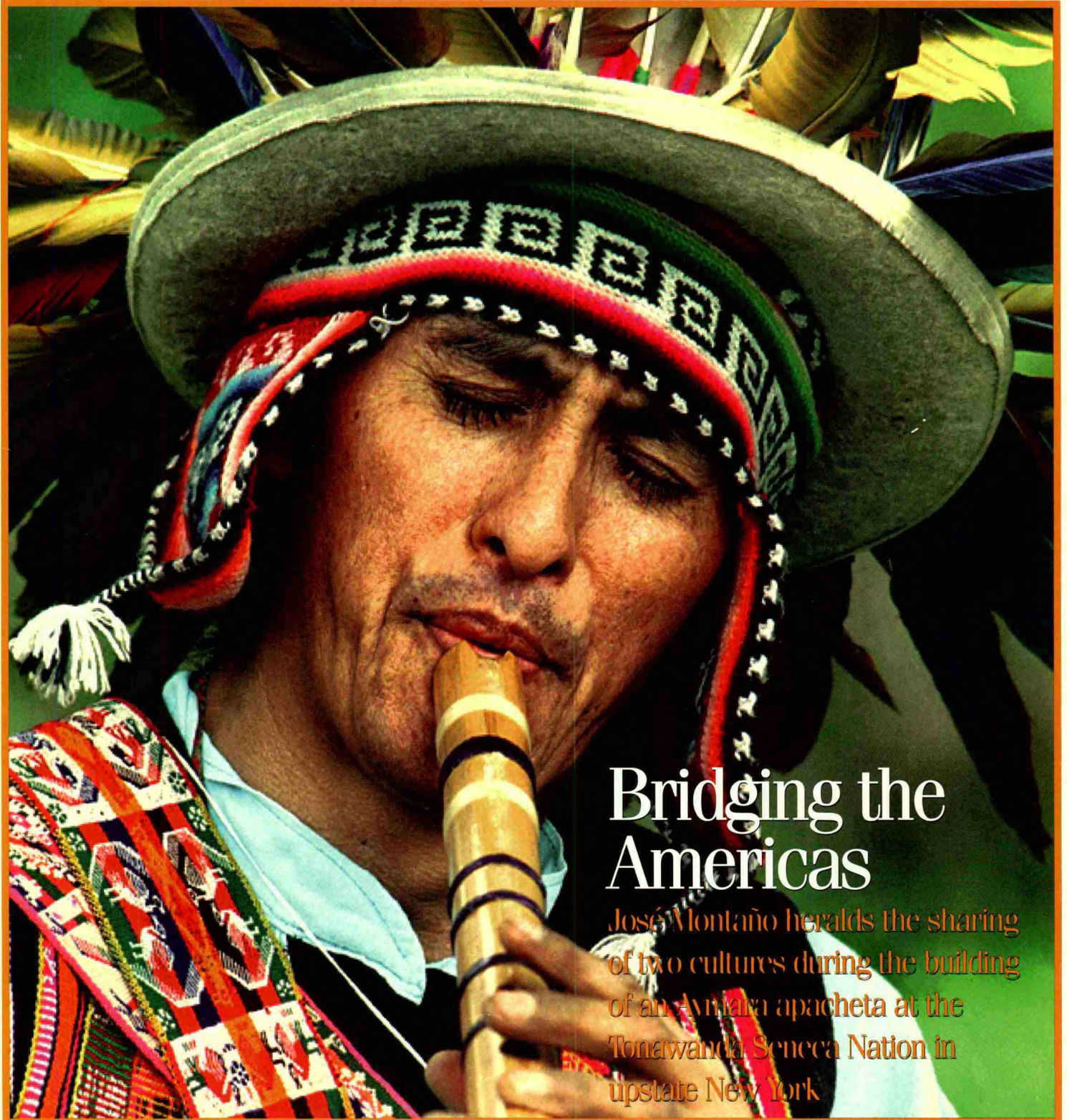


# NATIONAL MUSEUM of the American Indian

Summer 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



## Bridging the Americas

José Montaña heralds the sharing of two cultures during the building of an *Ayíwara* apacheta at the Tonawanda Seneca Nation in upstate New York

INDIAN JOURNALISM • THE JOHN WAYNE CLY STORY • COYOTE ON THE POWWOW TRAIL



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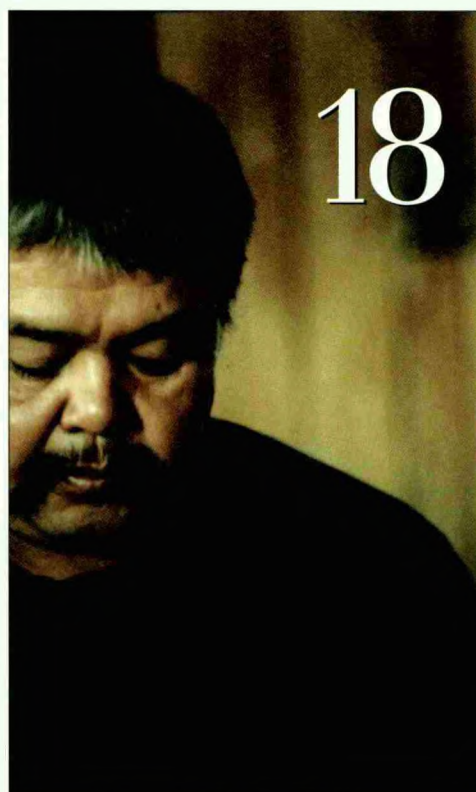
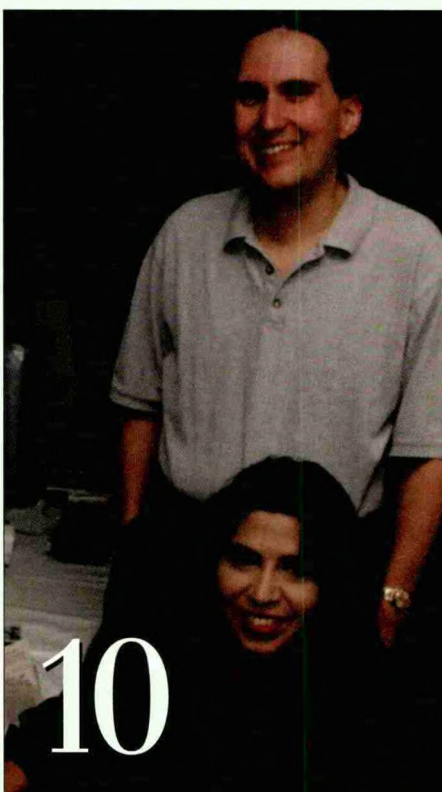
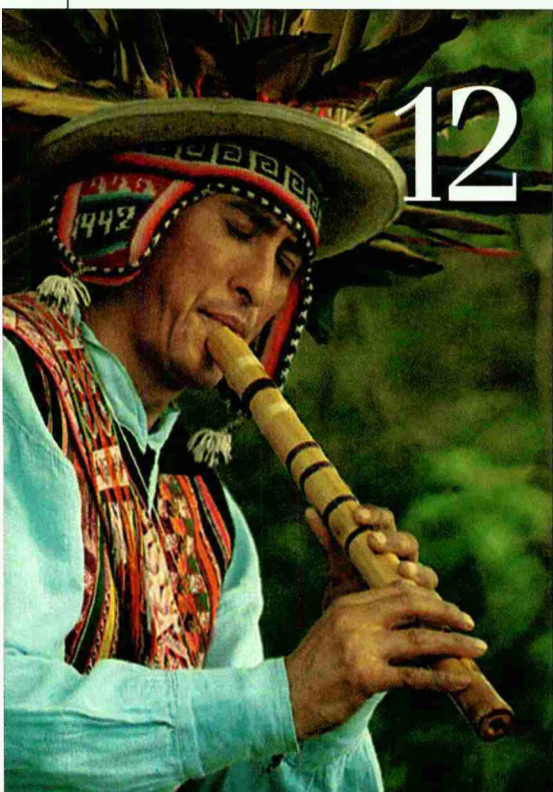


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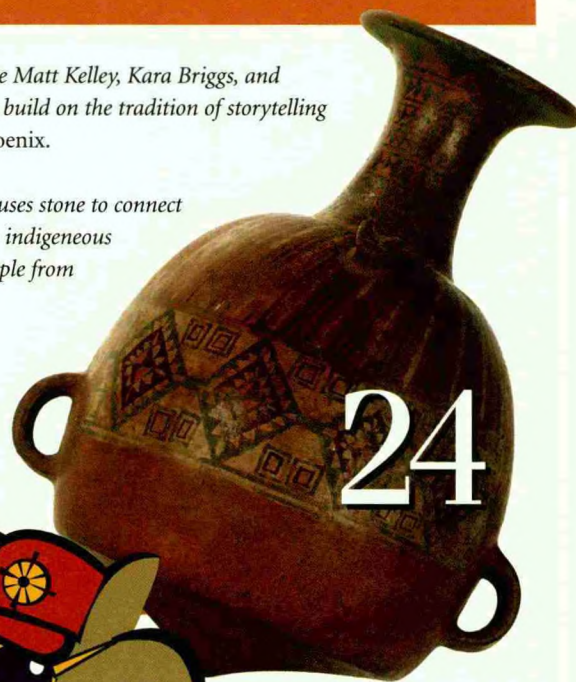


## FEATURES

**10 Ready for Page One** – Mark Trahant describes how Indian journalists like Matt Kelley, Kara Briggs, and Jodi Rave make a difference in today's newsrooms. Trahant says today's Native journalists build on the tradition of storytelling that began with Elias Boudinot, founder of the 19th century newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix.

**12 Woven Through Stone** – Ben Winton describes how a man from Bolivia uses stone to connect with Seneca people in upstate New York. Stone has spiritual and utilitarian significance to indigenous cultures across the Western Hemisphere. Roberto Ysais photographs Jose Montaña and people from the Tonawanda Seneca Nation as they meet in upstate New York to build an apacheta, a Qulla cultural icon.

**18 The John Wayne Cly Story** – John Wayne Cly's dream came true when he found his family after more than 40 years of separation. Marley Shebala tells us about this remarkable story. Cly's story and the events around it compelled Jeff Spitz and Bennie Klain to make a documentary film called The Return of Navajo Boy.

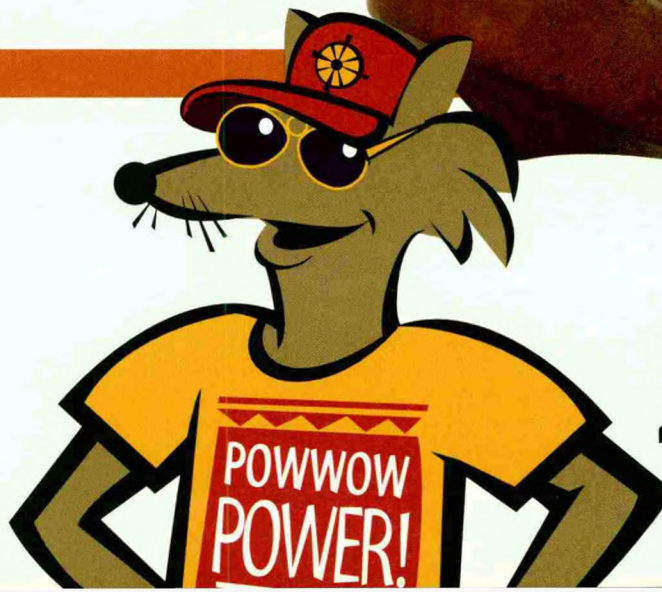


## DEPARTMENTS

PERSPECTIVES.....	5
MUSEUM NEWS .....	6
COYOTE'S PLACE .....	22
COLLECTIONS.....	24
CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....	25
DID YOU KNOW? .....	30

Cover photography by Roberto Ysais

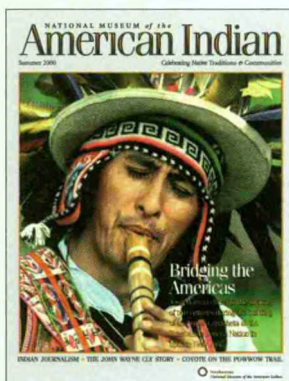
**Correction:** The photo credit on page 24 of the Spring Issue, Vol. 1, No. 2 incorrectly identified the photographer as Cynthia Frankenburg. The photograph was taken by Katherine Fogden. On page 29, we misidentified Nick Lassa (Cherokee). The correct identification should read Nick Lassaw (Pondera).



