

NATIONAL MUSEUM of the American Indian

Winter 2003

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



En Pointe, Center Stage

The extraordinary story
of Oklahoma's five legendary
Native American ballerinas



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Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Arts Council

On the cover: A detail from Chickasaw artist Mike Larsen's mural *Flight of Spirit* which hangs in the State Capitol Building in Oklahoma City. The mural was commissioned to honor Oklahoma's five renowned Native American ballerinas.



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En Pointe, Center Stage: During the Great Depression in Oklahoma, five Native American girls became inspired by ballet. Years later, sisters Maria and Marjorie Tallchief (Osage), Rosella Hightower (Choctaw), Moscelyne Larkin (Shawnee/Peoria), and Yvonne Chouteau (Shawnee/Cherokee) became the ballet world's celebrated stars. Fueled by motivation and cultural pride, these women blazed a trail still danced by young Native Americans today. Jason Ryle (Saulteaux) chats with Maria Tallchief, the first Sugarplum Fairy and one of America's greatest prima ballerinas, about her extraordinary career.



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Billy Mills, Olympic Hero: From high school in Kansas to Olympic victory in Tokyo, Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) made history in track and field. As a young man in 1964, his come-from-behind win in the 10,000-meter run is legendary. "It was a miracle to everyone but me. I knew I was going to win the gold," he says. Robert Struckman visits Billy Mills in Sacramento and finds a man still committed to making a difference.

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Creating New Traditions: Using fabrics such as luxurious silk and space age Mylar, Native American designers have created a niche in the world of fashion. Maya Dollarhide (Oglala Lakota) writes about designers Wendy Ponca (Osage), Shannon Kilroy (Nlaka 'Pamux), Virginia Yazzie Ballenger (Navajo), Dorothy Grant (Haida), and Margaret Roach Wheeler (Chickasaw/Choctaw) to discuss their collections often inspired by cultural symbols and stories.

CORRECTIONS: In the fall issue of *American Indian* (Vol. 4, No. 3) on page 20, it was incorrectly reported that museum members who purchase a Sauninga Pendleton blanket will receive it in a felt-lined box. Members will receive the members' edition blanket in a cardboard box. On page 16 of *American Indian* (Vol. 4, No. 3), the name of the man in the photo on page 17 in the Woven Histories story was not identified. His tribal affiliation was listed as Omaha. Priscilla Hokiahse Iba, Osage Tribal Museum photo archivist, wrote us and identified the man as Arthur Bonnicastle, an Osage chief. Paula Fleming, photo archivist of the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives, stated that the archives will now identify Arthur Bonnicastle and list his tribal affiliation as Osage and not Omaha in their catalogues.

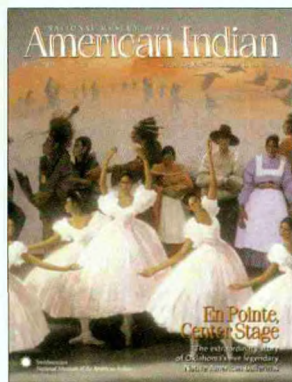
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NATIONAL MUSEUM of the American Indian

Volume 4, Number 4, Winter 2003

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



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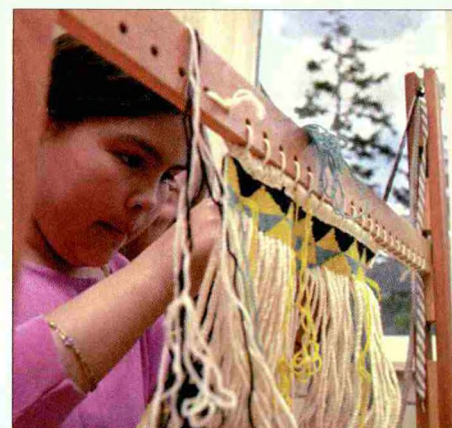
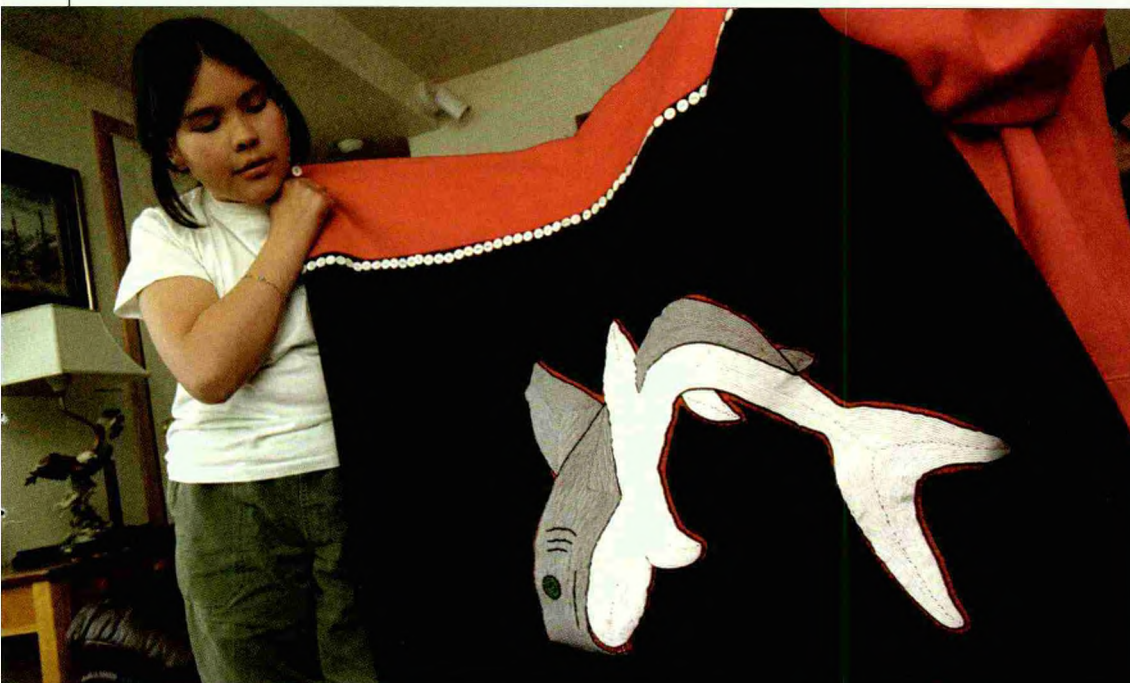
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Above: With her mother's help, Lydia Mills weaves a geometric ravenstail pattern for a bag that will be given to her brother.

