

"My beadwork is my art, my art is my life."

— Wanda Suppah VanPelt

Beading brings good things to life

Change happens.

Changes are what Wanda Suppah VanPelt is going through as manager of the Traditional Treasures Gift Shop and the Dollars and Cents Thrift Shop on Wasco Street. She doesn't mind, though. The changes are headed in the direction she wants to go.

Budget restrictions and unforeseen events forced these incubator businesses to merge under a single management. While she didn't mind taking over during the difficulties, her heart was in her beading.

"My beadwork is my art, my art is my life," she says.

VanPelt started beading when she was a little girl. While she admits she was too much of a tomboy to sit still for all those hours, she developed her love of beadwork. And she had plenty of inspiration.

"I saw my aunt make outfits and that was always my dream," she says, "to get as good as her."

Beadwork can be a difficult craft to learn. While some people are naturals, others work hard to master this art. But Wanda wanted this discipline. It became her passion.

"If you really, really want something, you're going to work hard at it," she admits, "I wanted this."

And beadwork has stood by her—even in the tough times:

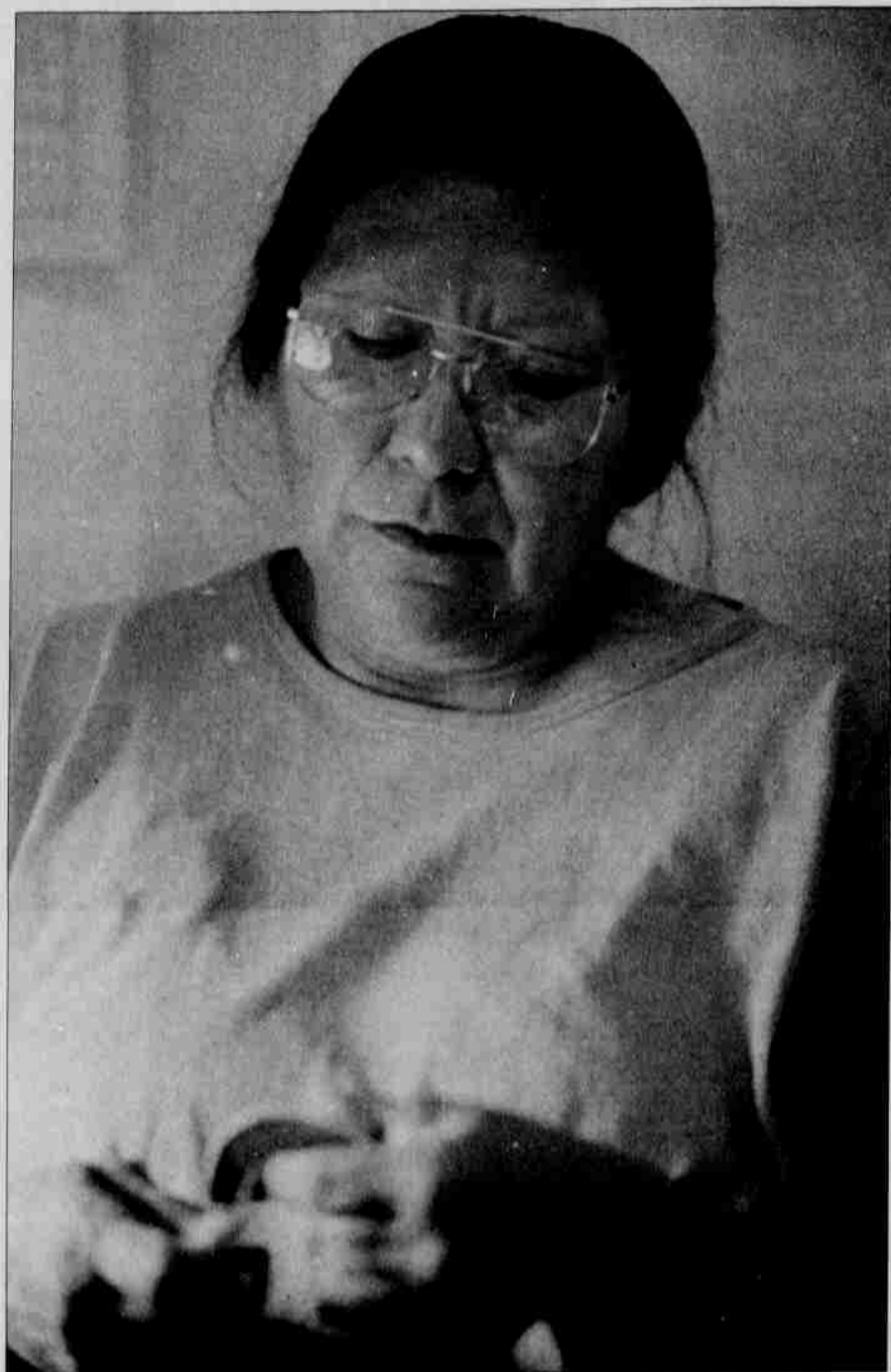
Wanda found out about the difficult times when her son died last September. Grief can be an overwhelming emotion. Different people deal with it in different ways. Wanda beads.