# NATIONAL MUSEUM of the American Indian

Volume 1, Number 3, Summer 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



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# NMAI's Festival Grows With Native Media

By ELIZABETH WEATHERFORD

For 20 years the Native American Film and Video Festival has earned international acclaim for showing outstanding new Native American productions. This year's festival, held in New York at the National Museum for the American Indian (NMAI)'s George Gustav Heye Center and host sites, will take place Nov. 16-19. It will present 60 new works, introduced by Native media makers from throughout the Americas and the Pacific Islands. Since its founding in 1979, the festival has greatly expanded its programming, and its focus now includes all forms of Native media: film, video, television, radio, CD-ROMs, multimedia installation arts, and the Internet. All genres are shown – documentaries, short fictions, music videos, animations, experimental art videos, and alternative broadcast public affairs and news programming.

The festival's success has prompted expanded screenings beyond November. It has spun off three national and international traveling film and video festivals and innumerable special film series organized for host sites – for tribal communities, universities, international film festivals, and other cultural institutions.

Since 1997, NMAI's monthly summer program, *Thursday Night at the Movies*, has screened new feature films, focusing on the work of Native American directors, actors, screenwriters, and other cinema professionals. The most recent project stemming from the festival is still in the formation phase: a *Native Networks* Web site by the Film and Video Center that will reflect, via the Internet, the many strengths and interests of Native American media. In keeping with the museum's mission not only to serve the viewing public with excellent programming but also to benefit Native communities and artists, the festival will offer workshops where participants can examine and discuss the media field.

The richness of the festival's programming reflects the expansion and dynamism of the Native American producing community at work today. In countries throughout the Americas, numerous Native projects have yielded strong bodies of work that will be shown at the festival. Like NMAI's Film and Video Center, many of these projects started about 20 years ago, with major new developments in the past five years. In Oaxaca and



Photo by Anna Peña

Left to right: G. Peter Jemison, Crisanto Manzano Avella, Beverly Singer, and Peggy Berryhill.

Michoacan, Mexico, Centers of Indigenous Video now offer video production training to community producers, whose work is featured this year at the festival. Other recent developments include a community production in Chiapas and a new Mexican Native independent video organization. In Brazil, a video training and media literacy project in many Indian villages in the Amazon states has spurred video production in Xavante communities in the Mato Grosso.

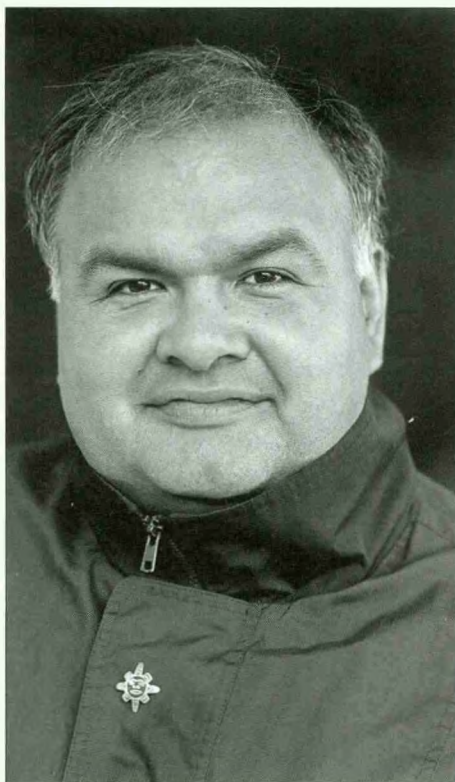
In the United States and Canada, major independent features and national radio series have gained recognition for Native producers. Chris Eyre, Randy Red Road, Shirley Cheechoo, Gary Farmer, and Sandy Sunrising Osawa, many of whose works have premiered at NMAI festivals and other special film and video series, figure among the many directors developing an international profile for Native American film. Canada has the world's first indigenous television network, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, thanks to national funding and hard work by the Aboriginal community. The Canadian film industry, including television and the National Film Board, has encouraged many more Aboriginal directors to produce excellent and challenging films.

The festival draws its energy from the work of its guest selectors – Native cultural activists and media makers who join the center's staff to view, discuss, and choose the programs to be featured. For them, the festival offers opportunities for Native perspectives to be seen broadly and discussed in detail among Native American media professionals. As one of the selectors, Dr. Beverly Singer, has said, "I am

really so encouraged by recognizing that in the last 15 years of production, really strong aesthetic tribal images are starting to come forward." Singer (Santa Clara and Navajo) is a leading scholar of Native American media and the director of the Alfonso Ortiz Center in the department of anthropology at the University of New Mexico. Selector G. Peter Jemison said, "What I'm really struck with is certainly the way in which the videographers individually portray the positive beauty of our communities." Jemison (Seneca) is a visual artist and serves as the site manager of Ganandagan State Historic Park in Victor, N.Y. The other two selectors for this year include Peggy Berryhill (Muscogee Creek), an independent radio producer currently developing *Club Red*, a National Public Radio series on Native culture moderated by comic Charlie Hill (Oneida), and Crisanto Manzano Avella (Zapotec), a noted filmmaker from near Oaxaca, a major center of Native media production. To focus attention on new directions in Native Internet work, electronic media expert Randy Ross (Ponca and Otoe Missouria) is developing *Native Interactive*, a special festival presentation of Native sites and Web producers.

NMAI and the Film and Video Center take pride in supporting and celebrating the continuing growth of Native media for the past two decades. This year's festival promises to extend that run of excellence; the museum looks forward equally to showcasing future Native talent in media known and yet to be invented. ■

Elizabeth Weatherford is head of the Film and Video Center.



Gary Farmer photographed by Tim Leyes

Gary Farmer (left) and Chris Eyre: "The film festival is a great venue for exhibiting your work to the (Indian) community."

## NMAI's Fall Film & Video Festival Now Includes Native Radio, Television & Web

A gathering of Natives will convene Nov. 16-19, 2000, as indigenous filmmakers flock to New York for the Native American Film and Video Festival. For 20 years, The Film and Video Center (FAVC) at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and its predecessor, the Museum of the American Indian, has been a forerunner in promoting Native filmmakers and their works. Native directors such as Chris Eyre, Sandy Sunrising Osawa, Annie Frazier-Henry, Barb Cranmer, George Burdeau, and actor-director Gary Farmer have exhibited their films at the George Gustav Heye Center in Manhattan.

"The film festival is a great venue for exhibiting your work to the (Indian) community," said Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapahoe), director of *Smoke Signals* (1998) and producer of the upcoming feature *Doe Boy*. NMAI has showcased and premiered Eyre's work and that of Randy Red Road, director of *Doe Boy*, since 1993. The festival specializes in independent productions of short features, documentaries, music videos, animation, and community video. Eyre commented that "they show those pieces that are less likely to be commercial."

Eyre, 30, felt the biennial festival worked well as a training ground for him. "It allows you to refine your craft. It allows you to talk in front of an audience," he said. "You learn how to set people up for a screening," he added. "You improve each time you get to exhibit." The festival gave visibility to one of Eyre's early shorts. "In 1993, I showed it [*Tenacity*] at NMAI," he said. Eventually the film sold to a shorts program.

Canadian filmmaker Annie Frazier-Henry (Blackfoot/Sioux) has seen the film festival help her career in another way. Frazier-Henry said it helped her get past the stigma attached to a lack of university credentials. "You know, the 'Land of Degrees,'" she said. "The FAVC program has been a champion for getting my work recognized by higher institutions," she continued, and helped her believe "that my work is of that caliber." Her film *Singing Our Stories* received an award from the University of Berlin Ethnology Department.

Elizabeth Weatherford, founding director of the festival, looks forward to this year's new developments, such as screenwriting workshops and a video wall with numerous screens showing different works simultaneously. The

festival will also broaden in scope, including the debut of *Club Red* – a live radio presentation – and the introduction of a new Web site, *Native Networks*. "We want to facilitate the way people think about media," Weatherford said.

The festival's exhibitors come from all over the hemisphere, including not only the United States but also Canada, countries south of the border, and the Pacific Islands. About half the works this year will be from Latin America. To date, Native media makers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico have had works featured. "The museum's position is we are multi-vocal," said Weatherford.

Although there are other Native film festivals in the United States, this is the only one held in a city that is a major film center. "Because we're in New York City, a mecca of films and filmmakers, there is that much more opportunity for exposure," said Russ Tallchief (Osage), NMAI's public affairs specialist. He feels he cannot overemphasize what a boon the festival can be for media makers. "The festival is one of the most prominent festivals for Native filmmakers in the world." – Leta Rector

# Cherokee Students Attend Video Workshop



*Shooting in New York City, from left to right: Jeremy Sequoyah (with camera), Channing George and Laura Pinnix.*

It was Laura Pinnix's Pueblo friends who alerted her to the story in the summer 1999 issue of the National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) former newsletter, *The Runner*. Pinnix, a teacher of Cherokee language and history at Cherokee High School in North Carolina, wanted to make videotapes for the school's language-retention curriculum. Some of her students had already taped a puppet show without the benefit of digital equipment or a mixing board. They wanted professional help.

*The Runner* article related how NMAI's Four Directions project had enabled students from Santa Clara Pueblo to get instruction from NMAI staff on using digital video equipment. Pinnix contacted Gaetana De Gennaro (Tohono O'odham), assistant director of the Resources Center at the George Gustav Heye Center, and described her plight. "They wanted to better learn how to document their community," De Gennaro said, explaining that the Resources

Center set up a program to help Pinnix, three students, and another teacher, June Smith, do just that.

For three days in March, Cherokee High sophomores Jeremy Sequoyah and Crystal Locust, and graduate and current college student Channing George took an intensive video workshop at the Heye Center, led by writer/producer Clinton Elliott (Ojibwa) of the Resources Center. Elliott, who wrote a 34-page manual that served as the blueprint for their hands-on work. Smith, a Cherokee elder, opened and closed the workshop with prayer. In between was a grueling schedule that covered research, budget, scriptwriting, sound, lighting, microphones, editing, camera work, and on-camera talent.

The students went home with a newly created three-minute video that focuses on Cherokee objects in the Heye Center galleries. Pinnix says they are sharing their new skills with fellow students so that more may contribute to Cherokee High's cultural curriculum. — Carrie Vaccaro

Photo by Georgetta Stonelish Ryan

# Heart Butte Warriors Honored the Traditional Way

When the Heart Butte Warriors boys' basketball team was honored by fellow Blackfeet tribal members for winning the Montana State Class C Championship this past spring, a time-honored tradition followed. Just as the tribe honored its victorious warriors with buckskin shirts hundreds of years ago, so were the team members and coaches honored in April, when they were given jackets recognizing the team's feat. "They (warriors) wore their shirts into battle," said Curly Bear Wagner, a Blackfeet tribal historian and teacher. "They worked as protection, similar to what a medicine bundle is used for."

Examples of the stunningly beautiful shirts from the mid-19th to early-20th centuries will be featured at an exhibition at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City, beginning Dec. 10, 2000, and running through July 2, 2001. The exhibit, sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, will feature shirts from the Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Crow, Gros Ventre, Mandan, and Nez Perce.

Back when the Blackfeet crisscrossed the Northern Plains, the warriors used their shirts for special occasions as well as battles. Many came highly adorned, with ermine, scalps, beads, and paint. "When you meet the Creator, you want to look your best. That's why they wore them — they were always prepared for



death," said Wagner.

Hundreds of years later, the jackets of the Heart Butte basketball team may not be as elaborately embellished, but the school and tribe still consider the feat of capturing a championship to be a major victory.

Heart Butte won the tournament by defeating the Gardiner Bruins in an 82-70 thriller, in front of 7,000 screaming fans — including the more than 3,000 Blackfeet who made the four-hour trip to the Butte Civic Center.

In the school's gym, nestled below the Rocky Mountains in northwestern Montana, tribal

leaders led the team and student body in a victory dance before presenting the players with the jackets.

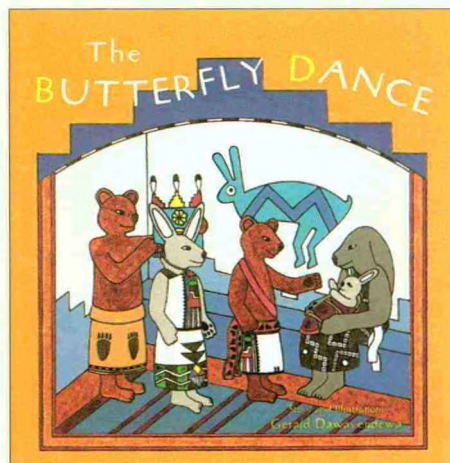
Heart Butte Coach Leo Kennerly said positive signs accompanied the team members as they traveled to the tournament, including eagles flying above as they left the reservation. On the return trip, Kennerly noted, the eagles were in the same spot. "Everything seemed so natural," said the coach. "It was just like going into battle. We left and then returned with these things — a basketball, a trophy, and a state title."

— Richard Peterson

Photo by Katherine Fogden



# Native Author Illustrates New Children's Book



The Butterfly Dance, by Gerald Dawavendewa will be available in bookstores and through online booksellers beginning Fall 2000, or by calling 1-800-ARTBOOK.