Left: Lydia holds up a button blanket decorated with her clan's crest, the Shark.

Meet Lydia: A Native Girl from Southeast Alaska

By Sally Barrows

On a Friday evening last May, we flew into Juneau with a mission: to recreate a typical year in the life of Lydia Mills, a 10-year-old Tlingit girl. Our goal was to complete the third book in the National Museum of the American Indian's *My World* series for older children. Lydia and her brother Thomas spend the school year in Juneau with their mother, Jane Lindsey, and summers in the village of Hoonah with their dad, Thomas Mills Sr. We wanted to photograph Lydia at many of the locations where she spends time, such as school, home, or her beading class. We also wanted to accompany her to Hoonah, to her dad's hand-built cabin near the town of Gustavus – and to Excursion Inlet, a traditional Tlingit fishing ground, now a salmon cannery complex where the Mills family spends most of the summer. Each of these places is about 50 miles from Juneau and is accessible only by boat or plane.

On Saturday morning, Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit), the book's author and Lydia's second cousin, introduced me and John Harrington (Siletz) to Lydia and her family. John quickly established a rapport with Lydia—he soon would begin taking hundreds of pho-

tos of her. As the planner and keeper of the photo list, I had arranged schedules with teachers, pilots, and Jane.

Along with Jane, Lydia, and Thomas Jr., we boarded a plane for Hoonah, where Thomas Sr. had arranged to display the regalia of both his and his children's clans. For the Tlingit, some regalia belongs to the entire clan and is worn by successive generations. A Tlingit person inherits his or her clan matrilineally, so Lydia, like her mother (a non-Native who has been adopted) is a member of the *Wooshkeetaan*, or Shark, Clan. In a neighbor's living room, John also photographed the regalia of Lydia's father's *T'akdeintaan*, or Seagull, Clan.

One piece, a traditional chilkat blanket, had been presented to the *T'akdeintaan* clan in the 1950s by Joe White, the head of the Thunderbird Clan, to honor the marriage of his mother to one of Tom's uncles – a marriage that formally allied the two clans. Jane, who has studied traditional weaving techniques, pointed out the tied braid at one corner of the blanket, a tie unique to each weaver.

Four days later – after a three-hour boat trip to Excursion Inlet, a flight in a four-seater plane to Tom's cabin, a steep hike to the top of a waterfall, visits to two of Lydia's classrooms at her school in Juneau (she helps in a Tlingit lan-

guage enhancement class for kindergarten and first-grade children), and a photo session at the bead shop – we encountered patterns similar to those we'd seen in the blanket. They were not the curvilinear chilkat designs, but rather the geometric "ravenstail" patterns often found on the reverse sides of chilkat tunics, and they hung on the loom where Jane teaches her daughter to weave. Traditionally, chilkat-style regalia was made of mountain goat hair and cedar bark, but this half-finished piece was of modern wool. As they worked together, Jane commented that Lydia naturally twisted the yarn in the same way as elderly Tlingit weavers, rather than in the opposite way required by machine-spun yarn. Lydia seemed greatly pleased. John continued to take pictures, Miranda chatted with Thomas Jr., and I sat on the couch making plans for the final photo session. The book was shaping up nicely. ■

Sally Barrows is an editor in the Publications Office of the National Museum of the American Indian.

Meet Lydia: A Native Girl from Southeast Alaska will be published in September 2004. For information about the first two books in the *My World* series, please see the Bookshop at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu.



NMAI Celebrates Santa Fe Indian Market

The 82nd annual Santa Fe Indian Market kicked off last August at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) with the dedication of the institute's Performance Gallery to the late Santa Clara Pueblo painter Helen Hardin. The dedication, co-hosted by the National Museum of the American Indian, paid tribute to "Helen's inspiring gift of artistry and personal integrity," noted Rick West (Southern Cheyenne), NMAI director, in his remarks to a crowd numbering about 300.

IAIA President Della Warrior (Otoe/Missouria) was presented with NMAI's commemorative Pendleton blanket, the first such award given. Designed by NMAI's curator of contemporary art, Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk), the geometrical pattern is based on the ribbon work of his late mother. Members of Hardin's family who were in attendance also received gifts.

The event at IAIA was the first public acknowledgment of a "memorandum of understanding," signed in December 2002 between NMAI and IAIA, which formalizes ongoing cooperation between the two institutions. The partnership was initiated to establish a framework for NMAI and IAIA to collaborate on educational programs, exhibitions, collections, and other resources, including development of scholarships and fellowships for IAIA students.

The following evening, NMAI joined *Native Peoples* magazine to co-host the fifth annual Santa Fe Artists Party, held at the IAIA Museum in downtown Santa Fe. Poet/singer Joy Harjo (Muskogee) performed as nearly 500 Native artists, collectors, and other guests danced in the twilight in the museum's Allen Houser Art Park.

Throughout the five days of festivities, NMAI's Film and Video



Photo by Jerry Barron

Department hosted its Native Cinema Showcase, a festival of film and video produced along with CCA Cinematheque and Taos Talking Pictures. The showcase screened new and classic films and videos at numerous locations throughout Santa Fe.

Also screened, according to Michelle Svenson, festival manager, was *Heart of the Sea*, which tells the story of Hawaiian surf legend Rell Kapolioka'ehukai Sunn, who carved the way for women in a sport dominated by men. Another filmgoer favorite was the 1929 silent film *Redskin*, performed with an original score by Laura Ortman (White Mountain Apache) and Brad Kahlhammer of the band National Braid.

"There was a visible, growing excitement about the museum at Indian Market," commented Elizabeth Duggal, NMAI's director of external affairs. "It was wonderful to hand out 'Save the Date' cards for the museum opening in September 2004."

