

Harry Miller Training in Burns Silversmithing Comes To Northwest

Silversmithing in Burns, Oregon?

A crowded garage on the Burns Paiute Reservation is the unlikely headquarters for a new silversmith training program funded by CETA. Here you can find northwestern Indians learning the southwestern art of silver and turquoise jewelry-making and discovering ready markets for their work.

Home away from home for a handful of students, the garage can barely accommodate three industrious jewelry-makers and the workbenches, grinders, torches, and saws that are tools of the trade. Amid the smell of burnt silver and the sad sight of splintered turquoise there is not a discouraging word, because after a week of training the new students are putting out rings that are suitable for sale.

Harry Miller, 36, of Warm Springs has been with the program since it was launched last June, a "guinea pig" whose success may point a future for himself and the program. Harry's contract has been extended to April as the six-month pilot project has matured to an established nine-month program.

By then Harry will be considered a qualified silversmith and he will be heading out on the powwow circuit - a field day for jewelry salesmen.

Harry and two new students, both Burns Paiute tribal members, are learning not only the craft of silversmithing but the techniques of marketing and handling finances. Their teacher

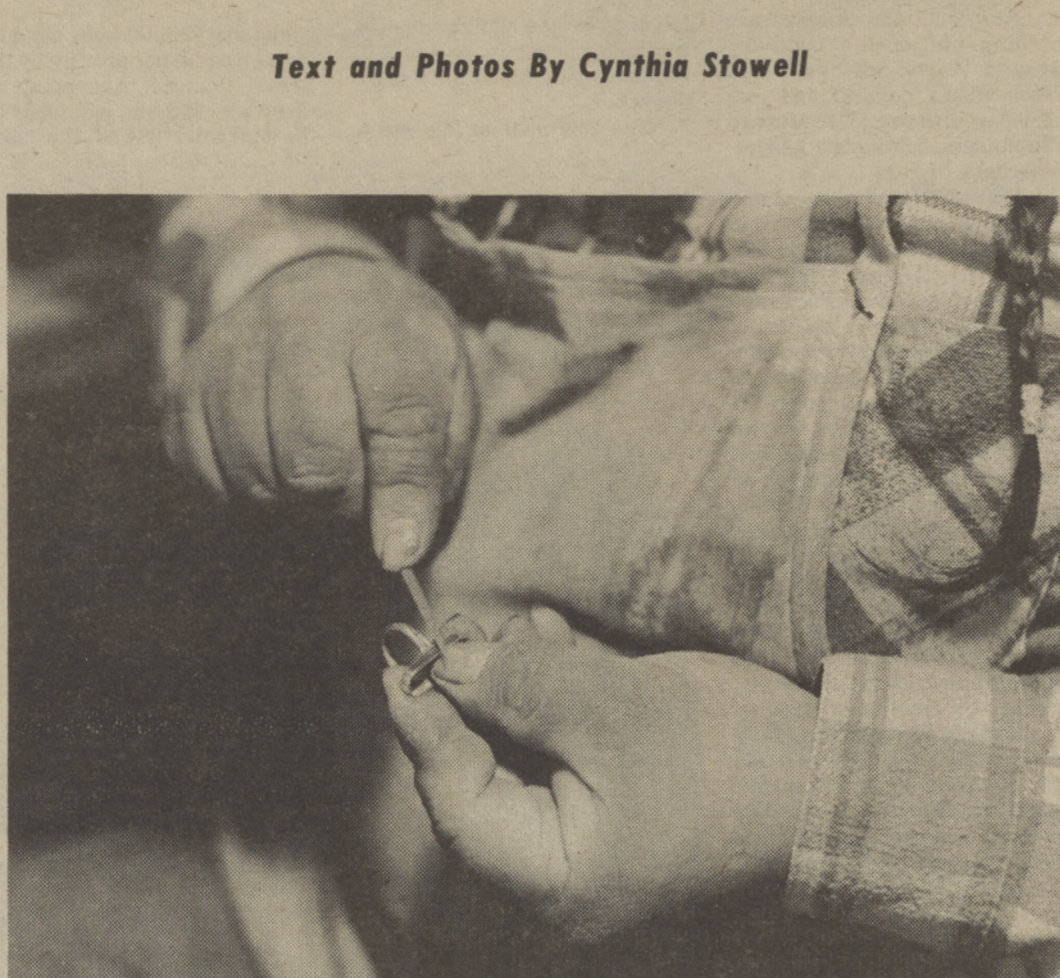
is a successful and accomplished silversmith, Delmar Adams, whose reputation is well-established in silver and stone circles.