The Hopi Sun Clan has a big responsibility: Its members are caretakers for the entire cosmos. "We watch or keep track or have that understanding of how things work in the sky," Sun Clan member/Cherokee Gerald Dawavendewa explained.

So when an astronaut contacted him about sending a piece of his artwork up in the space shuttle *Endeavor*, it didn't seem odd. "This was something very naturally connected," he said. Dawavendewa painted a Hopi design on a deerskin, as commissioned. Then he placed a prayer feather inside and wrapped up the skin. After the artwork's journey on the *Endeavor*, astronaut Thomas Jones brought the bundle back to Earth, and it stands on exhibit at the Kuiper Space Science Building at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Now Dawavendewa has written and illustrated a children's book. *The Butterfly Dance* is one of the books in the *Tales of the People* series published by the National Museum of

the American Indian with Abbeville Press. All written and illustrated by Native Americans, they include photographs of tribal members and a glossary of Indian words to help readers understand the story better.

The butterfly dance is a Hopi female social dance. A girl's first dance is a very special day. Girls have to be unmarried and not have children. "Your partner is related to you, and all the families are involved because you have to pay each other back in a way with food," Dawavendewa said. "The social dance takes a lot of people to do it. You also have the singing group." The songs are prayers for rain, and the girls dance like butterflies going from flower to flower. Whichever relative the girl asks to be her partner is obligated to make the wooden headdress for her dance. Held each autumn, the butterfly dance celebrates the importance of family.

So look for the book *The Butterfly Dance*, coming soon to a galaxy near you.

— Leta Rector

## Ford Foundation Offers NMAI a Challenge Grant of \$1.5 million for Outreach

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) took one giant step forward toward enhancing its Fourth Museum when the Ford Foundation recently presented it a very welcome one-time challenge grant. The grant totals \$1.5 million and requires a \$3 million match over a five-year period.

"This is one of the most significant grants ever provided to the National Museum of the American Indian," says Niki Sandoval (Chumash), acting assistant director for community services. "It presents a major opportunity to provide permanent program funding for extending NMAI's resources and services to Native communities throughout the Americas."

NMAI was selected when the Foundation launched a national study to choose 28 insti-

tutions that represent both imaginative work in arts disciplines and demonstrate sound financial management. NMAI was one of only five visual arts recipients, and the only institution dedicated to recognizing and sustaining the achievements of Native peoples.

**"This is one of the most significant grants ever provided to the NMAI."**

NMAI will need to find individual contributions to match the grant. Appeals will be made to individuals who are committed to strengthening Native communities.

Susan V. Berresford, president of the Ford Foundation, says, "The challenge grant grows out of our desire to see if we can jumpstart a process that gives greater permanency and financial stability to cultural organizations."

The Fourth Museum is not actually a physical museum, but a program of services and artistic initiatives for the entire

Western Hemisphere.

An underlying idea is that much of the museum will be accessible via the Internet and other means.

The Fourth Museum will expand NMAI's audience immensely. The programs include publications, electronic information, and collaborative events with Native communities for those who may never have the opportunity to visit the East Coast. The museum's Web site is available at any hour of the day to those who want to look at the electronic versions of current exhibitions and past exhibitions.

Sandoval believes the grant has given the NMAI a much-needed step up. She says, "We are extremely grateful to the Ford Foundation for recognizing our work and providing the challenge needed to help expand our services to Native peoples."

To get a taste of what the future holds, readers may view current and past exhibitions by going to the Web site at [www.si.edu/nmai](http://www.si.edu/nmai).

— Leta Rector

# NMAI Moves 49,000 Tribal Objects In One Year

**T**he National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)'s collections, whose origins read like an indigenous map of the hemisphere, are on a journey that seems to impassion those who shepherd these tribal objects. A year after NMAI began moving the collections from the overcrowded and outdated Research Branch in the Bronx, N.Y., to the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Md., the 49,000 relocated objects represent "a significant dent" in the overwhelming total of 804,000, according to Bruce Bernstein, assistant director for cultural resources. "To see one group's objects laid out together is spectacular."

The Research Branch "was so deeply lay-ered that we're only now beginning to see what

we have," says Raquel Chapa (Lipan Apache). "It was sad to see so many precious, sacred things crammed into such a small space." Chapa creates digital images of every object before it leaves the Bronx, both for inventory and for use by tribal delegates who travel to the CRC to choose from their tribal legacy what to include in the Mall museum exhibitions. Although the tribal delegations view a collection in its entirety, they may also look at Chapa's images of late-arriving or oversize objects.

Conservation specialists and experienced handlers on each end of the move act as stewards for each object, cleaning it before packing, and checking its condition on arrival at the CRC. There they rehouse it in a custom-built

storage mount or foam support. Clothing is shelved on special textile screens. Except for oversized objects, such as house posts or canoes, collections are placed together.

Collections received in the CRC since late last year include the Yupik from Alaska, Aleut from the Aleutian Islands, Anishinabe from the Great Lakes and Manitoba, Hupa from northern California, Tahltan and Tshimshian Niska from British Columbia, Mapuche from Chile, Maya from Guatemala, and Nahuatl from Mexico. "Laying out the complete collection anywhere is a rare occurrence," says CRC collections manager Pat Nietfeld. "It will probably be done again only when it's time to rotate the tribal contents of the exhibits."

— Carrie Vaccaro

## Smithsonian Study Tour Travels to Pueblos

**W**hile the drummers drum and the chorus sings, Pueblo men and women stand in the village and call out. All eyes turn to two hills. Shadowy figures emerge from the trees in the faint, early-dawn light. Deer and elk antlers and mountain sheep horns appear as Pueblo dancers, representing their animal brothers and sisters, descend from the hills. The San Ildefonso sunrise winter dances have begun.

Participants in the upcoming Smithsonian's Southwest Study Tour (Jan. 20–24, 2001) will have the rare and special treat of being guests at Pueblo dances, which until recently were closely guarded in secrecy and were not open to visitors. Guests will also be guided on a special behind-the-scenes tour at the Museum of Indian Arts, have lunch at Picuris Pueblo's Corn Dance Café (the only Native American-owned restaurant in Santa Fe), visit Jemez Pueblo, and stay at the La Fonda Hotel in the unparalleled magic and charm of Santa Fe, N.M.

The assistant director of cultural resources at the National Museum of the American Indian, Bruce Bernstein, will serve as the tour leader. Bernstein says the San Ildefonso dances help him to understand "why American Indians have continued to fight for cultural sovereignty."

"The sunrise dance is a prayer for the continuance of the world. They are beautiful dances," he says. Bernstein is thrilled that "the outside world" (the study tour) will be able to

participate. He believes that visiting the country's roots sheds light on Americans' collective identity as fellow inhabitants of the continent. He says, "To see the ongoing traditions of the communities is vital to understanding who we are as Americans."

To sign up for the tour, interested parties may speak with a study tour reservation coordinator by calling (toll free) 1-877-EDU-TOUR. More details are available on the study tour's Web site at <http://smithsonianstudy-tours.si.edu/sst/start.htm>. — Leta Rector

## Welcome Wall to Grace Lobby of New Mall Museum

*Research yields translations in 200 Native Languages*

**I**magine a museum where the walls literally welcome visitors. Christa Stabler, a 26-year-old graduate student in anthropology at the University of Connecticut, helped create such a wall for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) now under construction on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., while serving as a public programs intern earlier this year. For three months Stabler researched how to say "welcome" in Native languages throughout the Western Hemisphere, reaping more than 200 translations, many of which will be placed on a wall behind the main information desk.

Working under Gabrielle Tayac (Piscataway), public programs specialist, Stabler surfed the Internet, thumbed through dictionaries in the Library of Congress, and

telephoned tribal offices, teachers, and Native elders "who may be the last ones left who know their language," she says. More than 2,000 indigenous languages exist in North, Central, and South America.

Stabler's research, Tayac says, helped uncover "what's going on with Native languages — who's speaking them, how they're being used, who's teaching them." It revealed that because many indigenous languages are spoken rather than written, many variations in pronunciation and spelling persist, often without a single-word translation into English.

Carolyn Rapkiewicz, acting assistant director for public programs, initiated the idea for the project. NMAI staff are now considering how best to present the wording on the wall.

— Carrie Vaccaro

# Ready for Page One

*Dedicated Indian journalists are making sure that tribal stories and issues make the news, not just in our own newspapers, but in the mainstream press as well.*

By MARK TRAHANT

When I was eight or nine years old I toured a local newspaper with a group of Cub Scouts. We walked through the building, saw where reporters worked, and then sat back by the printing press and asked our tour guide what it would take for one of us to make Page One. "What if we're in a car crash?" someone asked. We were told that probably wouldn't cut it. "What if we *k-i-l-l* somebody?" another boy asked.

I don't remember the replies, but I recall that I wasn't satisfied by any of the answers to our imaginative – and often morbid – pursuit of the front page. Perhaps there was no answer because "Page One" was something unattainable to us as visitors from a nearby Indian reservation. Even as kids, we knew the front page was big time, a space where important stuff was placed – events, ideas, and people that mattered. And we knew that this concept, Page One, did not include us.

That Cub Scout tour took place about a third of a century ago. Think about how much the world has changed for a seven- or eight-year-old child from Idaho's Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Today a group of boys or girls might visit the same newspaper and ask not whether a tribal election story would go on Page One, but where on that page. Tribal elections have become important enough news events that many mainstream publications, particularly those near Indian reservations, routinely report the results with the same fanfare once reserved for other governments. But don't stop there. A child might also ask: "What if I am elected governor of Idaho?" This is a logical question in a state where a Native American was elected Idaho's attorney general and almost went on to the governor's mansion. Larry Echo Hawk didn't win the election, but he forever redefined the notion of what is possible for a person from a tribal community in that Rocky Mountain state.

Nowadays a lot of stories from Indian country are, and should be, routinely placed on a



*Kara Briggs and Matt Kelley were among the several hundred Indian journalists, editors and publishers who recently gathered for the annual conference of the Native American Journalists Association in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*

newspaper's cover. Most readers know some details about gambling, for example, or the expansion of tribal casinos or the creation of jobs, because these are often front-page stories. Or Page One might start with a reference to the sports page and a photograph of Navajo tribal member Notah Begay III when he wins a major golf tournament.

The world has changed, and one reason is

that more Native Americans are in newsrooms, sitting at keyboards, thinking about what makes news – and then writing the stories. We are, more than ever, defining what is considered "news." Sometimes these definitions are cast in tribal publications, such as the *Navajo Times*, *Sho-Ban News*, *Yakama Nation Review*, *Apache Scout*, or *Seminole Tribune*. There are some 300 reservation-based publications, with another

Photo by Peta Tinda

# Tribal journalism

has come of age in many communities, and the next edition is as eagerly awaited as a camp crier. In fact, most Native media efforts serve two communities: a tribal community wanting to know what's going on and the larger community of a neighborhood, region, or state.

300 written and edited for Native Americans living in cities, plus 30 radio stations, several television stations – both broadcast and cable systems – and a growing number of Internet 'zines.

Tribal journalism has come of age in many communities, and the next edition is as eagerly awaited as a camp crier. In fact, most Native media efforts serve two communities: a tribal community wanting to know what's going on and the larger community of a neighborhood, region, or state. Native American journalists define "news" at regional and national levels in publications such as *Indian Country Today*, *News From Indian Country*, or the syndicated radio newscast *National Native News*.

Look beyond the stories and peek at the writers' bylines. You'll see names like Kara Briggs, Jodi Rave, or Matt Kelley. Briggs is a suburban reporter at the *Oregonian* in Portland, a Yakama Indian, and former president of the Native American Journalists Association. When tribal leader Joe DeLaCruz died recently, she interrupted her routine and asked her editors for the assignment. She traveled to the Quinault leader's funeral and then wrote an essay that explained why DeLaCruz was important; she put an Indian's life and death into a broader context. Rave writes about Indian issues for Lee Enterprises, a Midwestern newspaper chain. That means her stories – such as a recent one about the death of a white buffalo – will appear on the front page of the *Billings Gazette* and the *Rapid City Journal* as well as the *Lincoln Star-Journal* (where Rave is based). Rave, who is a Mandan-Hidatsa tribal member, travels throughout Indian country putting stories in context for non-Indian and Indian readers alike. Kelley writes for the Associated Press, so his definitions of "news" are found in newspapers ranging from the *New York Times* to the *Modesto Bee*. Of Bad River Chippewa descent, Kelley folds Indian issues into his regional reporting beat in Washington, D.C.

Every Native writer, reporter, editor, or producer, like Briggs, Rave, and Kelley, builds on a

rich tradition of storytelling. The first Indian editor, Elias Boudinot, started the *Cherokee Phoenix* in 1824 with the idea that a newspaper could promote "temperate discussions on matters of politics, religion, and so forth." The issue that prompted him was the dispute over Cherokee homelands. The state of Georgia completely surrounded them, and the state government was intent on destroying tribal sovereignty. The very idea of a temperate discussion was considered criminal; a colonel of the Georgia Guard, a state militia, threatened to beat Boudinot unless he stopped writing. The editor's reply: "In this free country, where the liberty of the press is solemnly guaranteed, is this the way to obtain satisfaction for an alleged injury committed in a newspaper? . . . I complain of nothing of which a privileged white editor would not complain."

