

The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Learn "Stickgame" from Warm Springs Elders and Local Players

Photos & Text by Lenora Starr

The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians like many other tribes, are battling to maintain their culture after they were "terminated" in 1956. They regained federal recognition in 1984. They possess 6.1 acres of land on which sits a tribal hall.

In conjunction with their Honor Elders Day Breakfast, Patty Whereat invited people from Warm Springs to teach the locals how to play stickgame.

Originally another tribe was contacted and confirmed to teach a class through a college but at the last moment those plans were cancelled. Patty contacted Sam Starr who in turn contacted other members of the tribe and they volunteered to teach the interested members of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

Historically the game was played up and down the coast, throughout the Western States and Canada and as far

east as Oklahoma. It is a guessing game with different variations. Here in Warm Springs two teams with as few as two players and as many as a hundred (or more) compete for 11 sticks. There are two sets of bones two striped bones and two white (plain) bones. Each guesser hands the bones out for the players to hide in their hands hoping that the guesser of the other team will guess the striped bone which will cause the other team to forfeit a stick if they guess the striped bone, bringing the team closer to victory.

Each team will sing songs, drum, shake rattles and make gestures to the other team to try and "psyche them out" so that their guesser will become frustrated or distracted and forfeit all 11 sticks.

Most of the time their are wagers that are made. These wagers consist of anything a person considers to have value whether it be money, shawls, blankets, beads, etc.

Although the game is not played as much as in the past it is making a comeback through tournaments which

are sponsored by various tribes. The Starr Stickgame club sponsors a tournament in conjunction with the Pi-Ume-Sha Treaty Days. It is a relatively small tournament compared to other tournaments. The next big tournament is being held on the Muckleshoot Reservation and prize monies of \$15,000 will be divided among the winning teams. The Spokane Tribe sponsors a children's tournament annually during the Labor Day weekend.

Patty Whereat expressed their appreciation to the Warm Springs people for coming up to teach them about the culture lost to them. Some of them plan to continue to learn and some of them plan to go to Muckleshoot to play and observe the tournament. Sam Starr presented a set of sticks to Patty Whereat and encouraged them to continue learn the culture traditional to their people, in exchange Patty gave some shells from their area to the Warm Springs People.



Carolyn Slyter of the Coos tribe is suprised to learn she made a stick!



Wilson Wewa, Jr. Elizabeth Rhoan and Dan Brisbois gather on one team while others look on. Everyone had a chance to "hold the bones".



Sam Starr displays the instruments of the game and how they are used.



Joyce Quinn from Warm Springs looks on in Amusement



Patty Whereat, center was responsible for inviting Warm Springs to teach their tribes and surrounding tribes how to play stickgame.



Judy Helms and her husband from Linclon City participate in the stickgame and record everything on video