Adams himself is a member of the Burns Paiute Tribe and is a largely self-taught jewelry-maker whose brief four-year career in silver and turquoise began in California. He recently returned to the new Burns Paiute Reservation (established in 1972) and decided to share his skills with other tribal members. Teamed with his cousin Jim St. Martin, the tribal manager, Adams opened his garage with CETA training funds and has attracted a great deal of interest from students and wholesalers.

The answer to "Why Burns?" lies not only in coincidences of persons and places but also in the wise planning of tribal leaders who recognize their reservation's lack of natural resources. Said St. Martin, "We've had to start looking at the Tribe as a resource." The silversmithing program was promoted as one means of developing the talents and productivity of tribal members.

Off in the future, St. Martin sees a loose cooperative of silversmiths who will create their own styles identifiable to the Burns Reservation and establish a network of markets.

Although not a member of the Burns Paiute Tribe, Harry Miller is helping to show that people with little or no prior exposure can become skilled silver craftsmen in a matter of months.



Harry Miller's massive hands turn out delicate jewelry with no problem. Filing a ring, he noted that his fingernails had received a rather odd filing job that silversmiths take for granted - the result of getting too close to stone grinders.

Miller was attracted to the program, which is open to all Oregon Indians, because of his experience selling jewelry for others. He figured "What the heck - I don't have to do that. I'll just make my own stuff."

Securing local CETA funds, which provide for a stipend of \$2.65 an hour, plus instruction and starting materials, Harry moved his wife Pat and their four kids to Burns.

Harry has since mastered the basics of cutting and polishing turquoise and heating and shaping silver, combining the two materials into original jewelry designs. Instructor Adams hopes by April to have his student doing advanced bracelet work that is "clean" and creative, like the master's.

Harry is already displaying and cultivating his own style. He is fond of "unusual stones - different from what you usually see," and boasts a collection ranging from Mexican turquoise to Israeli "ilot." Harry is also striving for a northwestern touch, evidenced now by a distinctive notching on the edges of his rings which he feels represents the mountainous landscape. He signs his work with a tepee design.

Having filled his livingroom with a private workshop, Harry literally works day and night practicing and perfecting the techniques he has learned. He enjoys experimenting and has attempted inlay stone work without any prodding from the instructor.



Instructor Delmar Adams provides inspiration for his silversmith students with his array of masterful work which he gladly pulls out for examination. The Burns Paiute Indian has taken on a southwestern art and personalized it with his innovations.

Text and Photos By Cynthia Stowell

To Adams and St. Martin, this self-motivation is a mark of a successful craftsman. Adams does not lead his students by the hand; he is available to them as a resource and if they want to learn they will seek him out.

As Harry learns the finer points of jewelry-making, he will also be encouraged to increase his speed. Rapid production is necessary to make the craft pay for itself. The creation of quality work is not enough to assure a successful career as a silversmith. Knowing where to buy materials, what to charge for finished pieces, where the markets are, and how to handle income are also crucial tools.

Students are encouraged to sell their work, the profits from which go into their own special account, giving them funds for the purchase of more materials.

St. Martin noted that Harry is ahead of the game in that he has established numerous business contacts through the years. Retailers on the coast, powwows, arts & crafts fairs and the Warm Springs visitors center-gift shop are all potential markets that Harry will depend on. Harry observed happily but a bit wearily that he already has more orders than he can handle.

Silversmithing is a "very personal thing", said St. Martin, and the career options available are unlimited. Harry has some very specific ideas about his future.

