

NOTICES

Editor's note: This is a personal essay written by a Siletz Tribal member who would like to share her thoughts on Tribal culture and traditions.

Homage

by Delores Riding In

When I was 6 years old, my family moved to a town just outside the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in southern Idaho. We attended many "doings" of the Shoshone-Bannock people over the years and I would like to respectfully share my memories of the reservation pow-wow scene of 45 years ago.

Back then, there were few, if any, non-Indian visitors at pow-wows; the dances were for the people and some were held on land that had never been stepped on by whites. This is what we were told.

There were no specialty dances, no fancy or jingle dress dances; there were only war dances, round dances and general dances. My mother taught us to wait for the head lady dancer before we dared to take even a step.

I loved to dance as a child, to fly in my little shawl, and my family attended pow-wows from Oklahoma to Montana. I remember sitting on the ground for most of the evening and looking up at the men during the war dances. They owned the arena during these dances, they seemed to take power from the earth and they pounded it so hard with their feet that the ground shook.

The style then was shirtless, pantless, sometimes even short-less and they were nothing short of magnificent with beadwork glittering against their brown skin, huge eagle feathers and faces painted with "war paint." They dipped their heads so low they seemed to brush the ground as, whooping loudly, they pretended to hunt and kill.

When I saw my father dancing by, he seemed strangely unfamiliar. It was the only time I ever saw him without his shirt on. When the men retired from the dance floor, there were wooden benches for them to sit on that were high enough to protect their bustles. I remember watching these men as they came to their seats, sweating and breathing hard, and how two would put their heads together and pull away, laughing.

The women and children sat in lawn chairs behind the benches or in the bleachers, but no one even thought of violating the men's position in front of us. They were the guardians of that sacred ground, that magical dance arena that I loved so

much. It sounds old-fashioned but that's the way it was and it was there, crouched on the shaking ground as a child, that I learned to respect the Indian man.

Today, I'm sad to say I see men traditional dancers shoved out of the way to stand behind everyone else because there's no place designated for them to sit. I see people allowed to put on regalia and play at being Indian. I see little girls taught by adults to compete with each other and earn money for pow-wow committees. I see white kids and their clueless parents laying down blankets, encroaching further and further into dance arenas, clogging the sacred directions of northwest, southwest, northeast and southeast.

As a full-blood Indian child, my parents raised me with the old children's values of quietness, modesty and learning by watching. I wasn't primped, paraded or crowned because royalty is not an Indian concept.

The Sho-Bans had a young woman, usually 19 or 20 years old, who was Miss Fort Hall. I don't know how she was chosen, but knowing this Tribe, I suspect she was picked by the elders. All the kids knew she wasn't married and that she didn't smoke, drink or cuss.

Every time I saw her in her buckskin dress, sitting on a horse wearing more beadwork than she did, I would catch my breath. I couldn't wait to grow up and be just like her! Today, I'm not yet an elder but I am a grandmother and I'm told this is the time of life I look around me to see who will replace me. My words are offered in this spirit as one who remembers the old pow-wows and lodge dances.

I'm enrolled at Siletz and believe our sovereignty compels us to take back our dance arena. For all they do for us, we can restore our men to their rightful place. Disrespectful outsiders can be controlled or turned away. Girls as young as 7 cannot be anyone's role model, but may be in need of one.

I've heard our circle described as sacred while it's treated as common and completely commercialized. When our words no longer have meaning, money becomes our focus and our actions make no sense, we are fully embracing the white values that brought us termination.

Wilkinson to Present Chapters from Siletz History Book at Hatfield Forum

Charles Wilkinson, former Siletz Tribal attorney, will give two major lectures on his new book-in-progress, *Against All Odds: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Oregon*.

Wilkinson is the Distinguished University Professor and Moses Lasky Professor of Law at the University of Colorado.

The first lecture, *Walk On and Don't Look Back - The Trail of Tears of the Siletz Tribe of Oregon*, will be held April 21 in Portland, Ore., at the First Congregational Church at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50.

The second lecture, *Every Year We Go to the Center of Our World - Society and Governance of the Siletz Tribe of Oregon Before the Americans*, will be held April 22 in Salem, Ore., at Willamette University at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Wilkinson has been working on this book for four years in close cooperation with the Siletz Tribe and these presentations should be very interesting for Tribal members. The Hatfield lectures are premier events in Oregon and it is an honor to the Tribe to have its history recognized in this way.

Against All Odds presents an outstanding opportunity to write a truly valuable Tribal history. With so much Indian history at Siletz and elsewhere written from the non-Indian viewpoint, this book will present as well the Tribal perspective. It will be rich in the Indian voice. Many aspects of Siletz history deserve to be recognized as prominent in Indian policy nationally - a perspective lacking in the current scholarship.

Wilkinson has represented and worked with numerous Tribes for more than 35 years and has traveled to more than 100 Indian reservations. Often referred to as the nation's leading authority on Indian law, he has written 14 books, including *American Indians, Time and the Law*; *Messages from Frank's Landing* (a profile of Billy Frank, Jr. of the Nisqually Tribe of Washington); and *Blood Struggle - The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*.

In the venture closest to his heart, Wilkinson served as counsel for the Siletz Tribe for the passage of the Siletz Restoration Act of 1977 and the Siletz Reservation Act of 1980.

Mark O. Hatfield Distinguished Historians Forum

Professor Charles Wilkinson

Siletz Trail of Tears
April 21, 2009 • 7:30 p.m.
First Congregational Church
1126 SW Park Ave. • Portland

Tribal Life in Aboriginal Times
April 22, 2009 • 7:30 p.m.
Willamette University
900 State St. • Salem

AAIP Scholarships Available

The Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) is accepting applications for the 12th annual Patty Iron Cloud National Native American Youth Initiative (NNAYI) on June 20-28 in Washington, D.C.

Sixty American Indian high school students, ages 16-18, who have an interest in health professions and biomedical research will be awarded scholarships to attend the NNAYI program. This program is designed to educate high school students about various careers in the health professions and biomedical research.

AAIP member physicians and health professionals serve as role models for the students and offer insights into their respective health fields, including medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, public and allied health and biomedical research. Students also learn about opportunities for mentoring and shadowing with AAIP member physicians.

Application deadline for high school students is April 17. For more information, call Lucinda Myers at 202-946-7072 or e-mail lmayers@aaip.org. Applications can be downloaded at www.aaip.org/programs/nnayi/nnayi.htm.

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Owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Imprints is growing to meet your needs. Come on in and check us out!

Haskell Tournament Invites Teams

Any American Indian men's and women's fast-pitch teams around your area looking for some competition?

The Haskell Indian Nations Fast-Pitch Commencement Committee announces the 15th Annual Haskell Commencement Indian Men's and Women's Fast-Pitch Tournament that will be held May 9-10 at the Clinton Lake Sports Complex in Lawrence, Kan.

Teams interested in receiving a flyer or further information about the tournament should e-mail Sherry Girty at sgirty@haskell.edu, or call her at 785-979-5501.