Boudinot also made tribal leaders uncomfortable, however. Although the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Cherokee sovereignty in a landmark case in 1832, the editor became convinced that the federal government would not enforce the court's decision, and he became pessimistic about the Cherokee Nation's future in Georgia. He pleaded for discourse. But under Cherokee law, even discussing removal from the tribal homeland was illegal and considered an act of treason. Boudinot resigned as editor of the *Phoenix*, saying he could not reconcile his views with those of the Cherokee Nation's leaders. He wrote that it is a duty to reflect on "the darkness which seems to lie before our people – our prospects, and the evils with which we are threatened; to talk over all these matters, and, if possible, come to some definite and satisfactory conclusion." But one tribal leader did not want a debate on removal in the newspaper. Chief John Ross believed that tribal newspapers should promote only the official tribal view. He even called the newspaper "a public press" and an "auxiliary in asserting and supporting our political rights." Ross appointed one of his relatives as editor, just to make certain.

The *Phoenix* story is a legacy – a gift to journalist and citizen alike – because it highlights an inherent conflict in community storytelling: Does discourse, even an uncomfortable conversation, expose the weakness in a community? I think not. I think knowledge makes a people stronger – and I wonder if that has always been so.

One leader who pushed for knowledge was Lucy Covington, of the Colville Tribe in Washington state. Her story took place in the 1960s when "termination" – the federal policy of ending treaty relationships with tribal governments – was at its peak. Every important elected official had decided that the Colville Confederated Tribes ought to be terminated. Termination support ranged from the elected tribal council to the U.S. Congress. But Covington published a newspaper, *Our Heritage*, exploring the negative consequences of termination. She used the power of ideas to challenge authorities. She even followed council leaders to meetings, where she disputed their interpretation of that tribal world. "Somehow," Covington said, "the present fever and fervor for termination has to be quieted." On May 8, 1971, candidates backed by Covington and *Our Heritage* won the election. The tribal chairman was defeated and replaced by 30-year-old Mel Tonasket. The new council immediately rejected the policy of "termination" and replaced it with that of "sovereignty." Said Chairman Tonasket, "We are a sovereignty within a sovereignty, and we must be allowed to rule ourselves." He went on, "The Colvilles are not trying to get even with anyone, but are fast trying to protect their rights as Indians." Indeed Covington, her allies, and the newspaper, *Our Heritage*, had won an important victory. In the real world of reservation life, the federal policy of termination was over. From that point forward, the debates would center on the powers of government, not a tribe's right to survive.

The Colville fight over termination should have been a cover story. But only a generation ago, this story did not generate much news outside of Indian country. Indian stories, for the most part, did not matter because there were no Native American writers in newsrooms interrupting an editor and saying, "Hey! This is important. We need this context. This story ought to be Page One." Then even a group of Cub Scouts might have recognized that tribal stories are front-page news, representing ideas, people, and events that matter. ■

Mark N. Trahant is a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe and a columnist at the *Seattle Times*. He and his family live on Bainbridge Island, Wash.

*From South America to New York, stones have threaded their way through indigenous cultures. Aymara culture-bearer José Montaña should know – stones he borrowed from the Tonawanda Seneca of upstate New York have returned home.*

# Woven Through

**J**osé Montaña remembers the ancient cities of stone. The wild imagination of a child fueled the stories his Qulla (or Aymara) elders told him about the dwellings in the high mountains of the Andes. Hidden in the remote mountains of what today is called Bolivia, these stone cities evaded modern discovery, even by a young boy who knew the barren, windswept terrain as well as his ancestors, who had inhabited the region even before the Inka empire. Montaña remembers all this as a man who lives in New York City and travels around the Northern Hemisphere exploring Native expression.

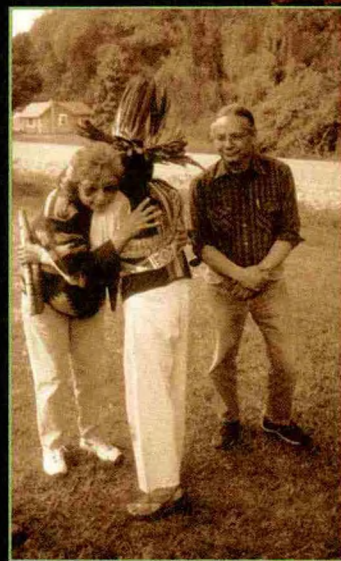
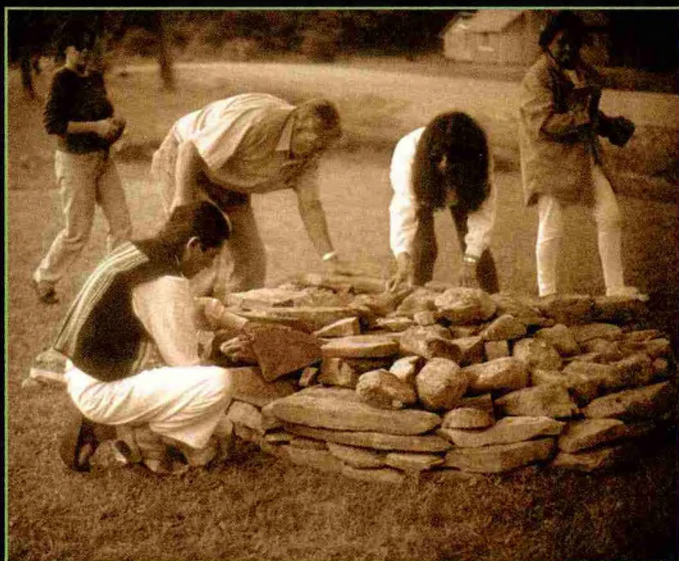
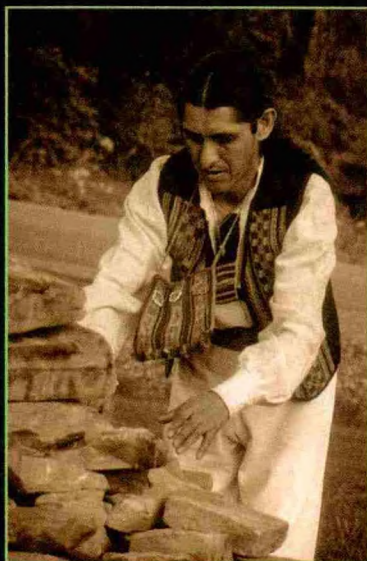


By BEN WINTON • photographs by ROBERTO YSAIS

# Stone



*Left: Jose Montano plays the choquilla (flute) to offer thanks after the apacheta is built.  
Above: The apacheta sits on Tonawanda Seneca Nation land in upstate New York.*



Montaño and Tonawanda Seneca people build the *apacheta* stone by stone.

Among many Native cultures in North America, for example, “stones are often personified spirits thought to have been spirits who turned themselves into stone,” says Walker. And, therefore, stones are viewed as sacred in themselves.

When he grew up, Montaño went to a village called Tiwanaku to attend a community celebration, where he played Native instruments. As a child, he had never learned about his own people’s history or culture in grammar school. History books mention Inka history, but never is there mention of Qulla history, which existed before the Inka. The stories of Montaño’s people are enacted through music and dance in community celebrations. Through music, Montaño learned about Qulla history and its links to Aymara, the Qulla language. He learned the Aymara words for different families of musical instruments like the *siku* (panpipe or flute) and the *jacha lakita* (large panpipe), which are played during specific agricultural cycles throughout the year. “Through music, I learned how strong the Qulla culture is today,” he says.

The people of Tiwanaku have lived near the ruins of one of these ancient stone cities for generations. There, a tangible link exists between the past and the present, among ancient stone temples, monumental stone sculptures, and the ancient stone carvings at Tiwanaku. The stones are more than just reminders of the past. They contain the code, like cultural DNA, to Aymara thought, religious belief, and expression. The people often have ceremonies at Tiwanaku to give thanks and to connect past, present, and future,

in order to keep the culture consistent and yet ever growing.

It was there that Montaño, now 47, says he had a profound realization about Native cultural connections. “The philosophy of the ancestors is contained in these [ancient stone] carvings,” Montaño says. “It is based on a spiritual relationship with nature and an ideal that emphasizes a strong sense of community. . . . The carvings at Tiwanaku are a tangible but mysterious manifestation of the ideas and wisdom of the ancients, and a link with our past.” In observing the link between past and present, between ancient stone monuments and the living Qulla culture at Tiwanaku, Montaño has reaffirmed and expanded on the age-old concept that Native life is circular. In fact, among many Native cultures, life is more than just a circle. It is infinity—the weaving of past, present, and future into a holistic thread, like a strand of DNA itself.

Montaño thinks of this connection in musical terms. His performances of traditional Qulla music have gained international acclaim and revitalized respect for the Native cultures in Bolivia, a country where nearly all citizens have some Native genes in their blood. Yet in this culturally diverse country, a virtual caste system exists, in which the European heritage of 15th-century Spanish invaders has been placed at the

top and that of the “Indians” at the bottom. “Today, Native Americans walk in two worlds,” Montaño says. “We dress and speak like anyone else, but inside we carry the traditions of our ancestors. People ask us, ‘Are you really Indian? Can you make rain? Where are your feathers?’ Some [Native] people have lost touch with their past—they have cast it off intentionally or have been drawn away from their homeland for various reasons.” But the cultural ties are still there, just like the ancient stone cities that have resisted centuries of weathering and European conquest. The same music Montaño plays today on the *siku* was played by his ancestors throughout communities from South America to the South Pacific to North America. He says, “Like the carvings, the music expresses the ancient philosophy that guides our lives in the present and projects us into the future.”

Because of this cultural awareness, Montaño felt he had to return to upstate New York—a continent away from his South American homeland—last May to return borrowed stones.

#### FINDING THE RIGHT STONES

Montaño had used the stones to build another ancient cultural icon, known as an *apacheta*, in 1994 for the dedication of the National Museum of the American Indian’s George Gustav Heye



Center in Manhattan. Symbolically, the *apacheta* was a fitting tribute for a museum with a mission to give voice and bring respect to tribes from the four corners of the Americas. Especially so, because it was built from stone in the North by a Native man from the South.

Leading up to his construction of an *apacheta*, 4,200 miles farther north than one had ever been built, Montaña had participated in another National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) cultural project, *This Path We Travel*. The project brought together 15 Native artists from the East, South, West, and North and gave them a simple assignment: They were told to create art, even though in Native cultures art does not exist as a separate entity. They traveled from Hawaii to British Columbia to Arizona to New York, and their works manifested a natural universality – one was a willow sphere resting atop two uneven piles of stone in a riverbed. No formal interpretation was given. Some said the sphere resembled the world and the universality of Native thought, and others said the uneven stones represented the disharmony that has begun to pervade Native life in recent centuries. But it was the stone in that and other creations that seemed to bring together common thoughts among the 15 artists. So Montaña's plans for the *apacheta* at the Heye Center dedication seemed

fitting, as well.

The *apacheta* consists of different-sized stones placed in a circular pile, held together only by careful placement. Today, when travelers reach these high-mountain shrines in South America, they add stones, as they have been doing for centuries. The practice calls to mind the stone cairns of Scotland, mounds of stone erected as burial monuments or as markers left by travelers. "Adding a stone to the *apacheta* is an act of prayer," Montaña explains. "The stone is held for a moment while one is thankful for arriving at this place safely. Then prayers and hopes are projected onto the stone, and it is placed on the *apacheta*, where it will join the thanks as well as the hopes and prayers of all the other people who have passed this way and added a stone." Laying down a stone also symbolizes a laying down of burdens, relieving one of hardships and adversities, he adds.

### SACRED PLACES

When Montaña was asked to make an *apacheta* for the museum, he needed stones, and not just any stones. Living in upper Manhattan, where he worked as a cultural teacher in various schools and other settings, Montaña was not sure that he would be allowed to take stones from the banks of the Hudson River, in the middle of a metrop-

olis. "In order to make the project more meaningful, I decided to see if we could collect the stones from Indian land," Montaña says.

At NMAI, Montaña worked with Linley Logan, from the Tonawanda Seneca Nation in upstate New York, to set up meetings between Montaña and the clan mothers and the chiefs at Tonawanda. At one meeting, Arlene Logan, Bear Clan mother and Linley's grandmother, suggested that the stones be gathered from a sacred space where it is said that the Little People reside. Montaña agreed and promised Chief Bernie Parker, Arlene Logan, and the Little People that he would return the stones and rebuild the *apacheta* at Tonawanda someday. And so the project began.