A tireless traveler, Harry plans to set up a shop in the camper and work the powwow circuit this summer. His traveling will then turn to the skies as

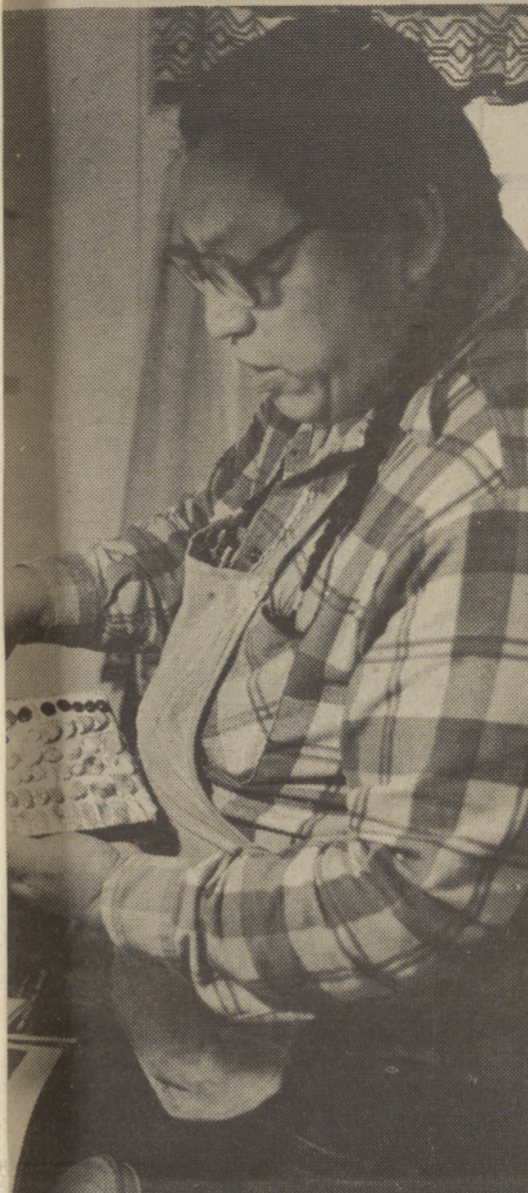
he finishes up the hours needed to get his pilot's license. Silversmithing on the side will help finance his way. Although he hopes one day to fly for the Tribes, his jewelry-making will always be a skill he can depend on.

Harry is even teaching his wife whatever he learns "so if something happens to me, she can support herself."

The future of the silversmithing program is no less ambitious. Working space for 15-20 will be available when a new arts building is constructed



Instructor and student talked on an inlaid stone and silver ring that Harry created. Adams is always available that his students should not be led by the hand.

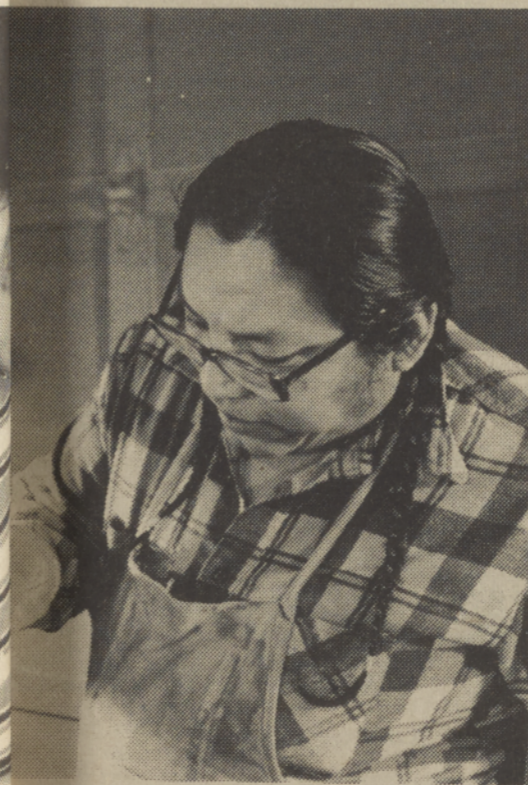


Harry Miller displayed his collection of unusual stones for himself. His taste goes beyond the traditional or he buys such unusual materials as "ilot" from tree seeds which he enjoys incorporating into his

