

# Artists preserve

By MARIANNA JONES  
Of the Union-Bulletin

Joseph Lavadour Jr. weaves Indian bags.

Not only because they are beautiful, but because they represent a "door to the past," he says.

Lavadour is a fifth-generation descendant of a French explorer for the Hudson's Bay Company (who spelled his name Laverdure) and Tawascklie, a Walla Walla Indian woman later called Lizette Walla Walla.

Joseph Jr., his older brother, James, of Cayuse, Ore., and his cousin, Maynard Lavadour of Mission, Ore., were all raised on the Umatilla Indian Reservation in eastern Oregon. Coincidentally, they are all artists whose work is represented in an exhibit opening today from 3 to 5 p.m. at Carnegie Center of the Arts, 109 S. Palouse St.

Joseph Jr., 23, will show seven woven bags and hats. James, 26, will display 50 watercolor and oil paintings. Maynard, 17, is exhibiting traditional Indian beadwork on a variety of items ranging from a baby board to a buckskin dress.

## Maintaining a tradition

Joe Lavadour follows an ancient custom by weaving baskets as Walla Walla Indians have for years before him. Traditionally, the baskets are made from dried corn husks and natural dyes, such as the small pouch in the foreground. Lavadour has expanded to include Pendleton wool, as in the large basket on the table, which took four months to make. Lavadour's baskets open this month's show at the Carnegie Center of the Arts today, along with paintings by his brother, James, and beadwork by this cousin, Maynard.

*(not now)*  
Joseph Jr. lives at 600 Sycamore St. with his parents, Joseph Sr. and Colleen Lavadour. In addition to weaving, he collects old photographs and researches a family history involving several Northwest Indian tribes. An enlarged poster-size photograph of three ancestors dominates the small living room where he plies brightly colored woolen strands and jute for long hours at a time.

A 14- by 17-inch bag has 200 stitches in one row and took four months to make, he says. It's not the kind of little gift item you might pick up for Christmas. If he sold it, his asking price would be \$350.

But he doesn't really want to sell it. His work is more than an art form, he says.

"I don't consider myself an artist at all. This is something I do that is like a door to the past. It represents a past culture that is quickly being lost. It is really a nice thing to be able to preserve a past. I've taught a lot of people (how to do it) myself."

Joseph learned the craft of twine weaving from his aunt Carrie Sampson on the Umatilla Reservation. The



# Indian past

technique is very traditional to the Nez Perce and other Indians of the area, he says.

"It takes years to master. I'm a very young man and I've only been doing it for a few years."

Among the pieces he will exhibit is a small corn-husk bag colored with natural dyes made from rose hips and black walnut husks. But mostly he uses wool, he says. He creates his own decorative designs.

Both Joseph and Maynard Lavadour say they were influenced by their grandmother, the late Edna Bellanger Lavadour, who encouraged their interest in native crafts.

During his early childhood, Maynard observed the work of craftsmen on the reservation. His interests center around traditional beadwork methods and designs. Although he does some jewelry, the majority of his work involves clothing. Among the eight pieces he is exhibiting are a child's red cloth dress, the buckskin-covered baby board, a belt, blankets, a wool coat and a white buckskin dress.

A student at Pendleton High School, Maynard is the son of Arnold Jr. and

Josephine Lavadour. He has been involved with cultural activities on the Umatilla Reservation and has participated in Indian language workshops and Indian celebrations. He plans to teach a class on making baby boards at the Mission Adult Basic Education Center.

James lives in Cayuse with his wife, JoAnn Mace Lavadour, and their two sons. A self-taught artist, he has been painting seriously since high school. His preferred media are watercolor, oil on paper and oil on drafting linen. His observations of the changing lighting and moods of the Blue Mountains are captured in watercolor, while his oils are more abstract, done in brilliant color.

He has been working for the reservation education department as a curriculum material specialist, assisting the tribe in preparing Indian materials for the Pendleton-area public schools. He has taught art classes at the Mission Adult Basic Education Center.

The exhibit by the three Lavadours will be at Carnegie Center through Nov. 30. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.