The Little People in Seneca culture could be as much Irish or Yaqui or Qulla as they are part of the Six Nations Confederacy. Folklore, myths, and creation stories of many cultures speak of supernatural beings that exist in this world alongside us. In the Native cultures of Mexico, Central America, and South America, Native agrarian societies are known for their tradition of placing alcoholic beverages and food in fields in the evenings. Villagers hope that the supernatural beings, visualized as miniature versions of themselves, will work the fields and take the offerings as payment. Similar practices exist elsewhere too,

**“Today, Native Americans walk in two worlds,” Montaña says. “We dress and speak like anyone else, but inside we carry the traditions of our ancestors.”**

such as in Irish culture; farmers in Ireland are known to carry on the same practice as Native agrarian societies in Latin America. Logan says that the place from which the stones were taken is recognized as a special, almost sacred space, to be respected because of the presence of such beings. Its location is remote from the rest of tribal life and quietly revered. For centuries in Bolivia, the Qulla have built *apachetas* in similarly remote spaces that also are deeply respected yet accessible to the people, such as in high mountain passes where people are likely to travel.

### RETURNING THE STONES

Back in New York, Seneca men helped gather the stones for Montaña's project, and the group built an *apacheta* at Tonawanda, carefully placing their prayers, hopes, and burdens into the structure. Then they took it apart and transported everything to Manhattan for the dedication of the Heye Center in 1994.

At the end of the exhibit, the stones were to be returned to Tonawanda and the *apacheta* rebuilt there, signifying the completion of a circle and the binding of the cultural ties of the North and the South.

“The National Museum of the American Indian staff respected the stones and kept them in a good place at the Heye Center,” says Montaña. “But now it was time for the stones to go home.”

Now the stones have gone back, fulfilling Montaña's promise to the Little People, Chief Parker, and Arlene Logan. An *apacheta* was built on the land of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation on May 27, 2000.

For Linda Logan, Seneca Bear Clan mother, the *apacheta* will remind her of her mother, Arlene Logan, who passed away two years ago. “I look at it and think of my mom,” says Logan as she admires the *apacheta*. Her nephew, Linley Logan, now lives in Seattle, Wash., with his wife, Iris, and their son, Sage. Logan was unable to witness the return of the stones. Montaña called Logan in Seattle on the morning of May 27 to let him know that Montaña's promise to Logan's grandmother was fulfilled.

The circle is complete, and stronger ties are

now established between these two indigenous peoples of the North and South. “[The *apacheta*] is not a Seneca tradition,” says Darwin Hill, clerk for the Council of Chiefs of the Tonawanda Seneca Nation, as he steps back to look at the newly built *apacheta*. “But now, it's a connection. It will be something to remember José's people in Central and South America by. Now, anyone can bring more stones and add another prayer.”

Many people will see the *apacheta*, as it is built on a location where the Seneca people hold their annual Field Day celebrations. People driving by will see the *apacheta* nestled under a tree less than 100 yards down the road from the Seneca longhouse.

Stone is so integrated into the Tonawanda Seneca view of the earth that, when asked, Hill finds it difficult to single it out as anything uniquely important. Rather, “Stone is part of the whole universe. It is part of nature, part of what makes up our world and allows us to live as we do.” He is much more comfortable talking about its utilitarian uses, such as for wells, chimneys, and many other day-to-day needs.

Montaña agrees. “My people don't call it art. Everything we make is something we use in our daily lives.”

### PROPHECY

Indeed, such is the case for many Native cultures, from the Inuit of northern Canada to the Hopi of the southwestern United States. Ferrell Secakuku, the former chairman of the Hopi Nation, rattles off a dozen uses for different types of stone, ranging from the baseball-sized shale stones, known as *gong'owa* and used in footraces, to a variety of flagstone that is polished smooth, rubbed with animal brains, and heated to make paper-thin *piki* bread. Then there is the limestone-quality rock called *tusyav'owa* that panels the floors of the *kiva*, where some of the most sacred of Hopi religious tradition is kept and practiced. That is where the subtle but irrevocable connections between the practical and the sacred intersect, and stone itself takes on a magical quality.

In Hopi prophecy, stone plays a part in the end of this world and the beginning of a new

world where universal harmony is restored. Sometime near the beginning of this world, two mythical brothers broke the *owa'tutuveni*, or stone-paper tablet, into two parts. Each took a part as the two went their separate ways. It is said that at the end of time, when disharmony threatens to destroy the world, the brother who left the windswept mesas of the Hopi lands will return. Everyone will know it is he because he will carry the stone that matches the one that still resides within one of the Hopi villages. “If the stone fits, then it is a symbol of purification and the end of all that is bad,” Secakuku says.

Like the *apacheta*, stone altars dot the arid lands of the Hopi, invisible to the untrained and uninitiated, serving both as shrines and as geographical boundaries.

### TURNING SPIRITS INTO STONE

Two thousand miles north of Hopi lands, Margo Kadlun's Inuit heritage also is manifest in stone. It is seen in the 60-foot-high *inuikshuks* – figures resembling Inuit sentries that stand watch over the landscape. The *inuikshuks* serve an important purpose in the cultural strength of Inuit culture, which depends on the return of the caribou each year, says Kadlun, who is well known in both Canadian and Inuit circles as a cultural educator and who has taught in schools and other settings for several decades. Kadlun, who lives in Cambridge Bay, heads a nonprofit project in Vancouver, B.C., to save the caribou that pass annually through Inuit lands. The giant shale and granite sentries guide the caribou into closed canyons, where once a year Inuit hunters are able to pick off enough caribou to enable their villages to live for another season. Every part of the caribou is used – the hide for clothing and shelter, the meat for food, the antlers for tools and religious objects.

Deward Walker, professor of anthropological and ethnic studies at the University of Colorado, sees an unbroken link between stones and Native tribes throughout the Americas. Many cultures, from the Lakota of the Great Plains to the Navajo to the Cheyenne, believe stones to be alive, instilled with spirits, visions, dreams, and prayers, he says. Among many Native cultures in North America, for example, “stones are often personified spirits thought to have been spirits who turned themselves into stone,” says Walker. And, therefore, stones are viewed as sacred in themselves.

In the Tonawanda Seneca Nation, the spirits of two cultures have woven together through stone, and cultural affinity – the DNA of Native culture – is ensured existence for future generations. ■ Ben Winton (*Pascua Yaqui*) is a former newspaper reporter and magazine editor who now freelances for publications throughout North America.



## Stone is so integrated

into the Tonawanda Seneca view of the Earth that, when asked, Hill finds it difficult to single it out as anything uniquely important.

Rather, “stone is part of the whole universe. It is part of nature, part of what makes up our world and allows us to live as we do.”

# The JOHN WAY



As a young child he was taken from his Navajo family and raised in a missionary foster home. Reunited with family after a 41-year separation, his story is so compelling, a documentary film has been made about it.

By MARLEY SHEBALA

**T**he taking of her baby brother by missionaries began when Hollywood movie legend John Wayne gave the little boy his name. That's what Elsie Mae Cly-Begay relates as she sits in her little modern hogan, her front door opening to a panoramic view of one of the eight wonders of the world, Monument Valley.

It was only two years ago that Elsie Mae finally – after more than 41 years – held her brother, John Wayne Cly, in her arms again. Tears mixed with their smiles. John's long-lost sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts, uncles, and other relatives cried, too.

Many other people also wept, as they watched this heartbreaking story unfold on a big screen at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival in Logan, Utah. *The Return of Navajo Boy*, a documentary co-produced by Jeff Spitz of Chicago, Ill., and Bennie Klain of the Navajo Nation, chronicles the family history of the Clys of Monument Valley, including the missionaries' removal of two-year-old John Wayne Cly and John's return to his family at the age of 43.

Elsie Mae, the eldest child, has become the keeper of the family history. She remembers the day that missionaries came to the hogan of

her grandparents, Willie and Happy Cly, and took little John away. Elsie Mae recalls that an interpreter was used, because her grandparents spoke and understood only Navajo, and her grandparents signed a paper with their thumbprints. She also remembers that her grandparents told the missionaries to bring John back when he turned six years old, because at that age children started attending federally funded boarding schools, and that the missionaries promised they would.

"It never happened. They never brought him back," says Elsie Mae. But she never gave up hope that John would return.

Indeed, John had spent most of his life searching, and he finally found his family after he read a newspaper article in June 1998 telling of a film being made about the Cly family from Monument Valley, the family of his grandpar-

All photos by Donovan Quintero (Navajo), except facing page: photo by Ray Manley

# THE CLY Story



ents. John remembers that he and his wife, Rufina, had returned to their home in the Pueblo of Zuni, N.M., from Gallup late one evening when his stepdaughter told him of the news article about the Cly family.

Rufina notes that whenever John heard the name Cly, he'd question anyone with that last name. "It was like I was always looking for something but I didn't know what it was," he says. He remembers watching vehicles pass the mission, near the Continental Divide on Route 66, where he and other Navajo children lived with their foster mother. Every time a car or truck passed by, John imagined that his family might be in it. With these thoughts on his mind, he decided not to read the story until the next day, because it might be just another setback. But when he did read it, he was not disappointed; he learned about Elsie Mae, who

was described as the granddaughter of Happy and Willie Cly. "And I knew they were my grandparents," he says.

John tracked down the reporter, who gave him the telephone number of Violet Addikai of Ft. Defiance, Ariz.; she turned out to be his niece. When he told Violet who his grandparents were, she started crying and then told him, "You're the uncle that we've always been looking for."

Violet also contacted Jeff Spitz and told him that John was going to Monument Valley. Spitz asked John to wait for him to get to Zuni, because he wanted to film the reunion. Spitz arrived the next day and positioned film crews in Zuni and Monument Valley. John said the normally six-hour drive from Zuni to Monument Valley took forever, because the film crew wanted shots of him driving his vehi-

*Happy and Willie Cly, John Wayne Cly's Navajo grandparents in Monument Valley over 50 years ago.*



**His voice carries no anger** when he talks about the missionaries who took him from his grandparents and never returned him. John believes the missionaries may have had good intentions, but they overlooked the feelings of the child.

*Left to right: John's sister Elsie Mae in Monument Valley, Utah; John at home in Zuni, N.M. and with his wife, Rufina.*

cle down the road. When John finally arrived in Monument Valley, Spitz again asked him to wait. "They made me sit out by the road and wait some more while they got everything ready. And all this time I was spinning my wheels in the dirt and they kept holding me back," John remembers.

"Finally I got there," he says. "I saw this big group of people standing outside, and to me it was just a group of people. I met everybody, and that big group of people became my family." He goes on, "Now I got a family. . . I know where they are and they know where I am."

"It was the best thing that could ever happen to me," he says. "Now I don't have to go looking into shadows for something I never knew." Ask him what day he was reunited with his family and John answers without hesitation: June 28, 1998. But he has not forgotten what it felt like not to know who his family was or even if he had a family. He recalls, "You're nobody. You're an outcast. You don't want to get involved with other people or other things because it looks like they have it all and you're off to the side. . . I could never be as good as them because I was always the last." John remembers that he never wanted to make a stand because he didn't have a "real family" to back him up. He says that bullies seemed to

sense that. "They'd pick on you more. You were like the straggly puppy that everyone kicked and threw rocks at."

His voice carries no anger when he talks about the missionaries who took him from his grandparents and never returned him. John believes the missionaries may have had good intentions, but they overlooked the feelings of the child. "They wanted that child to be something they wanted. We [Navajo children] had to go to church with little bow ties, white shirts, and black pants," he says. The children also were prohibited from speaking Navajo, and, unable to speak it, he felt more comfortable with Mexican and white children than with Navajos. "I wish I could have known how to speak Navajo. Maybe I would have gotten home sooner," he says.

John recently obtained a copy of a letter that his grandparents sent to the missionaries on Feb. 17, 1958. In the letter, his grandparents thanked the missionaries for taking care of John and informed them that they planned to pick up John in the next year, when Happy was expected to be healthier. They also enclosed some money for their grandson. John says he never knew about the letter or the money.

John also obtained a copy of a March 6, 1958, letter from actor John Wayne to the

Reverend Nelson McBride, the missionary who established the mission and foster home for Navajo children at Continental Divide, N.M. McBride had reprinted Wayne's letter on the cover of a pamphlet for the Crosslands Mission in Thoreau, N.M., to which he had moved after funding for his Continental Divide mission dwindled to nothing. Wayne thanked McBride for his Jan. 5, 1958, letter and stated, "Thank you for writing me about my little Navajo namesake. I am glad that he is being cared for, along with other Navajo children." Wayne added, "I hope the enclosed check will be of help in your most meritorious work."

According to the Crosslands Mission pamphlet, John Wayne was working on a movie in Monument Valley in the mid-1950s when he met an aged grandmother, along with a young woman and her newborn son. When Wayne learned that the baby had no name, he suggested that the women give the baby his name. For John Wayne Cly, the consequences were ridicule and teasing; most people didn't believe his story, which was handed down to him by the missionaries.