Miller spoke for the lines of re."

entering the month trial those who o-year apms will be months of w silver-

smiths reinforce their skills, exchange ideas and venture confidently into the business world. On a reservation where opportunities are few, a small program is making a big point. By taking on a craft new to themselves and the region, students like Harry Miller are demonstrating that they, as individuals, can be a valuable and adaptable resource.



Harry Miller worked on an inlaid stone and silver ring that Harry created. Adams is always available that his students should not be led by the hand.

What Is Your Opinion?

The strengths of the Madras Senior High School program, its weaknesses, and possible changes in scheduling, school procedures, extra curricular activities, and curriculum are being discussed by a high school study committee.

The school staff, students, parents and community representatives comprising the committee would like to know how other students, teachers and district residents view the school program.

The questionnaire below has been prepared for community residents to express ideas and opinions about the high school. (Student and faculty questionnaires will be distributed and collected at the school.)

Your thoughtful response to these questions will help the committee develop a better understanding of what the community expects of the school. The completed questionnaire, which is anonymous may be mailed or taken to Madras High School, 650 Tenth, or dropped in a "High School Questionnaire" box at Safeway, Ericksons, Aherns or Macys.

Please return the questionnaire by February 8.

Please indicate your feelings about the following statements.

- The current high school policy is that all 9th and 10th grade students must stay on campus during school hours. Do you: Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No opinion Should this policy apply to all students ?
- What is your opinion of the high school rules (discipline)? Too strict Not strict enough About right No opinion Enforced consistently Enforced inconsistently
- Do Madras High School students consume drugs (including alcohol) other than those prescribed by a physician? Very little Yes, but not enough to damage health or cause social problems No opinion
- How do you feel about talking with teachers and school administrators? Very reluctant Reluctant Comfortable Somewhat comfortable No opinion
- What do you feel are the students' attitudes, in general, of their classes? Very challenged Somewhat challenged Somewhat bored Very bored No opinion
- What do you think of the academic standards at the high school? High enough Adequate Too low No opinion
- Are graduates of Madras High School prepared to:
 - Function in the community? Very well prepared Adequately prepared Somewhat prepared Poorly prepared No opinion
 - Continue their education? Very well prepared Adequately prepared Somewhat prepared Poorly prepared No opinion
 - Meet the requirements of job entry? Very well prepared Adequately prepared Somewhat prepared Poorly prepared No opinion
- Do you feel there is enough home work assigned at the high school? Too much About the right amount Not enough No opinion
- What do you think of the Madras High School extra-curricular activity program? Too many activities Too few activities About the right number No opinion

From the following list of educational goals please select the five most important. Please place them in order of how important you feel they are.

Most important Second Third Fourth Fifth

- Learn how to respect and get along with people who think, dress, and act differently than the student does.
- Learn about and try to understand the changes that take place in the world around the student.
- Develop basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, math and listening.
- Learn to cooperate effectively with others and with those with whom we work and live.
- Learn how to be good managers of money and other resources.
- Develop personal creativity and appreciation of art, music and drama.
- Gain information needed to be aware of different occupational fields.
- Develop personal values, self respect and a feeling of self worth.
- Gain a general education in science, social studies, literature as well as learning to examine and use information and think logically.

From the above list which do you feel Madras High School is doing the best job. 1 2 3 4 5

From the same list which do you feel needs greater emphasis at the high school. 1 2 3 4 5

If you have any opinions or comments about the high school, good or bad, please attach them when you return this survey.

The following information is not essential, but would be helpful.

Age Male Female
 How long in district
 Children in pre-high school
 Children in high school
 Children in high school during last five years
 Either pre-school children or no children of school age

What is last year of education?
 No high school
 High school
 Some college
 College degree
 Graduate study