

She Weaves Herself Into Her Art

■ Tribal Member Sanda "Sam" Henny continues to inspire with her color.

By Peta Tinda

Tribal member and renowned basket weaver Sanda "Sam" Henny is one step closer to achieving her long-time goal: to have one of her baskets displayed in the Grand Ronde wing of the Portland Art Museum.

"Someday, I'll be there," said Henny. "I told the curator, Bill Mercer, you need one of my baskets, you don't have any color."

Color is something Henny is well known for. Her eye-catching baskets, made with brightly dyed Pendleton wool, have become famous in weaving circles and have garnered her much praise and accolades, including her being selected to take part in the Annual Sitka Art Celebration and sale, where her pieces will be displayed alongside some of the Northwest's most highly regarded and popular artists, such as Rick Bartow and Sherrie Wolf.

She also has one of her baskets on display as an example of contemporary basketry at the Grand Ronde Hall of Legends at Spirit Mountain Casino.

By using non-traditional materials, she can express herself with brilliant colors, and also not have to wade through the underbrush to gather components. "I don't want to fight snakes," she said.

Henny, who works as Tribal Developmentor for the Human Resources Department at Spirit Mountain Casino, has been weaving for about eight years and has developed a signature style of vivid colors, intricate patterns and bold designs.

She learned from master weaver Joey Lavadour of Pendleton, Oregon, who gave her



Photo by Peta Tinda

Inspirational— Tribal member Sanda "Sam" Henny with two of her finely crafted baskets that are well known for their bright colors and intricate patterns.

some advice she still goes by.

"He said the most important thing was not to fight the basket," said Henny.

Lavadour taught her to make baskets in the traditional way, using time honored techniques

and materials.

After learning the traditional methods, she then began to develop a style all her own. By adding intense colors and unusual shapes to her baskets, she began to move away from the baskets being strictly utilitarian to becoming art objects.

"I do it for the sake of art," she said.

Henny has also been teaching classes, both at the Sitka Institute and in Grand Ronde, for several years.

"I don't know what's better, weaving or teaching weaving," she said. "I will teach anyone who's willing to learn."

When she is weaving the baskets she always tries to maintain an optimistic attitude towards the baskets to ensure that they are made in a good way and that no negative energy goes into the basket. "The basket takes all of that in," Henny said.

"That's where the spirit of the basket comes from. When I weave, I weave myself into the basket," she explained. "It's very a very spiritual process, very positive."

By using non-traditional materials she can spend more time weaving the baskets instead of gathering and curing materials.

But this doesn't make it any less time consuming.

The average basket takes anywhere from 40 to 80 hours to make.

"The goal," said Henny. "Isn't to get it done quickly." ■



Elders' Bingo Party

Smiles — Grand Ronde Tribal Elders got a chance to meet, visit and win some prizes at the Annual Elders' Bingo Party, held at the Community Center in Grand Ronde on December 8. Leona Price, left, helps her father Albert Peters with his card, while Bonnie Tom (below, from left) Wesley West and Louise Colson enjoy themselves at the party. Elder Dorothy Green, (bottom left) was also there, along with her usual friendliness and good nature.



Photos by Peta Tinda