— Russ Tall Chief

Above: NMAI's Film and Video Center representative Charmaine Jackson (Navajo) and Australian filmmaker Ivan Sen (Gamilaroi) in front of CCA Cinematheque display case with poster from Ivan Sen's film at the Native Cinema Showcase 2003, *Beneath Clouds*. Below: Laura Ortman (White Mountain Apache) and Brad Kahlhammer of National Braid performed an original score for the film *Redskins* at the Center for Contemporary Arts Cinematheque in Santa Fe, N.M.



Photo by Millie Knapp

Guides Help Teachers Show Students What the NMAI is All About

Last October, 26,000 U.S. teachers in grades four through eight received the first of five teacher guides about the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Scholastic Inc., the nation's largest publisher of educational books and materials, partnered with the NMAI to provide information to about 8 million schoolchildren. "It is an opportunity to share in the education of young people about American Indians, to help change and debunk stereotypes, and to create an understanding that American Indians have living cultures with a past, present, and future," says Shelley White, editorial director at Scholastic, Inc. "We view this as a long-term initiative - not only for the opening of the museum, but also for the future of American Indian peoples and for the future understanding of children."

The collaboration makes good on the Smithsonian Institution's

mission, which is the increase and diffusion of knowledge, notes Maggie Bertin, NMAI deputy director of external affairs and development. "Education is just one avenue for the diffusion of knowledge that the Smithsonian values," she says. "This initiative is groundbreaking for the NMAI. The guides spread the good news of what the museum is all about, which is making Indian Country as understood as it should be. We are assisting teachers in their quest to educate their students about the museum and what it represents."

The materials have another purpose, Bertin added. Many people will never be able to visit the Mall museum. The teacher guides will give millions the opportunity to learn about the NMAI from afar. Teacher guides are available to NMAI members, who can call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624) or email aimember@nmai.si.edu

— Liz Hill



Photo by Chlois Lowe

Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk) honors Chief Clayton Winneshiek (Ho-Chunk) by presenting him with a Pendleton blanket at the Black River Falls Labor Day Weekend Powwow in September 2003. Lowe (right) designed the NMAI Pendleton blanket, Sauninga.

"I wanted to honor him by presenting him with the first Pendleton blanket with a Ho-Chunk design," Lowe says about the presentation to the traditional chief.

New NMAI Books Showcase Vibrant Native Cultures

At the heart of a second children's book recently published by the National Museum of the American Indian is the story of a special time in a young Hopi girl's life. *Meet Mindy: A Native Girl from the Southwest* features Mindy Secakuku, a 14-year-old who experiences the year of her "coming of age" ceremony. Author Susan Secakuku (Hopi), former NMAI Community Services staff member, writes about her niece in

ways that describe her family and the Hopi way of life, with elements about the Hopi calendar and the Hopi language. The book is suitable for ages eight and above.

In another NMAI publication, Bruce Bernstein, assistant director for cultural resources, explains the longstanding importance of baskets to Native peoples. *The Language of Native American Baskets: From the Weavers' View* is a companion to the exhibition of

the same name on view at the George Gustav Heye Center in Manhattan through Jan. 9, 2005. In the book, Bernstein describes how basketmakers Pat Courtney Gold (Wasco-Tlingit), Theresa Hoffman (Penobscot), Terrol Johnson (Tohono O'odham), Julia Parker (Pomo), Lisa Telford (Haida), and basketry scholar Sherrie Smith-Ferri (Dry Creek Pomo) helped organize the exhibition. "We expressed concern about the need to show on a

national level that there are still vibrant Native cultures here in America with people making baskets, speaking their languages, and living in their tribal communities trying to make a difference," says Theresa Hoffman, executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance in Old Town, Me.

To purchase either of these books online, please visit www.AmericanIndian.si.edu. Click on "Bookstore." — Liz Hill



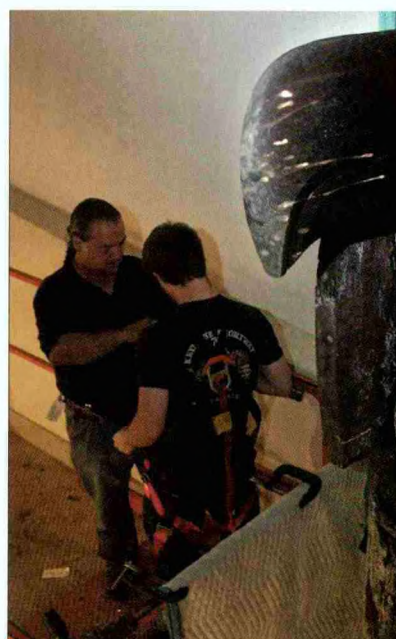
Raising of Haida, Kwakiutl Poles Signals Final Collections Move to Cultural Resources Center

Two totem poles, the largest objects in the National Museum of the American Indian collection, have completed the long journey from New York City to the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Md. NMAI staff watched as riggers moved the poles off a truck and into the CRC on September 10, 2003. "The event was similar to watching a 'dance' of totem poles as the riggers carefully manipulated a winch and forklift separately to lift and swing the totems into place, says Thomas Sweeney (Citizen Potawatomi), NMAI public affairs director. The totems were installed against the highest wall of the CRC's Collections area.

One of the poles, a 45-foot Haida totem carved around 1875 and purchased from Old Kasaan Village on Prince of Wales Island in Alaska, had stood sentry outside the former Museum of the American Indian (MAI) at Audubon Terrace in New York City since 1941. The other pole, a 31-foot totem carved by Calvin A. Hunt, was commissioned for the MAI by the IBM Gallery of Science and Art in New York City for the IBM exhibition *Out of the Mists: Northwest Coast Art* in 1984. Hunt, a Northwest Coast Kwakiutl from Fort Rupert, Vancouver Island, Canada, selected the Killer Whale and the Thunderbird figures from Kwakiutl legends to illustrate the poles.

The installation of the totem poles signals the final move of more than 800,000 objects from the Research Branch to the CRC.

