



Photos by Dave McMechan

Emily Waheneka, left photo, has seen many seasons of gathering over the years; Sara Vaeth's youthful energy resulted in a bountiful accumulation of huckleberries.

## Huckleberries ...

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Past HeHe, Scott drove onto Skyline Road toward High Rock. Scott, Waheneka, Judy Kalama and Sara Vaeth, who works as an intern at Cultural Resources, gath-

ered some huckleberries.

Vaeth, being many years the youngest, came back with by far the most berries.

Scott explained that the huckleberries this year are small.

The bushes have also produced fewer berries than in most years, Scott said.

The problem was the winter snowpack in the higher elevations, Scott said. With little moisture in

the ground from the snow, the huckleberry bushes were not able to produce many berries, he said.

The same thing happened last year, Scott said.

## Baskets practical, with artful delivery

By Bill Rhoades  
Spilyay Staff

High up in the Cascade Mountains, where weathered stands of noble fir and mountain hemlock endure persistent winds and frigid winters, the warmth of July is a passing luxury. The growing season is short, but often prolific. If one knows where to look, there are fleeting treasures available for the taking.

At the forest's edge near a high elevation meadow, the huckleberries, buried in snow just three months earlier, signal their edible presence by turning a bluish purple. Resident black bears and blue grouse have come to dine on the plentiful crop, sharing this seasonal bounty with human visitors from the rangelands and river valleys far below.

A footpath winds through the towering firs and leads to a sunny opening where berries grow in abundance. A tribal berry picker walks the familiar path, tracing the footsteps of her mother, her grandmother, and countless ancestors before them. Like her mother, she wears her long, black hair in braids. Her floral-patterned dress is hemmed at the shins, hanging over the elk-skin moccasins protecting her feet. She wears a sash belt around her waist and carries a conical-shaped basket at her hip.

The basket is palm-sized at the base, flaring out on the sides to a height of 11 inches, where it achieves the diameter of a small dinner plate. Along the basket's rim are a series of loops, often referred to as "ears." The loops are laced with string to hold down ferns that will be used to cover the day's harvest. Ribbons of bear grass, stitched into quarter-inch squares, decorate the basket's exterior with multi-colored geometric. The pattern appears as connecting Vs or mountain peaks. It is carried with the utmost care and an em-



mous sense of pride.

The basket described above is one of several variations used for huckleberry pickings on the reservation. Its origins are in the Mid-Columbia region, as evidenced by its common name, "Klickitat."

Cedar root, stitched together in a method known as coiling, provides a durable and highly functional foundation. Narrow roots farthest from the tree are sought out as the straightest and easiest to use material. After they are harvested, the cedar roots are split with a heavy knife so the rough outer layer can be removed. Selected portions of the roots are used for decoration,

the coil foundation and stitching material. The outer skin is suitable as decoration, while the longest and smoothest fibers are reserved for stitching material.

Basket makers do not weave coiled baskets; they sew them. Long coils are wound around and around to form a base and then on top of each other to form the walls of a basket. Each successive layer is stitched to its predecessor to keep the basket intact. The completed foundation is sturdy and often watertight, suitable as a storage container or even for cooking.

Bear grass, the preferred material for decoration, is gathered in the late summer when the grass has matured. Leaves are harvested and allowed to dry, at which time they

appear white in color. White is often used for the decorative base, with yellow, black and brown being the other favored colors historically. Black can be obtained by soaking the design material in mud from an alkaline spring. Brown comes from willow bark and yellow from Oregon grape stems and roots. Contemporary basket makers often color the design materials using commercial dyes.

Imbrications are applied to the coiled foundation by folding the design element on top of each stitch. Designs are applied as the foundation is being constructed, making the two processes inseparable. The three-peaked mountain design is common, but other elements such as human figures, horses, crosses, salmon gills, flowers and triangles are also used.

Klickitat-style baskets are a classic form used by huckleberry pickers throughout the Columbia Plateau. It is not, however, the only form. Baskets similar in shape, but made of split willow, are also popular and highly functional.

Split willow baskets used for huckleberry picking have Paiute, as well as Wasco, origins. The foundations are coiled and the rims are often looped. Strips of willow are used as the foundation and stitching material. There is no exterior decoration.

