



A Warrior Among Us

by Carol Blomstrom

There is a true warrior who walks among us. His name is Bobbie Bayya.

Bobbie has fought the battle of cancer once and won. Now he fights it again.

He shares his kindness willingly and is strong in his beliefs. He needs to be told how much we respect his courage.

He is a messenger. He courageously speaks out on the issues of cancer and more particularly on the issue of early detection and screening for cancers concerning men.

You young people who are putting drugs and alcohol into your body, stop and give him a thought. He works to survive day to day and you work to

destroy your body. Somewhere the message was lost.

To be healthy and reach your goals, you need to remain strong and healthy by treating your body as a gift from the Creator. Bobbie is here to carry the message of courage, healing and survival.

We need to be there for each other during our trials. We can fight the cancers that come upon us by talking, calling and sending letters to loved ones and attending support groups to help each other cope with the trials of cancer. With love, prayers and togetherness.

Bobbie, you have my prayers and praise.

Tooth Talk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Oral Health Is Not a New Practice for Tribal People

This subject arose from efforts to learn about traditional tribal oral health practices, especially Siletz Tribal practices.

The main question: What oral health practices did Siletz Tribal people utilize prior to Western medicine/dentistry? The overall study of a culture's uses of plants is called ethnobotany. In this case, it's called Native American ethnobotany.

These efforts were in preparation for this year's Culture Camp, held a couple weeks ago. The dental clinic worked to collect information and samples, examples of Siletz and general tribal plant uses for oral health treatment.

Preparations were made for the kids to participate in making a memory quilt (paper squares with teeth for individuals to place messages, each square tied to the next with floss). Tribal words for smile/teeth/mouth/etc. were woven into the quilt.

First, oral health was a natural part of the life of the Siletz people and tribal people in general. Tribal people ate high fiber/gritty and unrefined foods¹ that tend to cause wear on teeth but not necessarily decay.

Not long ago, the dental profession spoke of "nature's toothbrushes," foods like carrots and apples. The fibers of these hard fruits and vegetables brush against our teeth as we chew and remove plaque from the tooth surfaces the food touches as we bite and chew. Siletz people and other tribal people were doing this ... well, forever.

The disadvantage of large quantities of high fibrous foods is wear to teeth, which leads to shorter and shorter teeth. Today we have wear to our teeth as well, but it's not caused by the foods we eat because we consume too many processed foods.

Today's wear can come from bruxing or grinding of our teeth whether awake or asleep, triggered by the stresses in our lives while awake.

Many plants common to most of us (cow parsnip, salal, Oregon grape, echinacea root, white oak leaves/bark, etc.) were utilized for medicine and other uses by Siletz and other tribal peoples.

Daniel E. Moerman, in his book *Native American Ethnobotany*, documents Native American uses of 4,029 kinds of plants with a total of 44,691 usages.

More than half of these usages are medicinal and the breadth of Native American plant knowledge is shown by the listings of 11,078 uses for foods, 2,567 for fibers, 607 for dyes, and 5,494 for a rich assortment of other uses such as ceremonial and magical items, cleaning agents, containers, fertilizers, fuels, incense and fragrance, insecticides, jewelry, lubricants, musical instruments, preservatives, smoking and snuff, soap, water-proofing, tools, toys and weapons.²

Ocean spray, a plant native to the Northwest, is a wood that did not burn easily and has branches that grow straight. Ocean spray also is called creambush. It has a growing range from wet coastal forests to drier, cooler mountains further inland or chapperral.

Ocean Spray tends to grow in areas dominated by Douglas fir. It tended to be the first green shoot to spring up in an area recovering from a burn.³ Today, scotch broom is replacing that plant's natural habitat.⁴

The whole Ocean Spray bush had practical and medicinal uses. The flowers are edible.⁵ The bark was boiled as a tea taken as a tonic for convalescents and athletes.⁶ Poultices were made from flowers for treating sore lips.⁷

Long branches were used for arrows.⁸ The branches, cut into sticks, were used for chewing and brushing of teeth. Ocean Spray wood also doesn't burn well, so it had uses as cooking tools.

Just chewing would have a natural brushing effect. I suspect that the chewed stick was moved about the teeth in the same manner that a tooth-

brush is moved on our teeth today. Any type of wood sticks could be utilized, as long as the flavor was agreeable to the individual.

The ubiquitous California poppy has a history of its leaves being utilized for oral pain.⁹ In 1846, one doctor observed that creosote bush, *larrea tridentata*, was used for toothaches.¹⁰

Another source recommended applying this plant topically to "treat toothache and may be effective at preventing cavities."¹¹ Creosote as manufactured today is considered by some to be a toxic substance causing burning mouths and much more.¹²

Native American ethnobotany may be giving us another example of circles spiraling back as Western medicine returns to its origins.

Dr. Terry Maresca, a Mohawk Indian who trained in Western medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, represents a new kind of Native American healer.

Her training as a physician allows her to bring the best of the scientific method, modern diagnostic tools and healing technologies to her healing practice, while her knowledge of Indian ways and medicinal plants brings the wisdom of her culture to the process. But she would not call herself a traditional healer.

"I think it's important to point out that there is a big difference between an American Indian or Alaska Native physician who's been trained in a Western way versus what I could call a traditional healer," she says. "They're not the same."¹³

My apologies for the lack of more specific information on Siletz traditional healing or what Western medicine calls ethnobotany. Sources for this effort were limited by printed materials found on the Web.

I will continue my search and get back to you. Until then, check out the Memory Quilt in the clinic made by Siletz children at last month's Culture Camp.

portant for you to be seen at least every two years. Your CHS funds renew every two years.

For those patients who have VSP insurance (employees of the tribe and casino have this), VSP will cover an eye exam and new lenses every year, and new frames every two years.

If you have questions about when you were last seen or about your available CHS funding or VSP insurance, call us in Optometry at 541-444-9630 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1630. Employees can GroupWise either Kathleen Furgason or Darcy Jimenez.

For those patients who are **not** students, elders or diabetic, it's also im-

Siletz Community Cancer Support Group

Meets the third Tuesday each
month: Aug. 21 and Sept. 18
Siletz Library Community Room
Noon to 1 p.m.

Community members who are directly or indirectly affected by cancer are invited to attend – cancer patients, survivors, family members, support people, and care providers.

For more information, contact Sandra Hahn at 541-444-9627 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1627; or DeAnna Pearl at 541-444-9659 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1659.

1 *Journal of Dental Research*, "Concerning Defects in Enamel of Teeth of Ancient American Indians," Bodecker, CF, 1930

2 *Native American Ethnobotany* by Daniel E. Moerman, Timber Press, sixth printing 2006, p11

3 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creambush>

4 www.paghat.com/oceanspray.html

5 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creambush>

6 <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/pacificnw/2001/1014/plant.html>

7 *Native American Ethnobotany* by Daniel E. Moerman, Timber Press, sixth printing 2006, p268

8 *Native American Ethnobotany* by Daniel E. Moerman, Timber Press, sixth printing 2006, p.268

9 *Native American Ethnobotany* by Daniel E. Moerman, Timber Press, sixth printing 2006, p228

10 *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, Vol. XXXIV, Feb. 4, 1846, p1

11 *Secrets of Native American Herbal Remedies* by Anthony Cichoke, D.C., PH.D, 2001, Avery, p59

12 www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts85.html

13 www.tribalconnections.org/healthnews/features/oct2003.html