

Insects, underage drinking,
pow-wow, elk tag drawing
Pages 4-6, 8

Babies, graduates, five
generations, Indigenous Games
Pages 12-13

Pharmacy update, CHS update,
out-of-area benefits, breastfeeding
Page 19-20

Wynonna, Styx, Run for the
Wind, Comedy on the Coast
Pages 21-22

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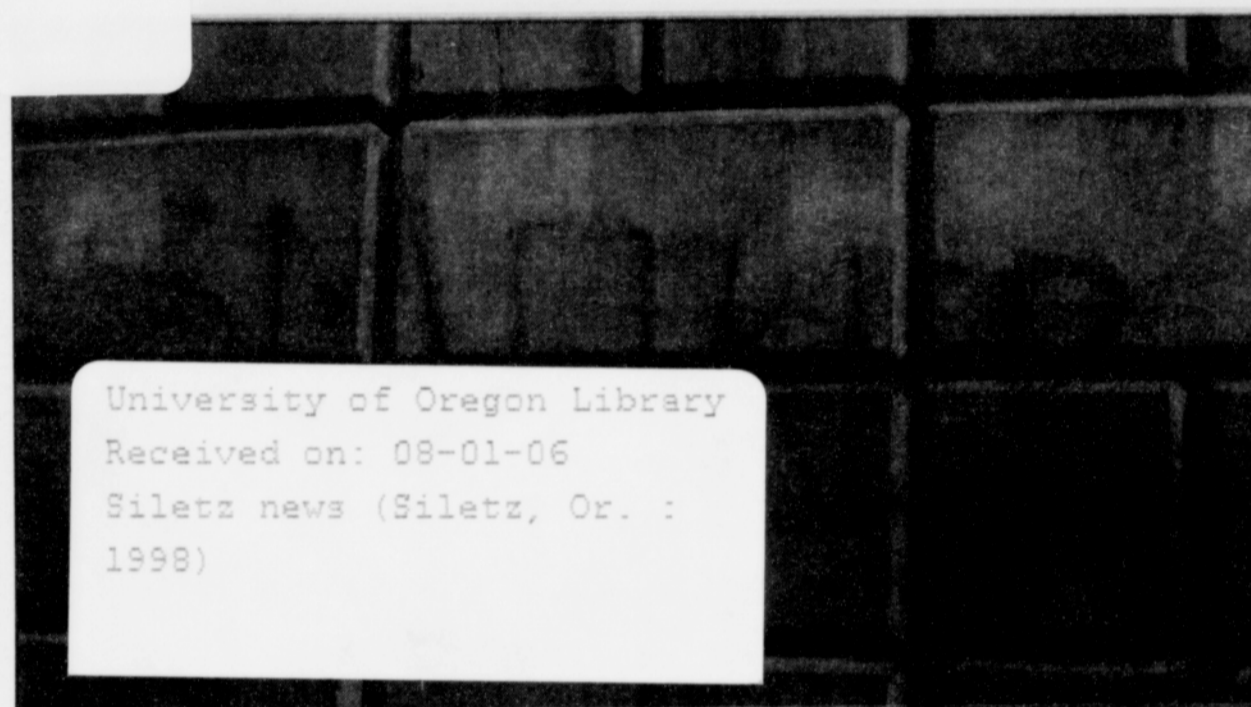
SILETZ



NEWS

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

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Graffiti appears on the cement wall on Gwe-shut (k'wee shvt) Road (above) and at the Siletz Sk8 Park (right). Two meetings have been held to help community members learn what to look for in identifying gang-related activity.



Gang-Related Activity Appears in Community

by Laurel Johnson

In response to recent signs of gang-related activities in Siletz, the Tribal Prevention Programs Committee held a follow-up meeting June 28 at the Siletz Tribal Community Center.

At a previous meeting on June 6, Tori Lopez, a presenter from Multnomah County; Darelle Butler, a Siletz tribal elder/spiritual healer; and members of the Toledo Police Department discussed gang-related issues with members of the local community.

Approximately 40 people attended the most recent meeting after enjoying a free dinner sponsored by Prevention Programs. During the meeting, Delina John, prevention coordinator, and Jenifer Metcalf, youth development specialist, discussed gang-related issues with members of the community.

"We want to develop a community action plan," Jenifer told those attending. As of early June, gang graffiti had made its appearance at the Siletz skate part and in tribal housing, including the large cement-covered embankment on _____ . Large reproductions of photographs of the graffiti in Siletz were on display at the meeting.

During the discussions, the Prevention Committee and community volunteers agreed that their attempts to remove the graffiti were met with little success. One volunteer told those attending the meeting that those responsible for the graffiti had left a paint thinner-type compound over their markings, thus leaving the painted surfaces pitted and making conventional methods of clean-up "almost impossible."

"It's taking too long," another member of the community told the committee.

Jenifer and Delina asked those attending to research the problem further to see what could be done to remove the graffiti and prevent future occurrences.

"What we've seen in our community," Jenifer said, "is tagging and it's a gang-related activity."

Graffiti Often First Indication of Gang Activity

According to Robert Walker, former National Major Gang Task Force advisory board member, "Gang graffiti, the singular of graffiti, is of-

ten the first indication that gang activity is present in your community."

Walker also said, "Studies have shown in many cases that if graffiti is left unchecked and not removed, more and more graffiti will appear." However, as Walker indicated, "Not all graffiti is gang related. Individuals known as 'taggers' paint graffiti on buildings, fences, signs, highways, overpasses, and even trucks and railway cars. Many of these individuals enjoy a reputation for creativity and will frequently sign their 'tagger' name."

Still, Walker stressed, "It is nonetheless important to immediately remove this type of graffiti (because) it is still vandalism!"

In response to the problem of gang graffiti, Walker has told the public to "remember the four Rs of graffiti:

"Read – Read the graffiti to determine the gang(s) involved. If you are unable to interpret what is observed, find someone who can. Frequently, a great deal of intelligence can be gathered, such as the nicknames or monikers of gang members, warnings, threats to other gangs, availability of drugs, pending gang wars, and more.

"Report – Educators, parents and other concerned citizens should report found graffiti to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Law enforcement or corrections personnel should report the existence of graffiti to the department's gang intelligence unit.

Record – Use a still or video camera to record the graffiti for possible later use. If graffiti continues

See Gang on page 14.

Siletz News
Confederated Tribes of
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What's Inside

Letters to the Editor	2	Tribal Council Timesheets	18
Chairman's Report	3	Siletz Clinic	19
Tribal Program News	4	Chinook Winds	21
Tribal Member News	12	Passages	23
Notices	15		

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