Cedar bark baskets are commonly associated with Columbia River tribes. Foundations are made from a single plait of western red cedar bark folded in half. Historically, the two halves were stitched into a tubular form with a thread made of the cedar's inner bark.

A variety of baskets used for huckleberry picking are on display at The Museum at Warm Springs. Classes in basket making are offered on a periodic basis and books relating to this subject can be purchased through the gift shop.



## Mill ...

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Since then, the mill has become more efficient, and the production level has actually increased with one shift rather than two. There are various reasons why this happened.

One reason is that the operators of the big-log equipment, installed in 1998, have matured in their skills, said Larry Potts, mill general manager.

Another reason for the improved production level is that maintenance workers now have time to ensure that the machinery is operating as efficiently as possible, said Dave Reynolds, maintenance supervisor.

Production coordinator Katchia said, "We're running the machinery at design capacity." Under one shift the cooperation and coordination among the departments at the mill has also greatly improved,

Katchia said.

Anthony Van Pelt, sawmill superintendent, said, "Running the mill on one shift means that there's more time to make sure we're doing things right. And the crew we have now is very good," he said. "There's good cooperation between maintenance and production."

When the mill changed from one shift to two, Van Pelt had the task of developing the list of who remained on the job, and who was let go.

"That was the hardest thing I've ever had to do," he said. "The people we have here now are the best of the best."

(This is the first of two articles on the WSFPI mill. The second article, on changes that may happen in the future at the mill, will run in the next edition of the Spilyay Tymoo.)



Pat Courtney Gold uses both traditional and modern materials.

## Wasco artist's work on display in gallery

PORTLAND — The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC) announces its Fourth Annual Community Artist Award and Residency given to Native American fiber artist Pat Courtney Gold. Keeping Tradition: Exploring the Boundaries will showcase her recent works, September 6 through October 27, 2001.

The public is invited to a First Thursday opening reception in her honor on September 6, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., featuring the music of Native American flutist James Greeley. The IFCC Gallery is located at 5340 North Interstate Avenue. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays, noon to 4 p.m. A Wasco native known for their traditional Sally Bags, Gold was selected for the IFCC award and residency in recognition of artistic excellence in service to community. Her work has been integral to the revival of the almost lost technique of full-twinning, a basket weave which incorporates geometric designs (human and animal motifs) unique to the Wasco tribe. "I felt as though the ancestors were waiting for someone like me to come forward — all this energy was being focused and funneled through me — for the generations that are coming after me" says Gold. Gold describes her earliest memory of Sally Bags when her family visited the Maryhill Museum.

Her Mother said, with pride,

## Fort Sill school sets 2001 reunion

Fort Sill Indian School Alumni Association is preparing for the 2001 reunion.

Dates have been set for Sept. 28 and 29. On Friday, Sept. 28, a reception is planned at the Fort Sill Indian School campus.

On Saturday, the reunion will continue at the Comanche National Fair. This year's planners have decided to have the reunion during the

"Our people made them." Her artwork has helped to educate the general public about Wasco and Plateau culture, and the importance of protecting our natural resources that provide the traditional plant fibers used, while perpetuating the traditional art form.

As a contemporary artist Pat Gold uses traditional techniques to create new works, but goes beyond tradition using non-traditional materials, and experimenting with new patterns and forms. Her Sally Bags feature contemporary motifs such as "Yuppie Couple" and "Spandex Sally."

Her baskets and wall hangings explore plaited and twined weavings with textured designs and mixed media: commercial fibers, copper sheets, wires, linoleum, wall paper and "recycled" plastic bags.

Pat Gold will also present mono-prints in the Entry Gallery in conjunction with the East-West Symposium in Print Art. She explores printing techniques with handmade paper, mixed media collage and various textures, while highlighting Native American themes. In addition to the exhibition, Pat Gold's residency will include an ORIGINS LECTURE SERIES, October 17th, 7:30 p.m., and two weaving workshops on Plateau art and culture in Spring 2002.

For more information call 503-823-2072.

## Comanche National Fair to give alumni a variety of things to do

The last reunion lasted three days and included a powwow. A special invitation is extended to all former students and former staff.

For more information, contact: Richard Bread, (405) 643-2770; Phyllis Hunter, (405) 247-6673, ext. 258, e-mail: PhyllisHunter@bia.gov; Lorene Kerchee, (580) 492-5492.