

The Oregon Family Study Siletz Sample

By: Walter T. Kawamoto

"Ya wanna year a story?"

I always love hearing from Walt Klamath, so I said, "Sure."

The story he told went something like this....

Nobody dares get between a mama bear and her cubs. She's very protective of her children and will closely watch over them and keep them from harm. But she also lets them explore their home area as they play with each other. When the cubs are playing and exploring, they sometimes make mistakes and hurt themselves. But, usually they learn from those mistakes and don't make them again. It's the same with Indian parents, they raise their children by watching over them and keeping them from danger, but at the same time they let their children learn from experience.

I have seen and many people have told me about how many American Indian families teach their youth by giving them good examples to follow and by letting their children learn for themselves, rather than directly instructing and teaching their children. This custom is consistent with one of the two major findings from my Masters Thesis, which involved an analysis of some of the data collected from many of your friends and relatives as a part of the Oregon Family Study. This article is written to share these findings in a demonstration of my commitment to share all the findings possible with the Siletz Community.

The Masters Thesis involved the comparison of data from the twenty-five families contacted with the assistance of the Tribe with twenty-five non-Indian families with similar education, income, and age characteristics. I was trying to find out if a few selected variables had any relationship with the amount of activity the parents had with their children.

The first thing I found was that for mothers and fathers in American Indian families, the amount of contact they had with their children was much lower than the amount of contact the non-Indian parents had with their children. Somebody else might have concluded, "....so they have less contact, they must love

their kids less." I was not ready to accept such an easy answer. I brought these results to Indian friends and reviewed what little literature on Indian families was available. I consistently got the response that this was by no means evidence of neglect and a lack of love and concern, and that this is only an indication of what has always been there. The "lesson" described in the story above might never have been observed or even reported by Indians or non-Indians, but it was there.

The other finding of interest was about the mothers in the American Indian families and non-Indian families. An important thing to point out here was that I am using the phrase "mothers in American Indian families" because many of the families were intermarried families and had parents that were not Indian. Nevertheless, the involvement with their children by the mothers in the non-Indian families seemed to have a strong relationship

with how they felt about their marriage. In other words, if things were bad with their husband, they weren't interested much in taking care of the kids. And if things were good with their husband, they had a lot of contact with their kids. This relationship was not true for mothers in American Indian families, they basically had the same level of contact with their kids whether things were good with their husband or not. Again, this was consistent with discussions with friends and the literature. There are those that say that in addition to getting an education, a job, and becoming active in the Tribe, the modern Indian mother also is very conscious of her traditional role in many tribal communities as the one who manages the household and has the revered responsibility of bringing in the next generation and sharing tribal/family customs and traditions. Others have said that this finding is also consistent with many Indian communities because children were always given respect. One friend mentioned the example of the cradleboard propped up so that the baby can see all that is happening instead of putting the baby down in a cradle or crib.

The Masters Thesis was only the first analysis of some of the data, and you will see another article as soon as there is more to report to the Siletz community. The full Thesis is on file with George Nagel at the Mental Health Department of the Siletz Clinic, Selene Lynch at the Culture Office, and Michael Darcy at the

school. I am interested in knowing if you agree or disagree with my reasonings behind these findings. I would also welcome stories that you might be interested in sharing which support or challenge these findings. If you would like to respond to this article, please write to me, Walter T. Kawamoto, 2629 SW Pickford #1, Corvallis, OR 97333.

In Loving Memory

Raymond Willard Sondenaa

Raymond Willard Sondenaa aged 74 years of Siletz, Oregon died at his home on December 12, 1994.

He was born in Clatskanie, Oregon on December 30, 1919 to Aaga and Gladys M. Stone Sondenaa. He had been a life long resident of Oregon and of Siletz since 1943.

He married Viola Louisa Logan in Albany, Oregon on April 23, 1943. For 21 years he was employed by Georgia Pacific in Toledo as a cat skinner. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and bowling.

Mr. Sondenaa was a member of the Siletz VFW Paul Washington Post #732.

He is survived by his wife, Viola; sons, Edwin Leroy of Siletz, Raymond Willard, Jr. of Woodbridge, California, Lawrence Lynn of McMinnville, Oregon; brothers, Orville of Keizer, Oregon, Lee of Cottage Grove, Oregon, Elmer of Toledo, Oregon; 10 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

A memorial service was held 1:00 p.m. Friday, December 16, 1994 at Bateman's Funeral Home in Newport. Pastor Al Burkey of the Fairview Mennonite Church in Albany, Oregon officiated.

Ray's ready smile and cheerful outlook brightened our days. He was a good friend to many and he will be greatly missed.

SILETZ TEEN MODEL

Submitted by Aunty LeiLani & Selene

Corina Rilatos has been modeling for over a year now with LA Models. Corina is the daughter of Josh Rilatos of Siletz and Niede Diaz of Reedley, California, and is the granddaughter of David and Gaye Rilatos of Siletz and Mr. and Mrs. Rafeal Diaz of Reedley. Corina lives in Reedley and attends Reedley High School and she has one sister Elaine. Corina enjoys playing sports such as basketball, track and volleyball where she has won many awards for her outstanding athletic ability. In her spare time she enjoys modeling. Corina has appeared in Macy's Catalog, Seventeen and Teen Magazines. Her summer job and goals with her modeling career will take her to Milan, New York and Japan to model for LA Models. She recently visited Siletz and attended the Restoration Pow-Wow, she was really amazed with all the family she met, as this was her first visit home since she was very small. She loved her visit and can't wait to come back again and spend more time with her family in Oregon. We're all proud of Corina and feel she is putting Siletz on the map again, in a beautiful way! (Nush Te to you Corina)