The pamphlet also states that in December 1957, McBride and Navajo pastor John Largo were visiting hogans in the Monument Valley area, about 150 miles from the mission.



## “I wish I could have known how to speak Navajo. Maybe I would have gotten home sooner,”

*Above: John is reunited with his family after 41 years.*

McBride and Largo went to the hogan where “Little John Wayne” was now 20 months old; his mother had died from tuberculosis. According to the mission pamphlet, Happy Cly had become a Christian while she was at the Tuba City, Ariz., hospital. She was scheduled to return for surgery, but the baby was a “problem.” And so “God, in His great provision,” brought McBride to Happy’s door. John was soon seated on McBride’s lap and eating Ritz crackers. As the pamphlet tells it, “Happy Cly was pleased with the love shown, and more pleased to learn of the Home for Navajo Children back in New Mexico. When the mis-

sionary left, he had a scared little Indian boy with a famous name, seated beside him in the car.” The pamphlet goes on to say that John grew up in the Continental Divide area, graduated from Thoreau High School, and married a “Zuni Indian girl.”

McBride sent a letter dated Feb. 4, 1980, to Merv Griffin, who had a syndicated TV talk show at the time, in response to a reference to Wayne’s little namesake on one of the shows. In his letter, McBride tells a slightly different story from his mission pamphlet about how he obtained John. McBride said he and a Navajo minister were doing missionary work when

they came upon a hogan where an old lady sat outside and a little boy played. “For some reason, I was drawn to the little fellow, and after much coaxing I was able to get him [onto] my lap to eat a Ritz cracker,” McBride told Griffin. He said the boy’s mother had died from tuberculosis in a sanitarium in Tucson, and that his grandmother, Happy Cly, was returning to the hospital for surgery. “Since we were from a children’s home, she asked me to take him to raise. I was somewhat startled to find his name to be John Wayne,” McBride stated. He went on to say that John grew up in the children’s home, which later dissolved. “He [John] had a good

*... Continued on page 29*

# Coyote's Place

by SHAWN TERMIN & JOHANNA GORELICK

WELCOME TO  
THE POWWOW  
TRAIL!

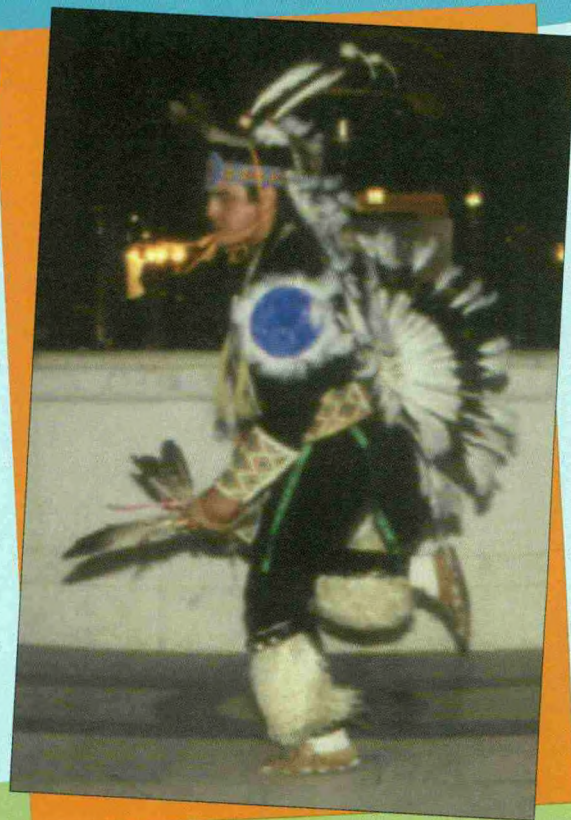


Photo by Jeff Tinsley

Above: A dancer with the American Indian Dance Theater at the NMAI opening ceremonies in 1994.

**Whew!** Let me tell you what I have been doing this summer. I am on a road called the "Powwow Highway." This road takes me to powwows all over North America. A powwow is a celebration – Indian style – and it is fun, too. Many American Indian families travel together to take part and visit with friends in Indian Country. In winter powwows are held indoors, but in summer powwows are usually outside. Tents, campers, and tipis pop up all over and form a small weekend village. Children play games, grandmas cook favorite foods, and friends catch up on the news. But the main activity is DANCING! Many powwows hold dancing contests. Dancers travel great distances to take part. There are four main types: Traditional, Fancy, Grass, and Jingle Dress dancing. Judges watch the dancers' steps closely, and every movement counts. Among the many good dancers, the very best ones will win prize money.

# Meet my friend, Kathryn Stalk.

She is Ojibwa and Mohawk and is a Jingle Dress dancer. Jingle Dresses are covered with lots of small metal cones called jingles. When Jingle Dress dancers move, the jingles make a soft "tinkling" sound. Kathryn is glad she is a Jingle Dress dancer and likes to go to powwows. "I love my Jingle Dress," she says. "My daddy gave it to me."

## The Ojibwa Jingle Dress Story by CLINTON ELLIOTT

Once a little Ojibwa girl was very sick. Her grandfather, who loved her very much, searched the countryside for a cure but could not find one. Then one night in a dream, spirits came to him and told him about the Jingle Dress. They showed him how to make one. The spirits said that if he made a Jingle Dress for his granddaughter, she would get well and dance gently like the wind. With grandmother's help, he made the dress for his granddaughter.

When the sick granddaughter saw the Jingle Dress, her eyes widened. She sat up and put it on. Then she began to dance. She knew the steps without being told—they came to her naturally. It was a brand-new day. The granddaughter was cured of the sickness, and she lived a long time. This is why the Jingle Dress is a healing dress. The Ojibwa people share it with everyone. They say the Jingle Dress is for all women who want to be healed.



Photo by H. Carson

## Beat of the Drum

When you go to a powwow, the most important thing you hear is the beat of the drum. Powwow dancers listen to this beat and feel it. As their feet move up and down, they become one with the music. The drumbeat is the heartbeat of the powwow, and it represents the heartbeat of Native America.

Drum groups play all across Indian Country. Recently, an all-Native women's drum group, The Mankillers, visited the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City. Their name honors Wilma Mankiller, the first woman elected principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Using long drumsticks to create a steady beat, The Mankillers sing songs in many languages, including Choctaw and Apache. They often sing in vocables—sounds that have no meaning, like way a hey ya. They also play popular powwow songs created for the youngest powwow dancers. Throughout the museum when the group played, this refrain sounded: "Scooby Dooby Doo, where are you? At the powwow tonight."



Carrie Dunn Anderson  
& April Frank of the Mankillers.

## Food Is Yummy at Powwows!

A favorite food across Indian Country is fry bread. You can eat it plain, with powdered sugar or honey, or you can make it into an Indian taco. Try this tasty recipe...

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups buttermilk (if you use plain milk instead, leave out the baking soda)
- a pinch of baking soda
- 2 cups vegetable oil or shortening

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Make a hole in the center of the mixture and pour in the buttermilk and baking soda. Knead the dough until it is smooth (a few minutes) and shape into a ball. Press it out with your fingers or roll it out until it is about one-half-inch thick. Using a cup or glass turned upside down, cut the dough into rounds.

**\*Be sure to ask a grownup to fry the bread.** Add the oil to a deep pot. Ask the grownup to heat it until the oil is hot (but not smoking), and to fry the rounds a few at a time for about three or four minutes, until light brown. You will have enough for four people.

### Make an Indian Taco

Put your fry bread on a plate and add your favorite taco toppings. Try these: cooked hamburger, onions, grated cheese, shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, salsa.

**\*Parents: Be sure to supervise the frying of the bread.**



# Craft as Statecraft

*A beer pitcher reveals more than you would think about Inka history.*

By RAMIRO MATOS

**W**hat can be learned about a people from a ceremonial beer pitcher? The object in question was made in the province of Sillanes, Ecuador, during the rule of Inka king *Wayna Qhapaq* (ca. 1500 to 1524), who conquered Ecuador and annexed it to the empire. Using ethnographic analogy, I would say that this *aryballus* vessel (a Greek term for the kind of old Greek vessels this one resembles) was used to carry *chicha* (maize beer) during Inka feasts and religious ceremonies.

This vessel reflects the Inka rulers' mastery of statecraft, a political system which imposed widespread aesthetic uniformity. The Inka expansion began in the late 14th century and lasted until the Spanish invasion in the 16th century; after conquering the Andean region, they established their ethnic identity and political authority throughout the huge empire, known as *Tahuantinsuyu*. The lords of Cusco, the capital city, collected revenues in the form of labor tax or the collection of artisanal items, thereby imposing widespread artistic cohesion throughout the realm. Inka rulers imposed a hierarchical order in the provinces, among small local groups as well as big kingdoms, thus allowing the state to deal with only a few local leaders. This imposed political authority was evidenced by an artisanal production network which produced such crafts as ceramics, textiles and metals, as well as agricultural terraces and architectural structures. However, although pervasive control by the Inka promoted artistic unity, the incredible ethnic diversity of *Tahuantinsuyu* remained, and was never compromised by the statecraft system.

The design of ceramic vessels for state-sponsored feasts often followed state-prescribed patterns of shape and painted decoration. It was important, for example, that hospitality be clearly recognized. This particular vessel's shape and decoration indicate both practical function and cultural expression. The shape of the base facilitates pouring, as the vessel can be tipped on its side. The slight indentation at the center of the handles indicates that they were constructed by the "pulling" technique. The surface is smooth, slip painted, and

polished.

The protruding, inverted triangular lug on the body near the neck, with its incised eyes and mouth, probably represents the head of a jaguar. The top of the other side of the body is painted as well, connecting the panel on the other side. In the wide horizontal band of light brown, the concentric diamond designs seem to symbolize the *messas*, an altar for offerings that is still used by the Quechua people. The

concentric gray and red squares in the spaces between the diamonds represent *cocha*, or standing water, stored *chicha*, or blood. These concentric lines are abstractions of the liquid waves, and the decorated squares are *messas*. The vertical squiggles probably represent territorial division. Other decoration techniques include modeled and colored design, painting,

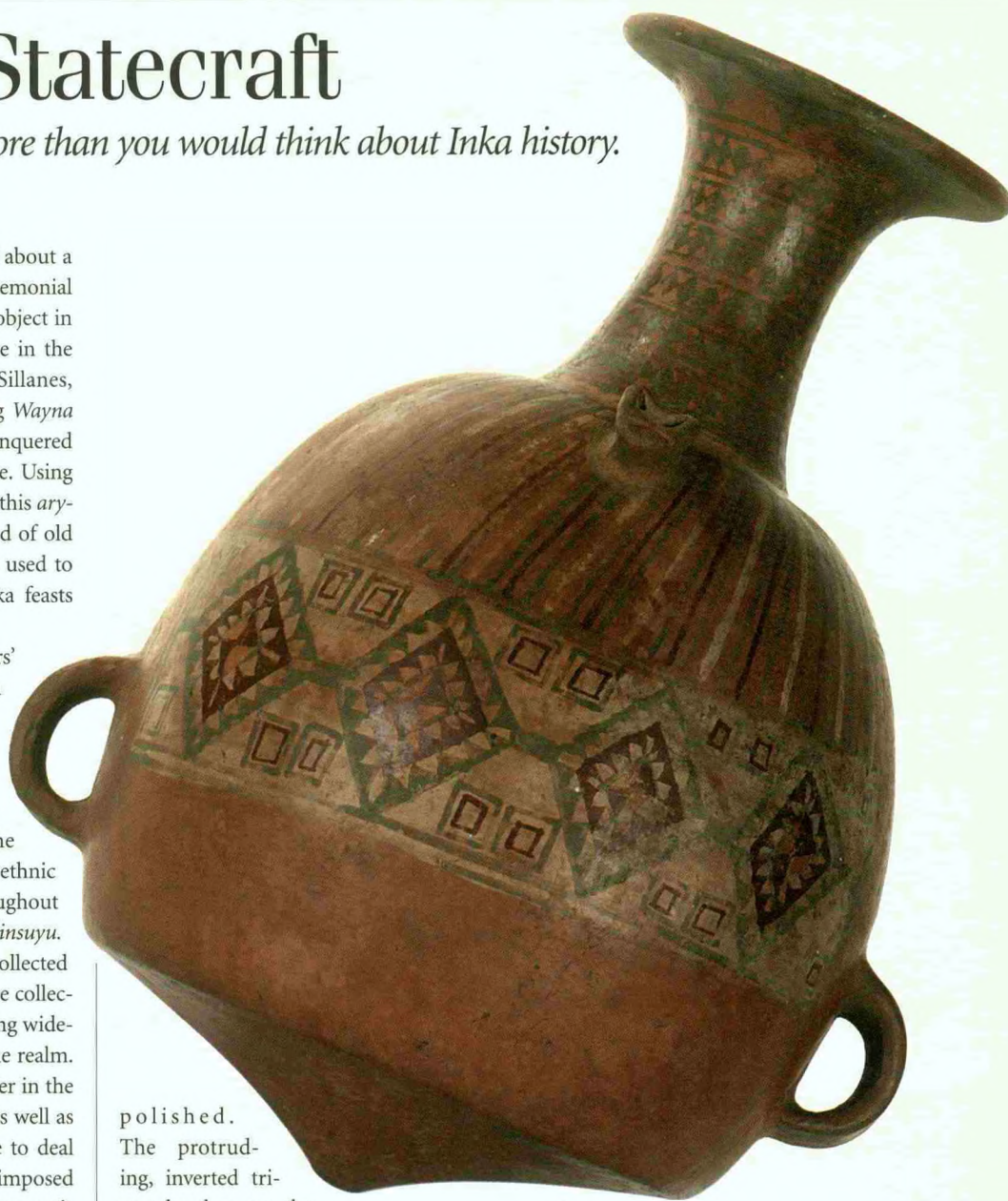
and burnishing with smooth stone.

