

cat named Tricky "used to sleep in our closet," she said. Then there was the cat that lost an eye, who was "a cat and a half."

"Heck," said Lee, "they got better care than some kids I see."

Lee is looking for a new direction for the Tribe. "We're going from good to bad," she said. "We want the older ones back on Council to get back to the old ways. They don't cater to Elders like they used to. They give themselves raises."

"I let them know what I think's wrong," she said, "but they don't listen to me. They'll get it straightened out, back to what it was."

She advocates for more employment for Tribal members. "Give the Indian a chance. We all did something wrong in our lifetime, but you don't have to go back 10 years. Three years is long enough. If they want to make something of themselves, let them."

"Last night," she said recently, "I dreamed that I could read real good again - I'm half blind - so I could bead again. And maybe I will because I just got some vitamins for my eyes. They said they're real good."

"I used to dream about my folks: dad was always cutting up and having fun; mom was always correcting me. When Dale and I settled down and quit drinking (twenty

years ago), I stopped dreaming about them - maybe because I was ok.

"Sometimes, I'll dream that I'm way out someplace and there's nothing but sand and bare hills. It's just really scary because I couldn't find my way out."

"A couple months ago, I had a dream that I looked up and Dale was gone and I couldn't find him."

She and Dale have been married for 43 years. Dale had a heart bypass operation in September of 2006 and a pacemaker put in after that.

The couple made plenty of money in their younger years, and now, living in Elder housing, she said, "we go to pick for the exercise."

"I stayed busy all my life," she said. "I really enjoyed what I did. Work is not a dirty word." ■



Norma in her teen years, babysitting.

Photo courtesy of Norma Lee



At left top is sister Margaret McAbee with Dale and Norma at the center top and Uncle George Leno at right. Nieces Marlene Groshong and Sharon Herron are at the bottom of the picture, left and right. They are McAbee's daughters.

Photo courtesy of Norma Lee