— Liz Hill



Photos by Katherine Fogden

NMAI Receives \$500,000 in Honor of Olympic Hero Billy Mills

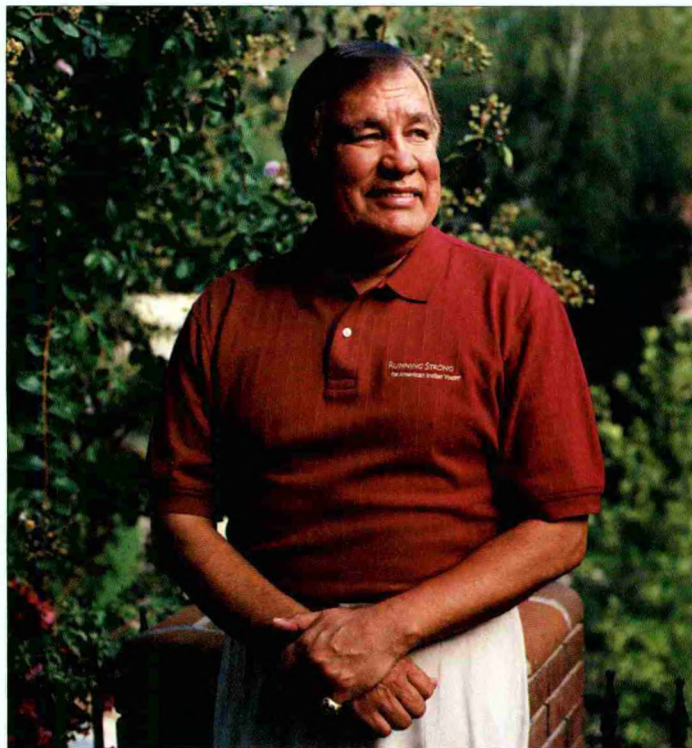


Photo by Mark Morris

Billy Mills, a young Oglala Lakota man from Pine Ridge, S.D., raced 10,000 meters to win the gold medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. His dedication to running established an Olympic record and a positive

role model for American Indian youth. At 65, Mills continues to run today, as well as to encourage young Indian athletes by serving as spokesperson for Running Strong for American Indian Youth (www.indianyouth.org), a non-

profit organization whose mission is to strengthen American Indian communities by creating educational and enrichment opportunities for youth.

To commemorate the upcoming 40th anniversary of Mills' unprecedented gold medal victory, Running Strong for American Indian Youth donated \$500,000 to support the Oglala Lakota tribal exhibit in the National Museum of the American Indian's *Our Universes* gallery when the museum opens on the National Mall on Sept. 21, 2004.

"This is a museum whose time has come," Mills said during a ceremony held on Sept. 2 in the soon-to-be-completed gallery. "I am honored to be involved in this exciting opportunity to celebrate and preserve so many Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere. Though the museum opening is still a year away, I hope this support will inspire others to join the National Museum of the American Indian's efforts to build this museum."

NMAI Director Rick West

(Southern Cheyenne) placed a commemorative Pendleton blanket on Mills' shoulders. "The National Museum of the American Indian is deeply honored to be supported by an organization that plays such an important role in Indian communities," West said. "Through this generous support, the stories of the Lakota people will come alive in one of the museum's inaugural exhibitions."

Lakota philosophy informs the design and exhibition in the gallery, according to Emil Her Many Horses (Oglala Lakota), NMAI associate curator. The gallery will be constructed in a circle, similar to the structure of a sun dance model that also will be on display. The circle will be divided into the four directions. For each direction, objects selected from the NMAI collection will represent stages of life, seasons, animal nations, and values. "This philosophy is imbedded in Lakota language, art, and everyday life," Her Many Horses said.

— Russ Tall Chief

NMAI Completes Move of Archeological Collection

The first item George Heye cataloged in his collection in 1904 was a ceramic bowl from Tularosa Canyon in western New Mexico. The black-on-white geometrical designs were hand-crafted around A.D. 1000 - 1100, when the Anasazi and Mogollon peoples first made contact with each other. Today, after four years of careful packing and moving, this rare bowl, which is among 607,089 objects in the National Museum of the American Indian's

(NMAI) archaeological collection, is now in its new home at the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md.

The NMAI's archeological collection includes materials from all of the United States, as well as all Canadian provinces and territories except Yukon Territory. The collection encompasses all countries of the Western Hemisphere, including Greenland. The largest collection is from Mexico, with 45,743 items. The most numerous

category of objects in the collection is chipped stone tools, such as "lithics," including arrowpoints, spearpoints, scrapers, drills, knives, and fragments, numbering at least 213,126.

Some of the most delicate materials in the move were prehistoric textiles, dating back to A.D. 600 - 1000, that were collected from the Andes region of Peru and adorned with black, turquoise, and orange feathers. Museum conservationists devel-

oped groundbreaking methods to pack, move, and house the materials. "New mounts now allow for the textiles to be viewed on both sides without being handled," says Pat Nietfeld, NMAI collections manager. "By our various space-saving efforts in shelving this collection, it has taken up 39 fewer shelving banks than were originally assigned to archaeology." The space that was saved will make room for the NMAI's growing contemporary art collection.



En Pointe, Center Stage

How did five Native American girls from Oklahoma rise to the top of the ballet world in New York and Paris in the 1950s?

“I was the first Sugarplum Fairy,” laughs Maria Tallchief. “It will be wonderful to see all the others that came after me.”

It was February 2, 1954, in New York City when the legendary Osage ballerina premiered in George Balanchine’s holiday classic, *The Nutcracker*.

Fifty years later, on December 6, 2003, Tallchief will be the guest of honor at the School of American Ballet’s Golden Jubilee Homecoming for more than 2,000 dancers who performed in the New York City Ballet’s annual production.

“It is very exciting and gratifying for me to be a role model to them,” she states. “I had a fantastic life and I saw the world through ballet.” Renowned as one of the greatest American prima ballerinas, Tallchief was in fact one of five Native American women from Oklahoma who rose to prominence in the ballet world in the middle of the 20th century.