Ceramic vessels like this and modern ones that resemble the Inka style are still used for *chicha* production and consumption, just as in former times, among the southern Quechua people of Peru and Bolivia. This vessel is only one example in the

Although pervasive control by the Inka promoted artistic unity, the incredible ethnic diversity of *Tahuantinsuyu* remained,

tremendous National Museum of the American Indian collection and is invaluable for research and exhibition. Comparing this vessel from the past with modern vessels that are still in common use can tell us much about the rich culture of these peoples of both yesterday and today. ■

Ramiro Matos (Quechua) is an NMAI curator.



# CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

AUGUST • SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER 2000

## EXHIBITIONS

### ONGOING

#### ALL ROADS ARE GOOD: NATIVE VOICES ON LIFE AND CULTURE

From the museum's collection, 23 Native American selectors from throughout the Western Hemisphere have picked more than 300 objects for display, chosen for their artistic, spiritual, and personal significance. Catalog (\$29.95) available in the museum shop.

THROUGH OCT. 1

#### CREATION'S JOURNEY: MASTERWORKS OF NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITY AND BELIEF

This exhibition, drawn from the museum's collection, features 165 objects dating from 3200 B.C. to the 20th century, selected for their beauty, rarity, historical significance, and representation of diverse cultures. Catalog (\$45) available in the museum shop.

THROUGH AUG. 20

#### RESERVATION X: THE POWER OF PLACE

Through multimedia art installations, seven Native artists from across Canada and the United States express the complex relationships between community and identity. Organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the exhibition was curated by Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree). The installations – which include a classroom setting, a conceptual "Big House" incorporating traditional and present-day West Coast designs, and a mural reminiscent of cave paintings – make use of photography, film, audio recordings, CD-ROM, sculpture, and painting. The seven featured artists include Mary Longman (Plains Cree), Nora Naranjo-Morse (Tewa), Marianne

Nicolson (Kwakwaka'wakw), Shelley Niro (Mohawk), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), Mateo Romero (Tewa), and C. Maxx Stevens (Seminole). Catalog (\$34.95) available in the museum shop.

OCT. 1, 2000 – JAN. 21, 2001

#### WHO STOLE THE TEE PEE?

"Who stole the tee pee?" is a question posed by artist George Littlechild. It's another way of saying "What happened to our traditions?" and it leads to another question: How have Indian artists responded to the changes – social, political, cultural, and personal – that Native Americans have experienced since 1900? Twenty-five historical works in this exhibition, taken from the National Museum of the American Indian collections, reflect change as it was happening. They register a blending of ways, Indian and European, in a process that began more than 300 years ago. More than 40 works by contemporary Native American artists examine the impact of those changes. The artists look back in order to see the present. Some seek a personal reconciliation with the devastating effects of the near-annihilation, forced relocation, and assimilation of their people. Some draw parallels between the past and the present. Their responses range from tragic to nostalgic to humorous. Curated by Joanna Bigfeather (Mescalero Apache/Cherokee), Richard W. Hill, Sr. (Tuscarora), and Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk), this exhibition is presented in conjunction with Atlatl, a Native arts service organization based in Phoenix, AZ.

On view Oct. 1, 2000 – Jan. 21, 2001



Indigenous comes to New York City's Wagner Park on August 17.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### NATIVE SOUNDS FROM DOWNTOWN

Rock meets roots in NMAI's music month.

AUG. 17

### INDIGENOUS

Named Group of the Year at the Second Annual Native American Music Awards, Indigenous joins the River and Blues Music Festival on the banks of the Hudson River. Presented in collaboration with Battery Park City Parks Corporation.

7 – 8:30 p.m., Wagner Park  
(Located in Battery Park City Parks)

AUG. 24



### ULALI

An all-woman a cappella trio featuring Pura Fe (Tuscarora), Soni

Moreno (Mayan/ Apache/Yaqui), and Jennifer Kreisberg (Tuscarora), Ulali creates its own sound from strong traditional roots and personal contemporary styles, mesmerizing audiences with unique harmonies and wide vocal styles.

6 p.m., Auditorium  
George Gustav Heye Center

AUG. 26 – 27

### DANCE OF THE SCISSORS

Master Quechua violinist Máximo Damián, who is honored as a National Living Treasure of Peru, presents the Damián Musical Group performing the "Dance of the Scissors."

1 and 3:30 p.m., Auditorium  
George Gustav Heye Center

### KIDAROUND DOWNTOWN

Cultural, historical, and financial organizations located in downtown New York join hands for a week-end-long children's festival. Presented in association with the Alliance for Downtown New York.



Smithsonian  
National Museum of the American Indian



*Tahuantinsuyo plays traditional music from Central and South America.*

SEPT. 23 – 24

### INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S THEATER

#### LEAF ARROW WITH DONNA COUTEAU AND JOE CROSS

Native storytellers Donna Couteau (Sauk) and Joe Cross (Caddo) present an interactive theater experience for children of all ages. Coyote tales, creation stories, and legends teach Native history as well as tribal and family values.

Saturday, Noon, 2, and 4 p.m.

Sunday, 1 and 3 p.m.

Auditorium

### ANDEAN DANCE AND MUSIC TAHUANTINSUYO

Andean performers Tahuantinsuyo offer traditional music and dance from Central and South America. Come and dance to the celebratory sounds of panpipes and drums from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Saturday, 1 and 3 p.m.

Sunday, Noon, 2, and 4 p.m.

Rotunda

### FUN FILMS FOR FAMILIES

Folklore, animation, and educational films offer children of all ages an up-close and personal look at Native cultures from throughout the Americas.

Saturday and Sunday, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30 p.m.

Auditorium

### NEW YORK IS BOOK COUNTRY

Paul Betancourt (Seneca) and Clinton Elliott (Ojibwa) read animal tales, folklore, legends, and other stories for children and adults.

Saturday and Sunday, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30 p.m.

Pause Area/Orientation

### ART TALK

OCT. 6

#### MOTHER LOVE

Artist Nadema Agard (Lakota/Cherokee) presents an illustrated lecture on her work and speaks about the place of "Mother Earth" in Native life and art. Presented in conjunction with the American Indian Community House Gallery/Museum.

Noon

Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor

### WEAVING DEMONSTRATIONS

SEPT. 9 – 10

#### SALASACA WEAVERS

Quichua weavers Aida Jerez, Cesar Jerez, Julio Masaquizo, and Sixto Masaquizo share insights from the Quichua community of Salasaca. Discussions and demonstrations include narratives of tapestry designs and music.

11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Pause Area

### FILM/VIDEO/RADIO

Screenings start daily at 1 p.m. and are repeated on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m., Video Viewing Room

THROUGH OCT. 5

#### NATIVE SOUNDS

Films and videos feature blues, jazz, and community music, focusing on performers presented in NMAI's music series "Native Sounds from Downtown."

THROUGH AUG. 20

#### THINGS WE DO (1998, 5 min.)

Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho). Music video. The director of *Smoke Signals* focuses on the music of Indigenous, the award-winning blues band from the Nakota nation.

#### PEPPER'S POWWOW (1995, 57 min.)

Sandra Sunrising Osawa (Makah). Documentary. A portrait of the late jazz saxophonist and composer Jim Pepper (Kaw/Creek) explores his Native roots and underscores the universality of his music.

AUG. 21 – SEPT. 17

#### WAY OF THE GLADES (1998, 5 min.)

Music video. The singing/storytelling of Chief James Billie, chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, is the focus of a work beautifully filmed in the Everglades.

#### SINGING OUR STORIES (1998, 49 min.)

Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux/Blackfoot/French). Documentary. The film explores the work of women in ethnomusicology and the songs and stories of contemporary Native women singers in the United States and Canada, featuring Ulali's unique singing style.

SEPT. 18 – OCT. 5

#### CHOLO SOY/I AM "CHOLO"

(1991, 13 min.) Cesar Galindo (Quechua Mestizo). Music video, in Spanish with English subtitles. Scenes of Native life in Peru are juxtaposed with images of the Spanish conquest, as a guitarist sings a popular song about being Cholo – a person of Indian and Spanish background with a strong sense of both heritages.

#### MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF PERU

(1984, 58 min.) John Cohen. Documentary. This film explores popular music in Peru – music of remote mountain villagers and of highland immigrants in the cities, as well as Huayno, music that mixes urban and indigenous styles. Featured are Quechua master violinist Máximo Damián and his group of scissor dancers in Ayacucho.

No screening on Oct. 6, see ART TALK

### ART SMARTS

Featuring Native American experimental videos and performance art.

OCT. 7 – 29

#### IN OUR LANGUAGE (1982, 6 min.)

Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne). A conceptual art piece, installed on the big light board at New York's Times Square, shows how the Cheyenne language captured some essential truths of colonialism.

#### NTV (1994, 20 min.)

Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie (Seminole/Creek/Navajo). Short programs poke fun at the conventions of television by showing Native life "as it really is" – that is, as if it were seen on TV.

#### I'VE BEEN BINGO'ED BY MY BABY (1996, 3 min.)

Nora Naranjo-Morse (Tewa-Pueblo). A music video pairs the image of the seductive woman with Indian gaming.

#### BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME (1998, 58 min.)

Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho). Provocative performance artist James Luna brings his art home to the Luiseño community at the La Jolla Indian Reservation in California.

### ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS

A film and video series for all ages, Daily at 11 a.m. and noon  
Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor

THROUGH AUG. 20

#### HAUDENOSAUNEE: WAY OF THE LONGHOUSE (1982, 13 min.)

Robert Stiles. A look at the philosophy and life of the people of Six Nations Reserve, focusing on the Mohawk.

#### A FATHER WASHES HIS CHILDREN (1974, 15 min.)

Timothy Asch. In the Amazon region of Venezuela, a Yanomamo father takes his many children down to the river to bathe.

#### ALICE ELLIOTT (1975, 11 min.)

Richard Lair. The famed Pomo basket-maker, born in 1886, talks about her life as a weaver.

**CORN IS WHO WE ARE** (1994, 19 min.) Rick Tejada-Flores. A look at the significance of corn in Pueblo life.

AUG. 21 – SEPT. 17

**ONENHAKENRA: WHITE SEED** (1984, 20 min.) Frank Semmens for the Akwesasne Museum. Mohawks of the Akwesasne Reservation share their views on corn and show the making of traditional corn soup and cornhusk dolls.

**PAULINA AND THE CONDOR** (1995, 10 min.) Marisol Barragan. Animation tells the story of an Aymara girl who leaves her mountain home for a life in the city.

**TOTEM TALK** (1997, 22 min.) Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux/Blackfoot/French). Northwest Coast urban youth reconnect to their heritage with the help of a totem pole that comes to life through computer animation.

**BOX OF DAYLIGHT** (1990, 9 min.) Janet Fries for the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. The Naa Kahidi Theater of southeastern Alaska presents the Tlingit story of how Raven brought daylight to the world.

SEPT. 18 – OCT. 5

**TOTEM TALK** (1997, 22 min.) Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux/Blackfoot/French). Northwest Coast urban youth reconnect to their heritage with the help of a totem pole that comes to life through computer animation.

**SHARING ONE EARTH** (1993, 20 min.) Indian Island Intermediate School. In Maine, Penobscot and non-Indian students share in a cultural exchange and filmmaking project.

**POTT STARR** (1993, 6 min.) and **HOPIIT** (1984, 14 min.) Victor Masayeva Jr. (Hopi). A Hopi videomaker plays with different ways of understanding the mean-



ings of Pueblo pottery. Hopiit captures vivid scenes of life in the Hopi villages during four seasons.

No Screening on Oct. 6,  
see ART TALK

OCT. 7 – 29

**HAUDENOSAUNEE: WAY OF THE LONGHOUSE** (1982, 13 min.) Robert Stiles. A look at the philosophy and life of the people of Six Nations Reserve, focusing on the Mohawk.