"When I really get down in the dumps," she says, "I sit and beadwork and it's a healing thing for me to do my art."

These days Wanda is concentrating on the business end of beading. She's teaching Tammy Tewee the fine art of the finished product. And she's turning the Dollars and Cents Thrift store over to her associate Rena Suppah-Gomez.

She is busily stocking the store with summer wear and setting up clothing exchange programs in Bend, Redmond, Prineville and Madras. This will provide a constant supply of new clothing in the store.

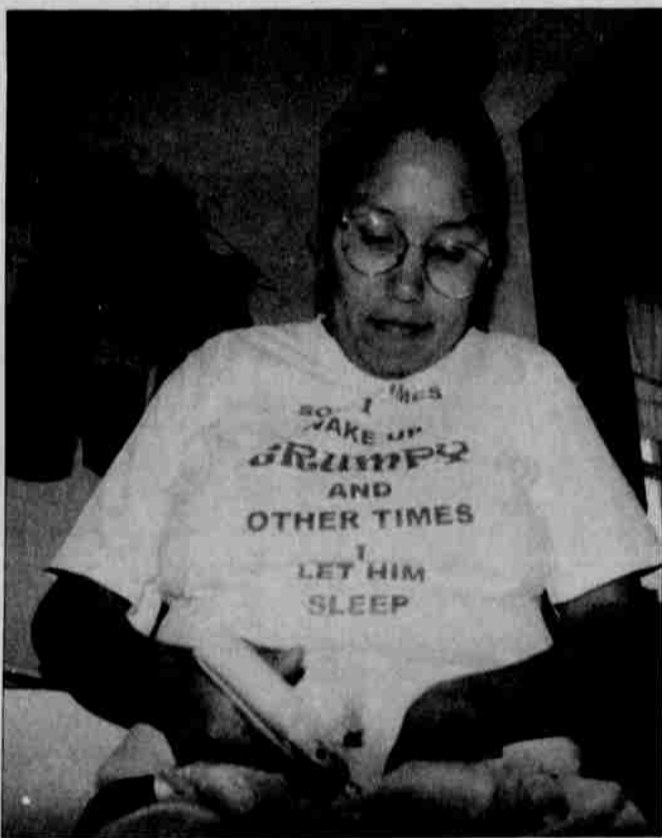
But losing the management of the thrift store is a welcome change for Wanda Suppah VanPelt. That just means she has more time to concentrate on what she does best, her art — beading.



Tammy Tewee (upper left) and Wanda Suppah VanPelt (left) work on beaded gift items.

The photo at bottom left shows the four employees at the gift and thrift shops: Delliath Heath, Wanda, Tammy and Rena Suppah-Gomez (clockwise from left).

And in the photo at far left, Rena works at the thrift store.



Story and photos by D. "Bing" Bingham

More than just a good place to shop

The Traditional Treasures Indian Market and the Dollars and Sense Thrift Shop are more than just places to shop.

They are also places where people learn important job skills.

Traditional Treasures opened in October of 2000. The shop is an incubator, or start-up business of the Warm Springs Work Force Development Department.

At first the shop was located at the Warm Springs Plaza. Traditional Treasures moved to its current location, 2710 Wasco Street, near the Work Force Development office, in the summer of last year.

During its initial couple of years, the gift shop was managed separately from the Dollars and Sense Thrift Store. Now the gift shop and the thrift store are managed by Wanda VanPelt.

Traditional Treasures and Dollars and Sense serve the community in two different ways.

Most obviously, the shop and thrift store offer good quality items for sale: the gift shop has outstanding Indian beadwork items on sale for reasonable prices; while Dollars and Sense offers clothing, household appliances and other items, also at very reasonable prices.

These businesses provide another service to the community, in that they are places where people can gain valuable work experience.

"Tribal members who go through this program hold temporary, part-time jobs," said Wanda Suppah VanPelt. "We're training people to go out and get a permanent job."

Some workforce fundamentals are emphasized: show up at work on time, be there every day, work well and get along with other people. There are about 10 different employment-related areas of focus, said VanPelt.

You can reach the gift shop by calling 553-2288. The number at the thrift store is 553-2287.

