



A Babe in Yarns — Tribal Member and NISA Advisory Board Member Elaine LaBonte said she was honored to be on a committee with such experienced Elders.

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"I truly am honored to be on that committee," said LaBonte. "Most are Elders. I'm a baby in storytelling by comparison."

She played a role in coordinating this wildly successful event, and during the event, she shared with the other committee members the role of emcee. In that capacity, she

said she requested the job of expressing the group's thanks to all those supporting the event, and "I really wanted to introduce Brent," she said.

"Every day we all spoke of the vision," said LaBonte. She commented on the large number of youth that were there. "For me, the purposes that NISA will serve is number one, promoting storytelling among our young people; and

number two, giving our current storytellers and our emerging storytellers the self value so they put a price tag on their services that reflects what they are worth, because dominant culture commonly calls upon Native storytellers and other Native artisans and expects them to be free or very very low paid. We want them to understand they are worth that dollar."

The three-day project received

support from National Endowment for the Arts, Multnomah County Cultural Coalition and Umpqua Bank. Other sponsors included United Indian Students in Higher Education & Native American Student & Community Center at PSU, Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Inc., Portland public School's Title VII Indian Education, the Center for Columbia River History, the Mark Spencer Hotel and Wisdom of the Elders, itself.

The group raised money to help pay for the event with auctions and raffles. Prized offerings included Pendleton blankets, Native art, Grand Ronde's Restoration video, along with outdoor vacations and restaurant outings.

Wisdom of the Elders also has received support from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund. In 2003, the Grand Ronde funding agency gave WOTE \$25,000 in support of the group's radio programming. An application for another grant is pending.

Whatever the level of support, the obligation for Natives, and maybe not just for Natives, is to keep the oral tradition alive. "What we hear," said Edmo, "we have to put back on the wind for others." ■



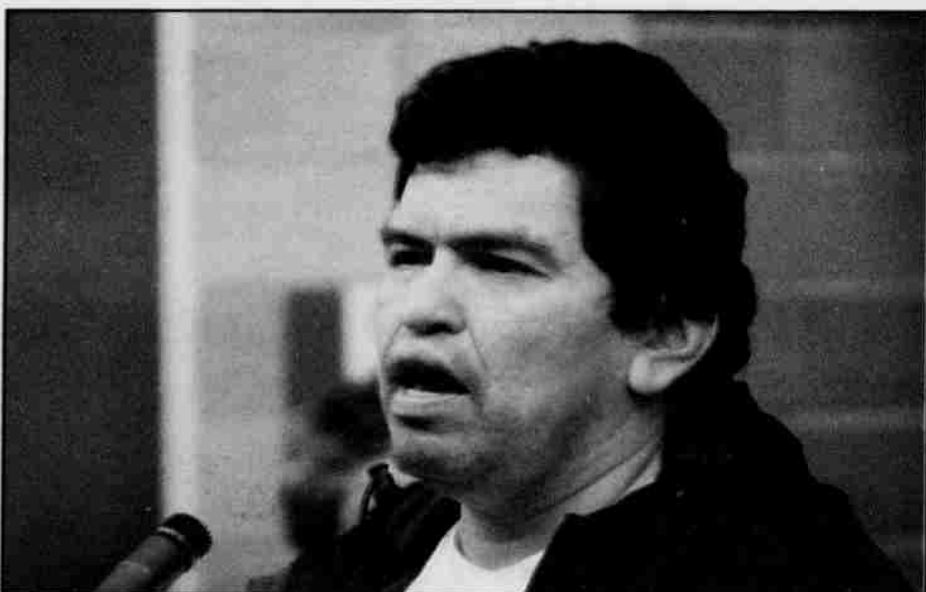
Festival Project Director Bruce Crespin
(Juaneno Band of California Mission Indians)



NISA Advisory Council Member and Storyteller Elaine Grinnell
(Jamestown Klallam)



NISA Advisory Council Member and Tribal Elder Darlene Foster
(Warm Springs/Wasco)



NISA Advisory Council Member and Storyteller Roger Fernandes
(Lower Elwha Band of the Klallam)