

TRIBAL MEMBER NEWS

Vote Stuart for NIEA Student Board

by Tiffany Stuart

Day'la'ha – Hello, my name is Tiffany Stuart and I am a tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon. I recently earned my associate's of arts degree in para-education elementary education from Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., in May 2006.

In March I was admitted to the Haskell Indian Nations University School of Education. I will pursue a bachelor's of science degree in elementary education.

I am running for the NIEA student board position for 2006-2008. I would be thankful for your vote. Please vote on-site at the NIEA convention in Anchorage, Alaska, on Oct. 20, 2006, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the designated voting area or vote by absentee ballot.

Individuals who have paid their membership for 2006-07 can request absentee ballots if they are unable to attend the 2006 convention. Absentee ballots must be requested in writing or by sending a fax to 202-544-7290; deadline/postmark by Sept. 22, 2006. Telephone requests are not accepted.

All absentee ballots must be returned, postmarked or faxed, 21 calendar days prior to the first day of the convention, on or before Sept. 28, 2006. Visit www.niea.org for convention and other information.

This summer, I taught students ages 5-7 at an Indian camp sponsored by Haskell Extension, Heart of American Indian Center – Kansas City, and the Rotary Club. I believe community involvement is a start for Indian education. Volunteering for this camp and other camps during the summer led me to encourage children to read, have good health, and learn about their Native culture.

In the spring 2006 semester, I volunteered to teach a group of 24 sixth-graders from Omaha, Neb., who were visiting Haskell. Like many young Natives today, they were searching for who they are.

I taught them what I know and where I am from. Working with these Indian students gave me better insight on what Indian education is all about.

Teaching at the Siletz Culture Camp for the past eight years has been

a unique experience that enabled me to guide fellow tribal members in learning our language, arts, and dance. Teaching Native arts has been at my heart for years.

I also have taught at the Cow Creek Culture Camp (Oregon) and Haskell Indian Nations University. Knowing where you come from is the beginning of an academic education.

The best experience of being a leader nationwide for Indian education was my role as Miss Haskell 2005-2006. I gave exposure of Native Americans to the Lawrence community and communities nationwide. From giving presentations to corporations about Native Americans to going before guests at Haskell, public speaking was my favorite part of my Miss Haskell reign.

I had the opportunity to attend the NIEA conference in Denver last October. I learned that Native Americans need that extra voice for education that goes beyond the classroom.

Being a Native college student is a start for me in Indian education. Attending the University Council meetings at Haskell Indian Nations Univer-



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sity, the Haskell Indian Nations University Board of Regents meetings, and serving on the Haskell Student Senate Board all have become a part of my foundation in becoming a leader for Indian education.

To all my relations – Hvm'chi

For further information or support, contact me at Ndn_homegirl@yahoo.com.

Gang, con't from page 1

to appear after removal, the photographic record may serve as a history of the efforts made to combat the problem.

Remove – Remove all graffiti as soon as possible after it is discovered. When removing graffiti, paint the entire wall, post, sign, etc. on which the graffiti is found. Studies have shown that 'spot' painting to blot out the graffiti is not as effective for the permanent discouragement of graffiti as is covering the entire subject area."

Brian Zeiler, professor of communication at the University of California at San Diego, said in one of his essays that, "Graffiti can be seen as a medium of expression that is coded with significant meaning to gang members. There are three major types of graffiti: tagging, bombing, and piecing.

"Tagging is the act of marking or painting one's tag (pseudonym, alias). Tagging is like writing one's autograph.

"Bombing entails spending at most only a few minutes to create a one- or two-color letter scheme based on the writer's tag name.

"Piecing is the highest echelon of modern graffiti. Pieces are large murals done with the utmost of care to illustrate the best an artist can do. Graffiti takes the concept of the artist down to its most common denominator; it is the essence of free expression, 'presentation' without compensation. Yet it is to be debated whether or not graffiti is vandalism. Of course it is, but that's not the point. When it is commissioned

by the City Council, graffiti art, like murals, instantly become acceptable forms of artistic expression. But take out the artist and the commission and replace them with an urban youth who isn't getting city permission, then the act becomes an epidemic striking at the core of private property."

In retaliation to the gang graffiti problem in Siletz, members of the community and the Prevention Committee agreed to develop an action plan, become more involved in a community watch program, and conduct weekly patrols of the area to watch for gang-related activities.

"We need to be diligent in this issue," said one member of the community, "[as] our children are at risk, (and) we have to protect our children."

Gang Clothing Also at Issue

Also discussed at the follow-up meeting was the issue of gang clothing. After the earlier June community meeting with a presentation by Tori Lopez on gang issues, Delina indicated that some community members had expressed that they felt they were being unfairly targeted because some of their clothing resembled the types of clothing worn by gang members.

As Zeiler noted in his essay on gang expressions, "Unfortunately, many of today's youths that are not connected with gang activity have

adopted the same styles and manners of dress because it's 'cool.'"

Also, Zeiler said, "Wearing particular styles, types, and colors of clothing, jewelry, shoes, and other items is not a positive indicator of gang affiliation. It is merely one of the indicators or factors to be considered when identifying gang members."

Finally, Zeiler indicated that, "It has been reported that some gangs are starting to change their clothing style by no longer wearing their colors in an effort to deceive law enforcement and conceal their gang affiliation."

Some of those attending the follow-up meeting indicated they felt there wasn't a "gang presence" in the Siletz community, but rather more of a "juvenile delinquency problem."

Delina and Jenifer stressed to those attending the follow-up meeting, "We need to make this a more caring process" in the recognition of clothing and forms of personal expression in relation to gang colors and styles, and "not jump to conclusions. We want to develop an action plan to help our community avoid gang-related problems."

The Prevention Committee also stressed the importance of recognizing gang activity and correctly identifying such activity. Informative handouts on gang prevention were given out at the meeting, specifying intervention and supervision strategies for area youth.

Jenifer also reminded those attending of Prevention Programs'

monthly meetings and indicated that announcements and additional information would be sent out on a regular basis to those who signed in at the meeting and gave their mailing address. During the meeting, Jenifer and Delina asked for the community's suggestions for making Siletz a healthier community.

Responses included an increase in parental involvement and supervision of their children, stricter enforcement of late-night curfews, and the opening of an after-hours youth activities center as a "safe place" where area youth can "hang" with their friends.

As one member of the community said, "We are responsible for our community, and we need to act as such."

For more information on services to support Siletz community youth, contact: George Nagel, medical social worker for the Siletz Community Health Clinic, at 541-444-1030; DeAnna Pearl, tobacco prevention coordinator, 541-444-9659; Alissa Lane, education specialist, 541-444-8273; Kelli Brugh, Siletz Valley School counselor, 541-444-1100; Kathy Stewart, Siletz Valley Partnership coordinator/developer, 541-444-7310; Delina John, 541-444-8267; or Jenifer Metcalf, 541-444-8267.

To report incidents of vandalism, area residents can contact the Toledo Police Department at 911 (emergency calls), 541-336-5555 (non-emergency calls), or 541-336-2123 (confidential fax).