

Siletz Indians Do That Kind of Thing, Said Dad

"She called me the next night to tell me that I saved her life"

By Brent Merrill

Tribal member Tygem Butler is a hero. He might not think so, but his actions speak for him.

On a sunny Thursday afternoon in June, Butler was at the "D" River Wayside in Lincoln City when he noticed a young woman struggling in the rip current and being swept out into the ocean.

He and a friend watched her struggle for a minute, trying to decide if they should go after her or not.

"Her cousin came and told us she was in trouble out there," said Tygem. "I had just bought a new body board that day and we were down there trying it out when we noticed her struggling. I just got it in my mind that I needed to help her."

Tygem said he decided to go after her and his friend went to call 911.

He said another man came out to help (identified in the local newspaper as Nick Cyr of Colorado), but got swept away by the current as well.

Tygem said when he got to the girl she was no longer moving.

"It was cold out there in the water and hypothermia was already settling in," said Tygem. "I started getting back to shore and we got separated for a minute, but I got her back."

Tygem said the waves were crashing over their heads by the time they both got back to the shore. He said they waited at least 20 minutes after reaching shore before local fire and rescue workers got there.

It's a good thing Tygem didn't listen to local search and rescue personnel who advised against the rescue because according to Tygem, the woman would not have made it and the rescue efforts could have been an attempted recovery of a body, not a transport to the hospital.

Tygem, 19, is the son of Arthur "Pee Wee" Butler and the grandson of Bruce and Martha Butler. He lives in Lincoln City and works for the Tribe at Chinook Winds Casino Resort.

Tygem is a graduate of Taft High School and currently attends Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, where he is studying sports medicine. He said he plans to complete his two-year sports degree and then go for a business degree next.

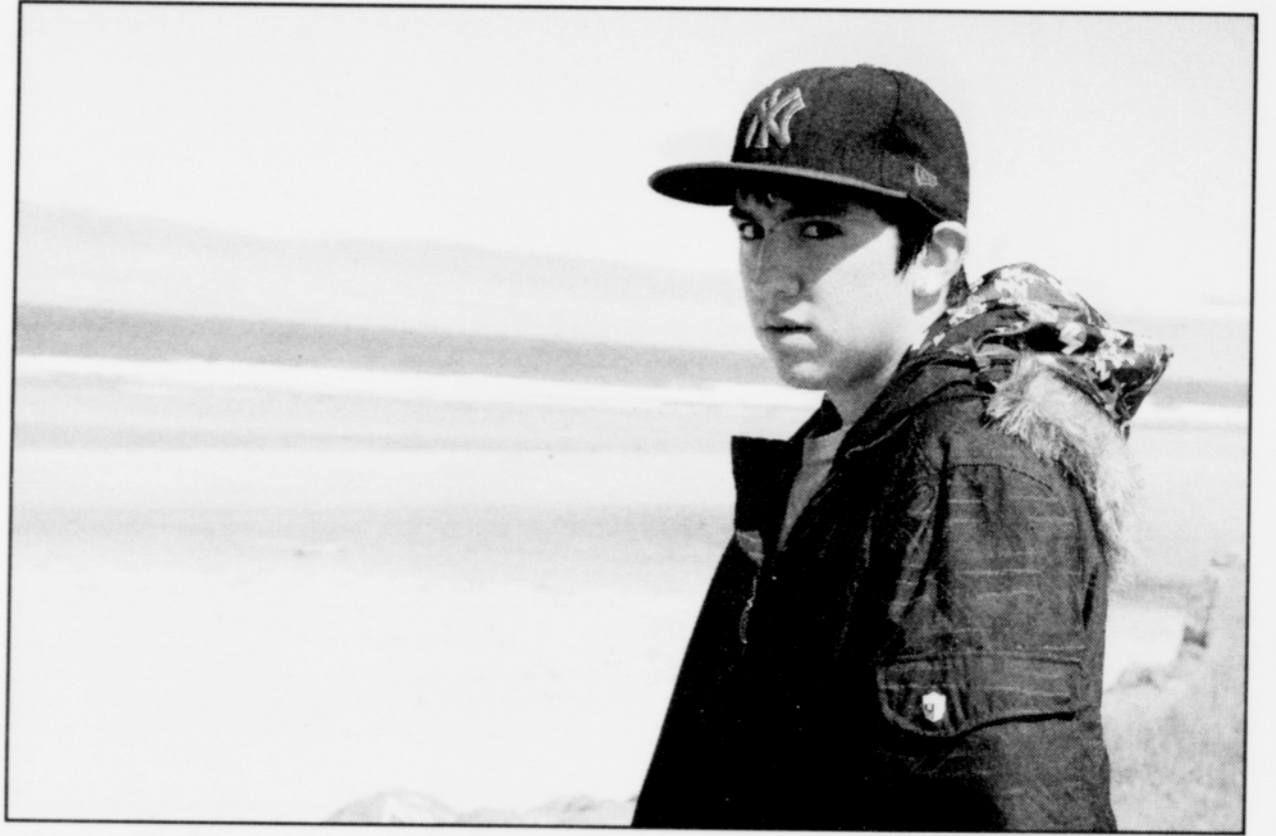
"Tygem is a good kid who works hard at school and enjoys his job at the casino," said Arthur in a recent telephone interview. "The young woman told Tygem when he got out there to her that she had asked God not to leave her out there. He was her answer."

