



Photo by Diane Rodriguez

Second-graders at Siletz Valley Schools present their tribute to veterans during the Veterans Ceremony on Nov. 10. Each class – kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade – honored the veterans in attendance in some way. Both Tribal Chairman Delores Pigsley and Brigadier General (check title) Dave Enyeart spoke at the ceremony. Enyeart also is chief of the Toledo Police Department.

## Tooth Talk: Silver bullets, a strike at decay

By Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) has been called “a caries silver fluoride bullet.” You remember the bullet destined to reach its target – in this case cavities – stop them and prevent them from coming back.

Silver (Ag) has been known to kill disease-causing organisms when the Ag is at concentrations at or greater than 50 ppm (parts per million). Fluoride in drinking water is kept at a level of .7 ppm. This is offered as a reference point for this means of measuring.

Silver currently is used for the following purposes: acute burn coverings, catheter linings, water purification systems, hospital gowns and caries prevention.

Silver is even part of the mixture for an amalgam or silver-colored filling in a tooth.

One hundred to 200 years ago, Japanese and Southeast Asian people used iron mixed with other chemicals to blacken their teeth. This was done as a sign of a girl ready to marry and also to hide the suggestion of evil spirits or the wildness of animals believed to be in their white teeth. Thus, men were known to blacken their teeth as well.

How does this connect to SDF? It will stain black the area on which it is placed. And it will stop decay.

A cavity is tooth material that has softened. The acid from bacteria eats or leaches/sucks the minerals out of teeth and leaves only softness. SDF actually hardens

this softened material of a decayed tooth.

But who wants healthy teeth that are black? Some Asian cultures wanted the black for their teeth but did not know the blackening material would save their teeth.

Today, steps can be taken to utilize SDF. Suggested uses include baby teeth that will be lost in a few years, for a patient unreceptive to treatment and as a cavity liner under a filling to keep a new cavity

from forming under the filling (from bacteria slipping under the filling).

Work is being done to study silver diamine fluoride and silver fluoride. The Food and Drug Administration is working on one formulation that is hoped will stop decay and not stain our teeth. I’ll keep you informed of the progress. In fact, I’ll be in a class on these two substances this coming spring. You’ll get an update then.

**Emergency dental visits available** – Contact the Siletz Community Dental Clinic if you experience dental pain or a dental emergency. The staff will do everything possible to see you as soon as reasonably possible. Check-in time is Monday-Thursday from 8:30-9 a.m. and Friday from 10-10:30 a.m. Afternoon check-in time is Monday-Friday from 1-1:30 p.m.



Robert Kentta talks about Siletz history and culture at Native American Heritage Month festivities at the Lincoln City Cultural Center on Nov. 12. Selene Rilatos made a presentation on contemporary Siletz arts and crafts and Esther Stutzman shared her storytelling talents during two different weekends of activities.



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