Along with Tallchief, her sister Marjorie Tallchief (Osage), Rosella Hightower (Choctaw), Moscelyne Larkin (Shawnee/Peoria), and Yvonne Chouteau (Shawnee/Cherokee) became celebrated stars in national and international ballet. How did five Native American girls from Oklahoma rise to the top of the ballet world in New York and Paris

BY JASON RYLE



Left: Moscelyne Larkin (Shawnee/Peoria) with a young ballerina hopeful at an audition for *The Nutcracker*.

Above: Maria (right) and Marjorie Tallchief (Osage) as young children in Fairfax, Okla., in 1933.

Right: Rudolph Nureyev (left) was a great admirer of Rosella Hightower (right) with whom he danced in his first ballet production. The two are shown with Sonia Arova and Erik Bruhn. The four dancers performed together several times in Cannes and Paris.

in the 1950s?

"They saw something magical," says Lili Cockerille Livingston. "They saw the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and were bitten by the bug." Livingston, a former ballet dancer and author of *American Indian Ballerinas*, refers to the ballet touring companies – the best-known of the lot being the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo – that served as their inspiration. Each of the five girls – all from different small towns in Oklahoma, except sisters Maria and Marjorie – were first exposed to ballet through these touring companies that traveled to places such as Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Crammed onto buses and trains, Russian and American dancers crisscrossed the country, performing up to eight shows a week.

"I was mesmerized by the dancers I saw as a child," Maria says of the touring ballerinas. "My family thought I would be a pianist, as I started to play when I was three years old, but I loved to dance more than anything."



Photos courtesy of Lili Cockerille Livingston

"From the very start
my Osage heritage was known," Maria says.
"When you are in a company with Russian and
European last names, the name 'Tallchief'
really stands out."



Maria Tallchief holds a framed copy of a 1954 Newsweek cover when she was at the height of her popularity as one of America's greatest prima ballerinas.

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower declared the prima ballerina “Woman of the Year” while the Osage Tribe of Oklahoma honored her international achievements and her Native American ancestry. “I was on the cover of *Newsweek* and they wanted to honor my life as a private person and as a public dancer with an Osage name,” Maria recalls.

Ballet was only one dance form Maria and the other women were exposed to. Dance plays a central role in Native American cultures and was a fixture in the women’s lives long before it became their primary passion. “They were surrounded by Native American dance at powwows since they were children,” Livingston states. “Even though they were not traditional powwow dancers, their discipline and desire were born partly from the skillful dancers they saw as children.”

“There is a wonderful rhythm to the powwow drum,” Maria says. “To be a great ballerina you need an innate feeling for dance. The powwow dancers I saw as a child share this innate

quality to dance naturally.”

Livingston says their culture was the backbone of their strength and desire to excel as ballerinas. “They are all very proud of their heritage. It gave them a special sense of groundedness,” she says. “The odds were against their achieving prominence, not because they were Native but because they did not live in a major city and because the odds are very high in the ballet world anyway.”

“From the very start my Osage heritage was known,” Maria says. “When you are in a company with Russian and European last names, the name ‘Tallchief’ really stands out.” After her family moved to Los Angeles so that she and

her sister could study ballet with Bronislava Nijinska, a Russian dancer, Maria joined the company that she first saw as a child. At 17, and at the advice of Nijinska, she joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1942, while Marjorie joined the American Ballet Theatre. “Nijinska told my mother not to let us join the same company, as people might confuse the two of us.”

The professional separation allowed the two sisters to shine. “A ballerina takes steps given to her and makes them her own,” Maria says. “Because it was so unusual to see a Native American in ballet, I had to fight not to be exploited. I wanted to be recognized for my



Photo courtesy of Lili Cockenille Livingston

Marjorie Tallchief (Osage) with her husband, dancer George Skibine, in a 1949 performance of Real Jewels in Paris.



After making a name for herself in classic ballets like *Scheherezade* and *Gaite Parisienne*, Maria performed *Song of Norway* by George Balanchine, a Russian choreographer. Balanchine fell in love with the young dancer and the two married in 1946. He would come to create some of his most famous works for her, including *Firebird*, her signature role.

dancing and not solely because I was Osage.”

Her determination to dance well, combined with her innate talent, enabled Maria to quickly become one of the company’s featured soloists. After making a name for herself in classic ballets like *Scheherezade* and *Gaite Parisienne*, Maria performed *Song of Norway* by George Balanchine, a Russian choreographer. Balanchine fell in love with the young dancer and the two married in 1946. He would come

to create some of his most famous works for her, including *Firebird*, her signature role.

“Meeting Balanchine was the most important thing in my life,” Maria states. “He made me famous. I was at the right place at the right time and I knew it. I never questioned what he said as a choreographer. When you did as he instructed, it became magic on the stage.” With her fame came a celebration of her Native American heritage. “I was seen as a ‘true

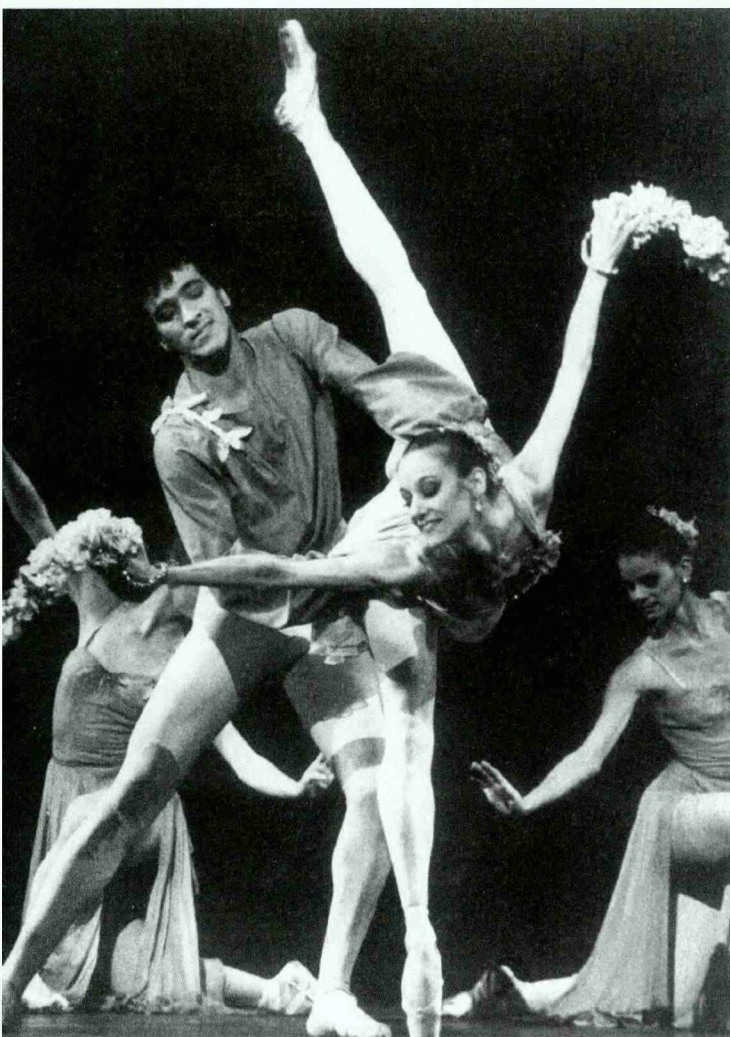
American’ ballet dancer because I was Osage. People celebrated the fact I was Native American, for which I was extremely proud and happy.”

