared a story when we'd dance, a prayer. He had this humble gentle way about him, a smile that made you never forget you met him. I've traveled to many reservations, met many different people these past several years, and many people knew my grandparents, both Native and non-Native folk.

I'm so blessed to have such an upbringing that there's no other way of learning other than being part of and seeing with little eyes that long to learn. Being a grandma now doesn't change my longing to learn, but I also try to carry on my grandparents' teachings. To describe it in today's jargon would be to look outside of the box. Always it's been difficult to try to put a circle in a box.

Selene Rilatos (one of the Ben girls)