

THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES LANGUAGE LESSON

Awa awinshmami ku inaumami xwiyaht
wat'i tkwainptyau awala inp'iwityau.
*The men and young men need to sweat
before going hunting or fishing.*

Awa xwiyaht wa'ti xnitpa awala
timaanipta. Ayat ayatmami.
*Cerimonial rootdiggers and huckleberry
gatherers need to sweat before going
rootdigging or huckleberry picking.*

(This segment is taken from "Schools Serving Native America: A Report of Five Case Studies", written by William G. Demmert, Jr. who spent his childhood with the Southeast Alaska Tlingit tribe. Incidentally, the Warm Springs Elementary School program of the Culture & Heritage Department was a case-study of Mr. Demmert.)

Historically, educating the youth in a tribe or Native community was the responsibility of the parents, the extended family, the clan, and/or the Elters of a tribe. The exact process depended upon each tribes practical experiences over thousands of years. For the Tlingit community of which I am a part, education responsibilities usually fell to the maternal uncles for the male child, and the aunts for the female child. In my case, my paternal uncles filled the role of mentor. In addition, grandparents and other members of the clan who were recognized as having special talents were included in the educational process. Each mentor had the responsibility of the next generation. No nephew or niece was allowed to fail, for the very existence of the clan depended upon how well those mentors carried out their teaching responsibilities. Exceptional individual talent was recognized and appreciated as a reflection of the respect a clan, on the whole, gained for having that talent. Clans might be noted for their oratorical skills, physical strength, wood-carving abilities, healing knowledge, knowledge of the seas, or skills in hunting or fishing.

As tribal groups communicated with one another they learned and adopted additional knowledge, innovations, and techniques to fit their daily necessities for living. The vast base of knowledge concerning every aspect of daily living; the skills, the knowledge and innovations which were passed down to each successive generation for thousands of years was severely threatened as the European colonizers entered the land with their own ways of life. This way of life, which eventually influenced most if not all Native American communities, included radically different systems of education then what the Native American had been exposed to. Native peoples became dependent upon the early colonial and national government for their very survival. This has in turn dramatically impacted the Native American's sense of identity and well being and had serious consequences for the hopes, goals, motivations and aspirations of generations of Native people to come.

The system of education introduced by the colonial powers have evolved into the current systems of public, church, Bureau of Indian Affairs, contract, and grant schools. These European systems changed the traditional systems of education youth within the community into one of sending youth to schools controlled and owned by others--others who were seldom interested in promoting or supporting local priorities, language, culture, spiritual well being, and more of the tribal groups served. The loss of tribal educational systems and tradi-

tions of transferring knowledge and skills to the next generation, and the loss of mentors for those systems, were traumatic. Many Native communities have never recovered from those losses. To this day, current education systems have not successfully replaced the original systems created by indigenous peoples. Traditional knowledge and skills are not transferred. Even modern skills and knowledge are not transferred in sufficient quality or quantity. Too few Native students are motivated to participate in and successfully complete the systems they are a part of. In short, the schools of today are not meeting the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, and moral needs of Native American communities and students.

The 1928 Meriam Report, the 1969 United States Senate Report, Indian Education: A National Challenge A National Tragedy, the 1970 Havighurst Report, the 1991 Indian Nations At Risk report, the 1992 White House Conference report and numerous Government Accounting Office (GAO) reports over the years all attest to the fact that there are significant problems encountered in creating schools and curricula, which meet the needs of Native American communities and students. Each report has had some influence in creating change. The Meriam Report recognized the importance of building upon the language and cultural bases of the tribal groups, and the fact that Native teachers were a necessary component of schools serving Native communities. Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge found that school was, in some cases, the enemy and that parental and tribal involvement were missing ingredients in the process of schooling.

We Remember Jeane Thomas



Over the years Jeane Thomas has become known for her heart and mind. Her service to the Culture & Heritage Department will never be forgotten, most especially by those who have worked with her. But even more importantly, her service to her neighbors and friends is a credit to humanity. As we remember Jeane, let us also remember all those who have passed on in these last few weeks and months. These people have been, and always will be, near and dear.

What is "Indian Time?"

Have you been hearing about something called "Indian Time"--airing for just a few minutes right after the language lessons every day? If you haven't, then you've been missing out on your chance to win four free swimming passes to the Ka-Nee-Tah Resort! All you have to do is call in, answer each question (correctly), and answer in Ichishkiin! "Indian Time" will feature a number of prize-winning trivia challenges, brought to you by the Culture & Heritage Department, KWSO, and sponsors. Each "Indian Time" contest will be featured in one of the three Native languages and give you the chance to win!

Catch the "Indian Time" program for rules. Here are the questions currently airing:

- Mtaat wilalik ku napt aikws?
- Naxsh tamam ku paxat wishpush?
- Mł chi iwa kakyami twin?
- How many letters in the Ichishkiin snwit and English alphabet?

Language Classes:

Wasco: Mondays from 3:30 to 5 PM in the Education Building (1st Floor Training Room)

Sahaptin: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5 PM in the Language Trailer.

Paiute: Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5 PM in the Language Trailer.

Home Base Classes:

Wasco: Thursdays from 6 to 8 PM. Held at Cladys Tompson's Home (For info. call Val Switzer at 553-3575.)

Sahaptin: Thursdays from 5 to 8 PM. Held in the Simnasho Area. (For info. call Suzie Slockish at 553-2201.)

Paiute: Tuesdays from 5 to 8 PM. Held at Cheryl Lohman's Home.