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower declared the prima ballerina “Woman of the Year” while the Osage Tribe of Oklahoma honored her international achievements and her Native American ancestry. “I was on the cover of *Newsweek* and they wanted to honor my life



Photo by Paul Kolnick

Above: Jock Soto (Navajo), the Cavalier, lifts Miranda Weese, the Sugarplum Fairy, in the New York City Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker*. Left: Maria Tallchief inspired Santee Smith (center), a Mohawk contemporary dancer and choreographer when Santee was a young ballerina at the National Ballet School of Canada. Santee creates performances inspired by the Mohawk culture. Her most recent project, *Kaha:wi*, illustrates three stages of an Iroquois woman's life and features dancers (clockwise from bottom left) April Doxtator (Oneida), Ilse Gudino, Jacob Mora (Cherokee), Carla Soto, and Tamara Podemski (Saulteaux).



*Jimmy Locklear dances with Sherry Moray in a Chicago City Ballet performance of *The Seasons* in 1986 while Maria Tallchief was the company's artistic director.*

as a private person and as a public dancer with an Osage name," Maria recalls. "I was given the name *Wa-Xthe-Thomba*, which in Osage means 'two standards' or 'woman of two worlds.'"

After eight years of marriage, Maria and Balanchine divorced in 1954. She rejoined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo after years at the New York City Ballet and in 1956 became the highest-paid dancer at the time. Remarried, Maria took a leave of absence from ballet to become a mother in 1959. "I always wanted to have a child," she says. "Elise was born January 4, and I was back dancing that April."

After seven more years of acclaimed performances – including dancing with Rudolf Nureyev in the young Russian's American debut – Maria surprised the dance world by announcing her retirement in 1966, at her prime. Family was to come first. "Elise was about to start school and it was time to stay home, so I hung up my shoes," she says. "But

ballet never left me and it is still good to me today."

In 1975 she became artistic director of the Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet, and six years later she founded the Chicago City Ballet with her sister Marjorie. "Balanchine came to the opening performance, which was *Firebird*. He was sitting next to my daughter and he leaned over to her and said, 'You know, your mother was wonderful in this ballet.' He never said that to me at any time," Maria laughs. "He was a man of few words."

While Maria's career reached stellar proportions in America, her sister Marjorie, along with Rosella Hightower, found success in Europe; Moscelyne Larkin and Yvonne Chouteau spent much of their careers with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo before each started ballet schools of their own, the Tulsa Ballet and the Oklahoma University Dance Department, respectively. "I was known as Marjorie's sister when I danced in Paris," Maria says. But Marjorie also left her mark in ballet history, becoming both the

first American to assume the role of Premiere Danseuse Etoile of the Paris Opera and the first American to dance, with the Paris Opera Ballet, at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.

"It is impossible not to underestimate what Rosella has accomplished in the ballet world," Livingston states. "However, like the others, she feels she has not done anything extraordinary. It is not forced humility. For them, it was merely a job they loved and chose to excel in. They are the real deal."

Born in 1920, Rosella Hightower is the eldest of the five women. "I came to ballet relatively later than most girls," she says. "But I knew what I wanted. I wanted to dance." In 1955, at the height of her popularity, Hightower's performance in *Piège de Lumière* resulted in a 15-minute standing ovation. "It was incredible," she says. Hightower opened a dance school in 1961 in the French Mediterranean port city of Cannes, where she lives today. The Ecole Supérieure de Danse de Cannes Rosella

Hightower is one of the preeminent dance schools in Europe, says Livingston.

The legacy of the five ballet pioneers lives on in the hearts of Native American ballet dancers today. A professional dancer for 20 years, Jimmy Locklear (Lumbee), now retired from dance and currently the secretary for public programs at the National Museum of the American Indian, danced three seasons at the Chicago City Ballet and the Lyric Opera under Maria Tallchief. "She is a remarkable dancer, and all five women were an inspiration," he says.

For Santee Smith (Mohawk), a dancer and choreographer from Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario, Maria was someone to look up to. Smith's parents, potters Steve and Leigh Smith (Mohawk), were worried that their daughter did not have Native role models at the National Ballet School of Canada where she was a student. "They drove me down to Chicago when I was teenager to look for Maria Tallchief," Smith recalls. "She was an inspiration to me." Smith, now a contemporary dancer, incorporates traditional Mohawk cultural elements into her modern works. "I base my work on the essence, power, and beauty of our traditions and tie that to the contemporary stage," she says.

Jock Soto (Navajo), a dancer at the New York City Ballet since 1981 and teacher at its School of American Ballet, says, "Maria Tallchief is still talked about today. She is a legend in ballet. I wish there were not so many years between her and me; it would be wonderful to have more Native Americans in ballet."

