



*The Vaughn family enjoys the holiday gathering in Portland.*



*Portland-area elders gather for the community Christmas gathering, including back row, l to r: Charlotte Squires, Diane Robertson, Connie James, Kay Steele, Geneva Johnson, Pauline Montana, and Victorine Harrison; and front row, l to r: Shirley Walker, Sister Francella Griggs, Connie Hartt, and Doris Riding In.*

## Portland Area Celebrates Christmas

Siletz Tribal members in the Portland area gathered together on Dec. 18 at a local V.F.W. Hall to celebrate the Christmas season at the Portland Area Annual Christmas Gathering.

All ages were represented, from newborn babies to our honored elders,

to enjoy a Christmas dinner, carols, door prizes, gifts for all our tribal youth (including ice skating passes), gift baskets, and poinsettias for our elders.

The Portland-area staff would like to thank all of the programs and staff who contributed to this annual

Christmas community gathering. We also would like to thank City Liquidators and Chinook Winds for their donations and all our tribal members who made the Portland-area Christmas gathering possible.



*Left: Jess and Hannah Ramsey celebrate baby Jordan's first Christmas. Right: Albert Worthington and Pearl Scott learn drumming techniques.*



## Walt's Words of Wit and Wisdom

Over the years that I have worked for the tribe, I have almost been racist. I wouldn't attend trainings unless they were Indian-sponsored. That has kinda changed now. I don't want to fly anywhere, don't want the hassle at the airport and just plain don't want anything to do with an airplane, so now I have to take trainings wherever I can to keep my certification.

During some of these trips, I've had the honor of meeting medicine people. Now, they don't wear little badges that say IMM or anything like it. Someone tells another that this is a medicine man.

I've had the good luck to have talked to a few on different occasions. One time, I was talking to a man, a blood tribal member. Later, another person told me that he was a Native healer. I did go back to talk to him. One thing I asked about was what schools trained Indian medicine men. He said there were no schools. He said that this is something that's spiritual and the children are born with it.

Another person there shared that the medicine man has helpers that sort of screen out the people seeking help. He said that if a person wasn't connected

with Mother Earth and didn't believe, then that person would be sent to a physician. A person seeking the help of a medicine man must believe that all life is related, i.e., all the plants, animals, birds, fish, that all is connected.

One time while at a Sun Dance on Mt. Hood, I had the good luck to have a medicine man contact me. It was during a sort of break in the dancing. The medicine man was walking by and suddenly turned and came to me. He said, "You wanted to talk to me?"

I was stunned for a moment and couldn't do anything but stammer, trying to find some kind of words. Finally, I said yes, that I would like to have him come to Siletz sometime and talk to my group. At this time, I had several people in Eugene, Siletz, and Salem.

He said that he would like to do it, but didn't think that he could find time to do it as he was going all over doing Sun Dances. He was the one who would put the ties in the Sun Dancers' skin to break. After he left me, he went to another pipe circle and talked to a man. He said that you are about to cry, then he went on to tell him what he was concerned about.

To me, it was almost unbelievable that this man could sense these thoughts that were going on in our heads. I have since talked with others who have had experience with medicine men and the things they have to say again sounds unbelievable, but it does make a believer out of me.

The word medicine man is probably the wrong term. Many of the very best medicine people are women.

The Boat people say that the medicine people use hocus-pocus tactics in that they used ceremony, rattles, and songs. They said that the Indians were very good psychologists. The Indian people had more than 200 medicines and 42 percent of the medicines are still in use today. The medicine people say that ceremony is a big part of healing.

My regret is that I cannot remember all the answers I got or even the questions that I had, but I was, and still am, very impressed.