When pressed on what qualities it takes for a young man to put his life on the line for someone he doesn't know, Arthur answered, "My son is a Siletz Indian, you know. Siletz Indians do that kind of thing."

Tygem spoke to the young woman the next day.

"She called me to tell me that I saved her life."

The woman, who is 20 years old, was vacationing from Portland when the incident occurred. She was transported to Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City.



Tygem Butler stands at the spot near the "D" River in Lincoln City where he saved a woman who was struggling in the rip current.



Photos by Brent Merrill

Apply Now for Tribal Head Start

Applications are now available for the Siletz Tribal Head Start program for the 2009-2010 school year.

In addition to an application, parents also will be asked to fill out a family needs assessment and a health summary for their child.

All of these forms are available from Lori Jay-Linstrom in the Head Start office in Siletz. Please contact her at 541-444-8376 or 800-922-1399, ext. 1376; or lorij@ctsi.nsn.us.

TLC Attitudes of Gratitude: Summer Season of Beauty and Laughter

By Lynn Whitlow

This definitely is my season! Sometimes I just want to cry when I look at the beauty around me – it fills my heart so full of joy.

Vivid patches of flowers, wild and tame; sunlight sparkling on rivers, lakes and oceans; white clouds floating in a bright blue sky (sometimes we see that!). My "lollipop" lilies opened in time for July 4, so I popped them into a cobalt vase with Shasta daisies, fluffy white astilbe and purple blue trio lilies – a perfect Independence Day arrangement.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming show when all the tight buds on the other Asiatic and Oriental lilies open, which will have happened as this goes to press. I love bringing in flowers for the TLC and the A&D office. Brightens up many days!

Most days find me pretty upbeat, usually with joy in my heart. I try to hang onto that even when things in life are sorrowful and/or unpleasant. It helps maintain some balance that gets me through the tough stuff.

An American writer, Orison Swett Marden (1850-1924), was known for his philosophical ideals, one of which struck me as a factual statement: "Joyfulness keeps the heart and face young. A good laugh makes us better friends with ourselves and everybody around us."

I don't know about you, but at my age I turn to that which helps keep the wrinkles at bay. Oil of Olay is super so I'll keep using it once a day. Laughter is free, so I'll turn to it more often.

Marsden also believed we make the world we live in, which means keeping joy in our heart is our responsibility!

Feeling gratitude for even small blessings in our life is one way to keep a supply of joy handy.

TLC residents are asked to focus on positives and gratuities in their lives. Some of the things they are thankful for are: "Respite! Honestly playing the tape all the way through! A good book. Quiet times. Pow-wow season. My son, my friends." Our 7-year-old says he is grateful for his mom and for plenty to eat!

Other gratuities include: "My contract renewal. A toilet with a seat. Being able to choose what I wear. A pillow. My sister and nephew. My family. To emotionally be able to grow. My son, sister, brother, mom. Air conditioners and deep breathing." Our 7-year-old says "friends."

We also are grateful for George Nagel and his weed whacker. Thank you, George, for cutting down the grass and weeds at A&D/TLC. We love you and appreciate your caring!

So take on the responsibility of putting some joy into your life – focus on being grateful for what you do have. Laugh a lot – "shave" a few years off your face and put more mileage on your heart!

We have had a few more women participating in our Women's Talking Circle on the evening of the second Wednesday of the month. We have a potluck dinner followed by a talking circle. It's a powerful evening of caring and sharing. If you are interested in being a part of it, call me at 541-444-8238 or 800-600-5599.