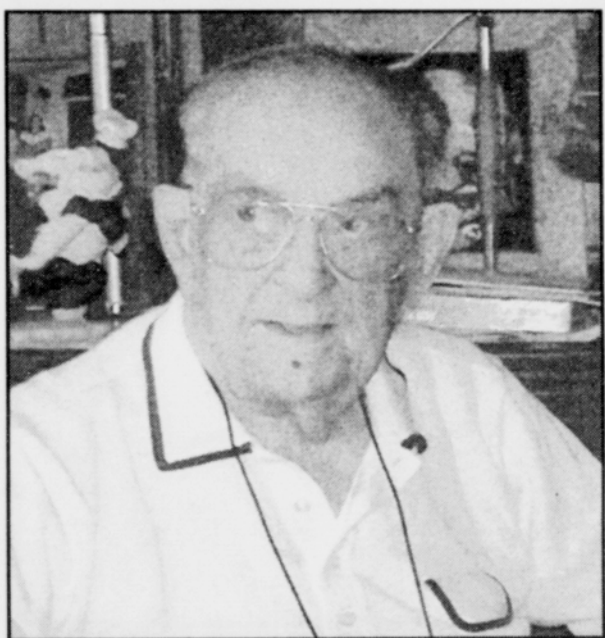


## TRIBAL MEMBER NEWS



Meet Robert Johnson, the oldest male member of the Siletz Tribe. He lives in Oakland, Calif., and will be 95 years old on Dec. 21, 2007.

He has two living children and a daughter who passed away in 2001, 10 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great-grandchildren. He was born in McCloud, Calif.

He spent his life working in a meat market and then driving truck for Langendorf Bakery. He then became a supervisor for the bakery. He retired after 30 years with Langendorf.

He lives alone as his wife, Peggy, to whom he was married for 67 years, passed away in 2000.

He hoped to get up to the tribe and meet the people, especially Loraine Butler. He also wanted to get his identification card, but his health keeps him from traveling. He is loved so much by all his family.



*Congratulations to Michael and Kristi Keene, married July 27, 2007. We are proud of you both and we know you will have a long happy life together. Miss you and love you! Love, your family in Siletz*



*Dub Bellinger planted this garden outside the Little Chief Restaurant in Siletz. (photo by Maria Westervelt)*



*Donald F. and MaryJane Bellinger with children, Dub Bellinger and Cynthia Farlow (1951)*

## Inspiration Comes in Little Packages, Too

by Sheila Warren

*Editor's note: Sheila Warren recently wrote this essay for one of the scholarship contests. The topic she originally wrote on was "the most inspirational person in my life," but she says it now best represents what becoming a parent has meant to her.*

Everyone is asked who their greatest inspiration is at least once in their lifetime. I know I have been asked that question many times since I was about four years old. Usually it was in a classroom setting and my classmates would all answer with either Mom or Dad, or even our teacher. I never had an honest answer, but I always thought about what it would be like when I finally found that one inspirational person. I figured that it would be an adult, and I thought that it would be someone who had done great things and at some point in time had said just one short phrase that truly hit home for me and struck an inspirational chord. As it turns out, I couldn't have been more wrong. I am now twenty years old and I have just recently found someone who inspires me to be the very best I can be. He hasn't done great things, he isn't an adult, and very few people even know who he is. "He" is my five-month-old baby boy, Alex, and he is the most inspirational person in my life.

I spent several years doing nothing but getting myself into trouble and disregarding any effect that it might have had on the people around me. Then all of a sudden I found out I was going to have a baby and everything seemed to change. The things that I had been doing suddenly seemed much less important when I realized that I was going to be a mom, and that I was the person that

would matter the most to this tiny little human. On Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007, he was born and he was the most beautiful (and gooey) little boy I had ever seen.

When I brought my baby boy home it was like I was coming home with a purpose in a carseat. Over the past year since I found out I was pregnant I have done many good things for myself, but really they have all been for him. The biggest thing that I have done is that I have gone back to school in order to get my Bachelor's degree so that I can begin a career. In school I have maintained a 4.0 average as many people do, but my motivation isn't the bragging right, it's to be able to be in the better classes and get the better jobs because of my grades so that in the end I can give my son more. I am told that most people do this for themselves, but I know that I never did and I don't think I ever would have without him. I look in my baby's eyes and I just see him looking at his mom and loving every minute of it. Right now all he knows is that I'm there and he wants me to be there, but as he grows up I want him to know how much he means to me, and for that reason I have to do my best in everything.

Alex is now five months old and along with inspiring me to be a better person, he inspires me to appreciate every single day. For five months now I

have woken up to hear him "goo" and "gah" to tell me he's ready for breakfast, and every time I walk into his room I am greeted with a huge smile and a laugh because he's so excited to start a new day. A few weeks ago I watched him wake up from a nap. He started moving and making noise, then the eyes opened just a little bit, and then just a little bit more. All of a sudden they opened wide and my baby looked around and gave a huge smile at the sight of his mom. Right then I realized two things that I had never given much thought to up until that point in time. First I realized that I really am the most important person in his life, which is something I had pondered a bit, but mostly questioned. Second and most important, I realized that Alex opened his eyes at that moment because he wanted to. There was no alarm blaring into his ears, no phone ringing to tell him something needed to be done, and no meeting that he was late for. He had simply taken a nap and decided that it was time to wake up and enjoy the world around him.

For a baby the world is a brand new place every day, no matter how familiar his surroundings might be, and new adventures are everywhere, no matter how many times he's chewed on that same squeaky toy or shoved the cat's head in his mouth. Every time he wakes up, there's something to see and something

to do, even if it's just staring at his mom. I stopped to think about that and found that I had not woken up that way in years. In fact I found that every time I had woken up in the recent past had been to think of a new way to get myself back to sleep. Suddenly that sort of thinking just seemed wrong to me and I was shocked that I could have spent so much time being so negative about something so positive.

I know that for some people it may seem like I really put too much thought into that one moment and blew it completely out of proportion. Whether I did or not, that day meant a lot to me, and since then I have not suddenly begun to wake up excited to be sleep deprived, but I have begun to wake up appreciative of the fact that I am awake and healthy and I could do anything if I really wanted to. The commercials say that having a baby changes everything. I don't know how much of everything my baby has changed, but I know that he has begun to change me and make me into a wonderful new person. That is what a true inspiration can do.