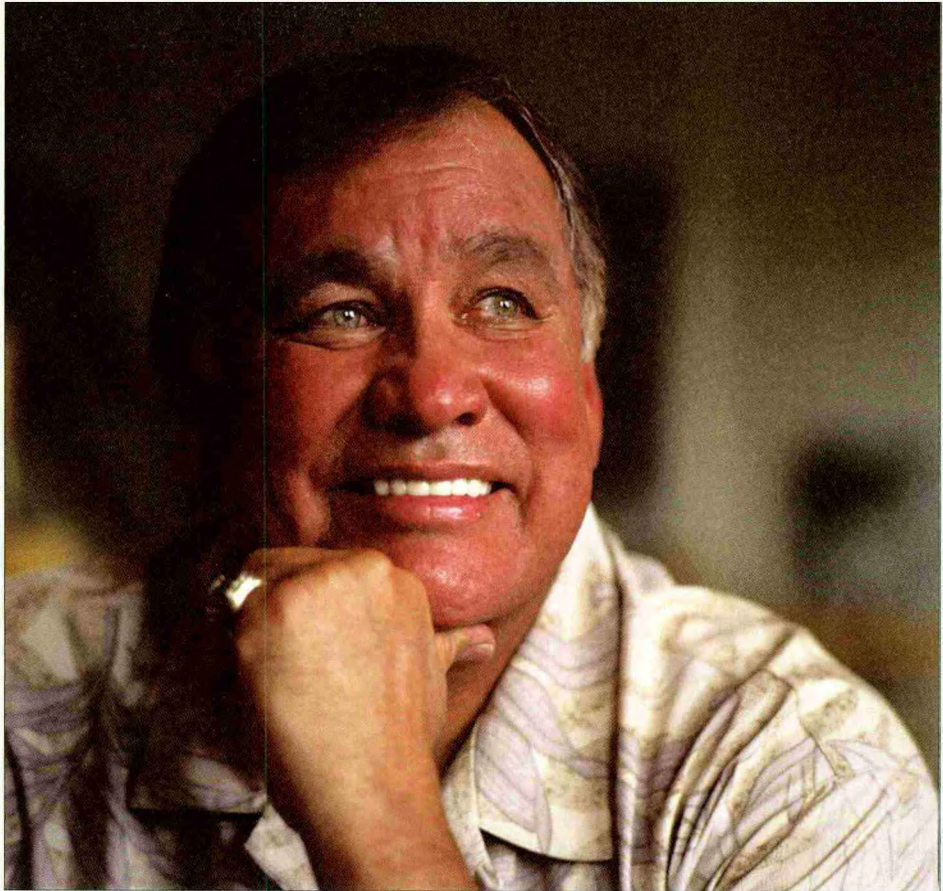
As a child, Soto began dancing as a hoop dancer, a challenging Native American dance form that uses multiple hoops, which he learned from his mother, Josephine Towne (Navajo). "Hoop dancing helped me with ballet in that it introduced me to the importance of following the rhythm of the music," he says. "Ballet, like Native American powwow music, is all about rhythm."

A documentary is in the works about Soto's life and his accomplishments. "It is still an anomaly in the ballet world to have a successful Native American dancer," he says. "Filmmakers are interested in how a Native dancer got this far. Ballet isn't something that most Native American children would be drawn to, because of its apparent elitist associations. But ballet is for everyone, as these five women have shown."

Locklear agrees. "We are all dancers, and the dance we dance is life." ■

Jason Ryle (Saulteaux) is a freelance writer based in Toronto, Ont.

Photo from the personal collection of Jimmy Locklear



Photos by Mark Morris

Billy Mills

By Robert Struckman

From high school in Kansas to Olympic victory in Tokyo, Billy Mills made history in track and field.



A hand-drawn sign taped near the front door of Billy Mills' white stucco and red brick residence says, "Track officials, Welcome." Another has an arrow pointing around the side of the house. It's a mild, early August afternoon in Sacramento. Billy (Oglala Lakota) and his wife Pat are hosting an informal group of local USA Track and Field officials. The officials sit on patio furniture and eat barbecued ribs with their plates on their knees. One of the officials, Thelma Brafford (Oglala Lakota), is Billy's sister. Billy is out on an errand. The subject of the conversation is miracles. Miracles don't happen – that was the initial consensus. An athlete only runs as fast as he or she can run, only throws the discus or shot so far.



Billy Mills (left) claimed the gold medal for his dramatic come-from-behind win in the 10,000 meter run at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo ahead of Mohammed Gamoudi (right, front) from Tunisia and Ron Clarke (right, back) of Australia.

Photo courtesy of Billy Mills



A person can't help but gasp at the footage of Clarke pushing Billy. Billy stumbles across three lanes, his arms flailing. Then the most amazing thing happens: He accelerates with inhuman speed. It seems almost as if the other two runners slow dramatically.

Except for the exceptions.

Phil Watkins, a white-haired former college sprinter, rattles off the details of a half-dozen upsets, like the one about the shot putter who heaved the cannonball far beyond his personal best and into world record territory. Then the glass back door to the house opens, and the ultimate miracle athlete, Billy Mills, steps out onto the patio. Immediately, the question of upsets and miracles is put to him. "It was a miracle to everyone but me," he says. "I knew I was going to win the gold."

At 65, Billy has muscular forearms and calves that still look fast, a reminder that this man was

a world-class athlete. He doesn't run anymore. It hurts his knees too much; golf is his game, and he swims or speed-walks to get his heart rate up. But as a professional speaker he talks about his gold medal regularly.

After his guests set down their plates, Billy invites everyone into the living room to see grainy black-and-white footage of one of the greatest upsets in Olympic history. That 1964 race – Billy's victory in the 10,000-meter event in Tokyo – stunned the world. His surge in the final lap was so dramatic that the television announcer quit announcing, sucked air, and started screaming. The first question from the scrum of

journalists around Billy after the race was, "Who are you?"

"Wait," says Billy, standing near the big-screen television. "I've waited 38 years to get a bunch of officials around to look at this photo that was called a tie." He hands around a framed shot of himself leaning into the tape at the 1965 national championships in San Diego. Right with him, though clearly behind him, was another runner, Gerry Lindgren. Both men intended to try for a world record in the six-mile race.