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**LOCATION:** The NMAI Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green in lower Manhattan. Subway: 4 & 5 to Bowling Green, N & R to Whitehall Street, and 1 & 9 to South Ferry. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, except December 25. Thursdays to 8 p.m., made possible by grants from the Booth Ferris Foundation. Admission to the museum and all public programs is free. To become an NMAI Charter Member, call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624).

#### ALSO OF INTEREST

##### MOTHER LOVE

A group exhibition of Native women's art explores love for "Mother Earth" and the signs and symbols of creation. Featured artists include Nadema Agard (Lakota/Cherokee) and Laura Ortman (Apache). Guest curator: Kathleen Ash-Milby (Navajo).

American Indian Community House Gallery/Museum

708 Broadway, 2nd Floor

Opening reception: Oct. 7, 6 – 8 p.m.

For more information call (212) 598-0100, Ext. 240

[www.aich.org](http://www.aich.org)

##### EVOLUTION AND INNOVATION, THE NATIVE ARTS NETWORK: 2000 CONFERENCE, Oct. 11 – 14, 2000

George Gustav Heye Center

Atlatl, Inc., a national service organization for Native American arts, hosts its eighth biennial gathering of Native artists, scholars, curators, educators, and arts organization leaders, who examine trends and issues in the field of Native American arts.

For more information, call Atlatl at (602) 277-3711, or (888) 828-5285.

**ADDRESS:** National Museum of the American Indian  
Smithsonian Institution, George Gustav Heye Center  
One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004

**MUSEUM SHOPS:** For special-occasion shopping, jewelry by Native artists, books, and children's gifts are available in the museum shops located on the gallery and ground floor. Open daily 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. For information, call 212-514-3767.

**WEB SITE:** Have you visited the NMAI Web site? <http://www.si.edu/nmai>

The George Gustav Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y., and is open daily, except December 25, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and, through the generosity of the Booth Ferris Foundation, Thursdays until 8 p.m. Admission is free. All programs are subject to change. For membership information, call (800) 242-NMAI. For program updates, call (212) 514-3888. Produced by NMAI, One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y. Russ Tall Chief, Calendar Editor.



# BE A PART OF HISTORY - JOIN TODAY!

## National Museum of the American Indian – Membership Benefits

When you join as a Charter Member, there are many benefits waiting for you. Please review the list of benefits and indicate your preferred level on the enclosed form. Thank you for your support.

### \$20 GOLDEN PRAIRIE CIRCLE

- ◆ *American Indian*, a full-color quarterly publication
- ◆ Membership Card
- ◆ Discounts of 10% at Museum shop, Smithsonian Mail Order Catalogue and Smithsonian Web site
- ◆ Your name listed on NMAI's permanent Member and Donor Scroll
- ◆ Eligible for Smithsonian Institution tours

### \$35 RIVERBED CIRCLE

All of the above PLUS

- ◆ NMAI *Insight*, a special insiders-only semi-annual newsletter on NMAI's progress in creating the Mall Museum

### \$50 EVERGLADES CIRCLE

All of the above PLUS

- ◆ An additional Membership Card for a family member
- ◆ A free gift for your child when you visit the Heye Center's Museum Shop

### \$100 SKY MEADOWS CIRCLE

All of the above PLUS

- ◆ An embossed NMAI lapel pin
- \$8.00 of member dues is allocated for publication subscription.

For more information on benefits for gifts over \$100, please call Member Services at 202-357-3164, visit NMAI's Web site at [www.si.edu/nmai](http://www.si.edu/nmai) or call 1-800-242-6624.

Charter Members may also e-mail membership concerns to: [aimember@nmai.si.edu](mailto:aimember@nmai.si.edu)



**Smithsonian**  
National Museum of the American Indian

**Yes!**

I want to support the National Museum of the American Indian.  
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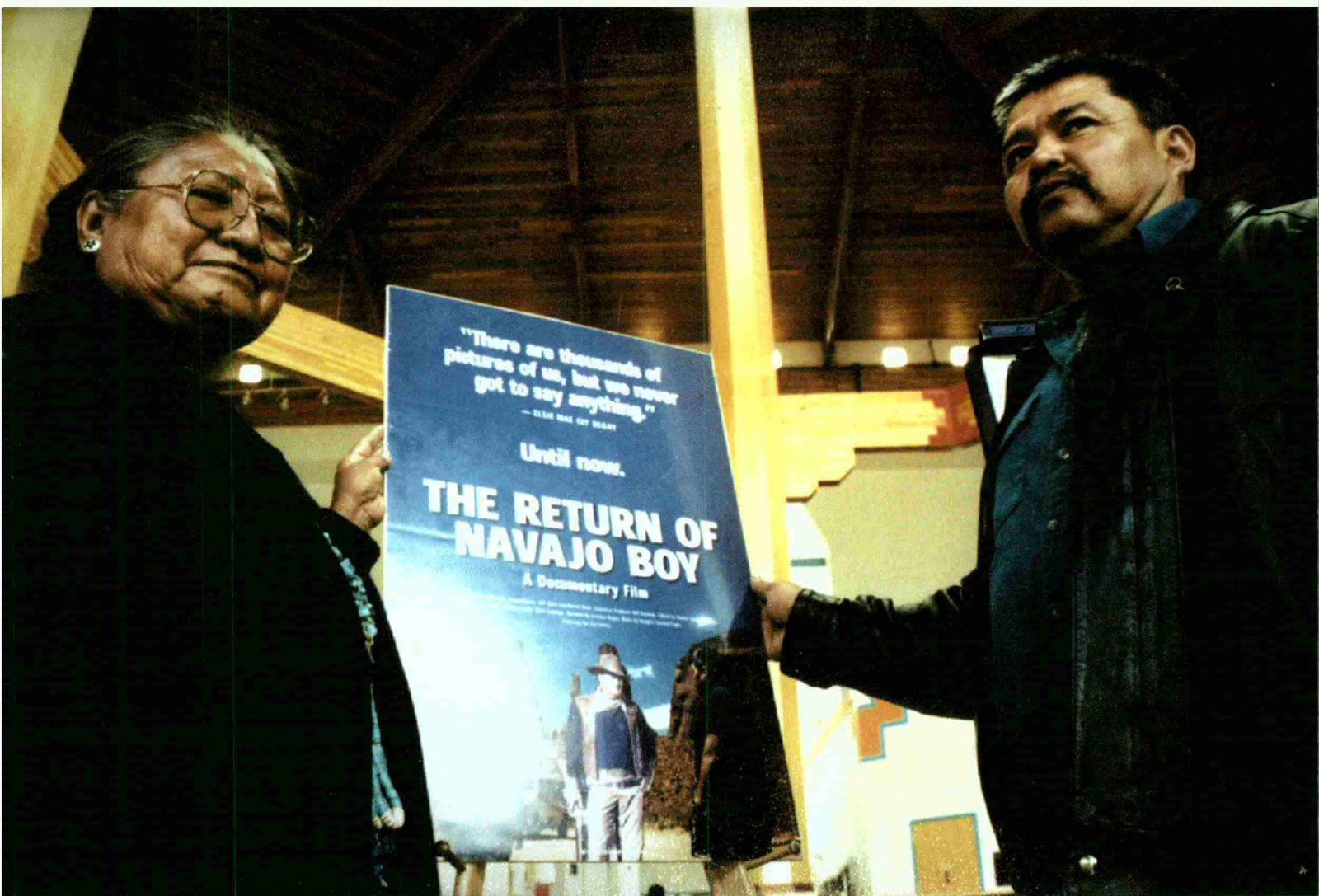
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Above: Elsie Mae and John at a screening of *The Return of Navajo Boy* in Window Rock, Ariz.

continued from page 21

housemother, and when we left to begin Crosslands Mission, we felt it unwise to disturb him, so he stayed there." McBride also told Griffin, "My wife and I have completed 25 years of work with the Navajos and have raised seven Navajo children. All were tiny babies within an 18-month age span, and all are grown now." He enclosed copies of letters from John Wayne and Happy Cly in the letter to Griffin and also sent a copy of that letter to a TV station in Albuquerque.

Elsie Mae remembers life with her little brother before the missionaries took him. She recalls that her sisters, brothers, and other family members would playfully fight with each other over the task of bundling John into his traditional Navajo cradle board and compete over who would carry him. Elsie Mae explains with a smile, "John was the youngest." She also says the family didn't call him John Wayne; they called him *Nek'eezchaa*, a Navajo term of endearment for

the youngest child. The literal translation of *Nek'eezchaa* is "mucus in the corner of the eye."

Elsie Mae remembers when her mother, Elsie Zina Cly, died, and her grandmother began having the health problems that put her in the hospital. She recalls that her grandfather said he would raise the boy to help him herd sheep. "He was very protective of *Nek'eezchaa*," Elsie Mae adds.

"John Wayne, he's the one that gave the name to the baby. . . that's the way it seems. It starts from there when his name was made. It seems like that's when it all began," says Elsie Mae. ■

*Marley Shebala, Dine' (Navajo) and Ashwi (Zuni), is a writer for the Navajo Times newspaper in Window Rock, Ariz.*

*The Return of Navajo Boy will screen at the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center during the Native American Film and Video Festival, Nov. 16 - 19 in Manhattan.*



# Susan LaFlesche Picotte

*The first American Indian woman to become a doctor, this extraordinary Omaha woman was also a pioneer in bringing modern medical care to her people.*

By MARTHA DAVIDSON

**S**usan LaFlesche Picotte is notable as the first American Indian woman to become a doctor of medicine, but her accomplishments go far beyond that — she devoted her life to the health and welfare of the Omaha people, as a physician but also as a medical missionary, lobbyist, and spokesperson. Born in 1865, she spent her early years on the reservation at a time when traditional ways of life on the Great Plains were disappearing.

Her father, Joseph LaFlesche, known as Iron Eye, was the last recognized chief of the Omahas. Son of a French fur trader and an Indian mother, Iron Eye knew both the Indian and white worlds and believed the Omahas' survival depended on adapting to the white culture that was engulfing them. He fostered in his children both a pride in their heritage and a hunger for knowledge. Susan's older sister, Suzette, became a journalist and spokesperson for Indian rights; a stepbrother, Francis, was an ethnographer with the Smithsonian Institution. Susan's own interest in medicine was awakened in childhood, as she witnessed the effects of disease on the Omaha people.

After schooling on the reservation, Susan LaFlesche studied at the Elizabeth Institute for Young Ladies in New Jersey, graduating in 1882, and at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, where faculty members encouraged her interest in medicine. She was graduated in 1886 as salutatorian and accepted at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, one of the first institutions in the United States to train women doctors. Graduating first in her medical class in 1889, LaFlesche then interned at the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia before returning to the Nebraska reservation as physician to the Omaha Indian School. Her practice soon expanded to the entire reservation population of more than 1,200. "There was another physician," she later recalled, "but I found that I

had most of his practice in three months' time, for I understood their language and they felt I was one of them."

LaFlesche treated patients all over the 450-square-mile reservation, observing that many of their health problems stemmed from changes in their way of life. When the U.S. government banned buffalo hunting in 1876, the Omaha lost their main source of fresh meat. In the frame houses that replaced their tipis and earth lodges, they kept windows and doors closed, preventing the circulation of air. They carried water from springs and wells, making frequent bathing difficult. Epidemics were commonplace, caused partly by the use of communal drinking cups; tuberculosis was widespread. Teaching public health practices became one of her main objectives; the other was to establish a hospital on the reservation.

Working to the point of exhaustion through bitter Nebraska winters, the young doctor damaged her own health. In 1893, suffering chronic earaches and head pain, she resigned. Within two years, she married Henry Picotte, a Sioux; bore her first son, Caryl; and moved to the town of Bancroft. There she resumed her medical practice, treating both Indians and whites. A second son, Pierre, was born in 1898.

After her husband's death from alcoholism in 1905, she cared for her sons and ailing mother and devoted herself again to the welfare of her people. She traveled to Washington, D.C., to represent the Omahas in arguing for their right to manage their own property and for a ban on alcohol in new reservation townships.



She also led church activities and was the first

Indian ever appointed a medical missionary by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.

Beyond the reservation, Dr. Picotte was active in the state and county medical associations, headed the health committee of the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs, and lobbied for state health laws. She campaigned against alcohol and lectured on tuberculosis prevention. Her dream of a reservation hospital was realized in 1913 when the Walthill Hospital opened to serve Indians and the local white population.

Dr. Picotte did not long enjoy the advantages of the hospital she had founded. Her chronic ear pain was diagnosed as "decay of the bone" (possibly bone cancer), and she died in 1915. Renamed the Dr. Susan Picotte Memorial Hospital, the institution served as a medical facility until after World War II. The building, restored in 1989 and still bearing her name, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic Landmark. ■

*Martha Davidson is a freelance writer and picture researcher based in Washington, D.C.*

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