The win was clearly Billy's. But the race was held at a time when technology was changing. Photographs and Bulova timers had improved



Photos courtesy of Billy Mills

At the 1965 national championships in San Diego on June 27, Billy Mills (right) set the world record by winning the six-mile race by four one-hundredths of a second ahead of Gerry Lindgren. However, rules at the time stipulated any race within five one-hundredths of a second was declared a tie for world record purposes and so Mills had to share the record with Lindgren.



Billy Mills, shown here in a 1959 photo, broke Kansas high-school track records at the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kan.

the accuracy of officiating, but the old rules hadn't yet been discarded. Any race times within five one-hundredths of a second were still declared a tie for world record purposes. The timer had Billy ahead by four one-hundredths of a second – he won the race but had to share the record with Lindgren.

"I'm still mad about that," he says. "That's the only world record I got."

Then the footage of the last two laps of Billy's victory at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 plays on the television. In a blur of motion in the last lap, someone pushes Billy into the third lane. He stumbles, and then he sprints. Each time, the announcer's sharp intake of breath is heard and then the shouts: "Hoo, hoo, hoo. Look at Mills! Look at Mills! Oh, my God! Look at him go! He's going to win!"

It's about 6,234 miles from Pine Ridge, S.D., where Billy Mills was born in 1938, to Tokyo, Japan, where he sprinted into fame in the Olympics, but the greater distance may be from his birthplace to his home today on the quiet cul-de-sac in the Sacramento suburb of Fair Oaks. Billy gives his father most of the credit for his running, but scores of people aided his life's journeys, from his sisters and brothers to his college friends and his Marine Corps coach.

The Mills children were orphaned when Billy was 12, and the older siblings raised the younger ones. His big brother made him work summers off the reservation. Billy built grain silos and slept in a car at night. As a teenager, he enrolled at Haskell Indian School in Kansas, following two of his siblings. Now it's Haskell Indian Nations University, but then it was a boarding school for secondary students. The school exposed him to Native Americans from around the country; he built friendships that he cherishes today, and the experience prepared him for college.

When describing his time at Haskell, Billy reminds a listener that in 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court decided the landmark Kansas case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, that ended legal segregation in public schools. Haskell provided a relatively safe environment, he said, but the instruction did not hold room for appreciation of his Lakota heritage. Nevertheless he formed nurturing friendships among the coaching staff and his roommates.

Billy Mills broke Kansas high school records and attended the University of Kansas on a track scholarship. Once when he was lonesome, he telephoned a woman's dormitory for his date. The girl who answered the phone said no one was there. What started as a call for a specific student became a fishing expedition. Billy said, "How about you?" She said she didn't go on blind dates. Well, he asked, could they meet first? Okay, she said.

Recalling that 1961 phone conversation, his wife, Pat, glances at Billy and says, "He was sweet." A year later they married and moved to

Quantico, Virginia, where Billy went to the U.S. Marine Corps Officer Candidate School. Running for the Marine Corps track team, he began racing internationally.

After he made the Olympic team he received hate mail calling him a flash in the pan – an embarrassment to the United States and himself. Don't compete, the letters said. But his wife spoke encouragingly, and he listened to her.

Plus, he was getting faster – a lot faster.

Billy had qualified for the marathon and two days later for the 10,000-meter race. When he left for the Olympic Games, he was nearing a peak in his strength and speed. Each day he ran faster than he had ever run in his life. In Tokyo a few nights before the famous race, he went to the track after the other athletes had left and ran 200 meters. A German guy timed him. He ran the 200 – a straightaway and one curve – and asked the German if it had been fast.

"No. Not too fast. Twenty-three point four seconds," Billy recounts.

The German then asked him what event he was in. "I told him, marathon and 10,000 meters. And he said, 'That's fast!'"

If Billy could call up that kind of speed, he would win. He felt he could.

He readied himself for the race. The gun went off. Billy moved into the leader's pack. At the 5,000-meter mark, halfway through the race, he was only seven seconds slower than his best time for that distance. He thought, I'd better slow down or I'll have to quit. But the thought of slowing terrified him. He knew he could never regain his position near the leaders. He stayed with them.

With 800 meters to go, the frontrunners, Mohamed Gamoudi and the Australian Ron Clarke, moved ahead. Billy and Mamo Wolde, an Ethiopian runner, began to drop behind. Billy knew he could leave Wolde, but he didn't know if he could bridge the gap. He pushed, reached within, and found himself catching Gamoudi and moving into second place, just behind Clarke's right shoulder.

With 300 meters to go, a runner appeared in front of them. They were lapping someone.

Billy remembered watching a race some months earlier. Clarke had been boxed in behind a runner in a situation like this, and his opponent had used the advantage to sprint to a victory. Billy resolved to box in Clarke the same way.

Clarke must have recalled the same race, because he aggressively bumped Billy to get him out of the way. Billy bumped back. Clarke elbowed him again. Billy leaned his shoulder into Clarke. That's when Clarke pushed Billy, knocking him three lanes over so that he lost his stride and nearly fell. Suddenly Gamoudi surged through the space between them.

Billy saw them running away, and he concluded, "I've got the bronze." His first impulse was to quit, to drop out of the race. His second reaction was, "No. I'm going to quit, but I'm



Married in 1962, Billy Mills' wife Pat assists her husband with the Running Strong for American Indian Youth, a branch of the Christian Relief Services for which Billy has served as spokesperson for almost 20 years.

going to catch Clarke and hit him first. Knock him down." Then he thought, "No. I'm going to win."

A person can't help but gasp at the footage of Clarke pushing Billy. Billy stumbles across three lanes, his arms flailing. Then the most amazing thing happens: He accelerates with inhuman speed. It seems almost as if the other two runners slow dramatically. Billy lifts his knees and stretches his feet in a full sprint, and he streaks past Clarke and Gamoudi. The announcer screams, "Look at Mills! Oh, my God!"

And then it is over, and Billy Mills raises his arms, the only American before or since to win the 10K gold in the Olympics.

The night with the officials ends late. Watkins and Billy talk out on the patio until midnight, and then Billy swims in the pool. The next morning, on the way to breakfast in downtown Fair Oaks in an SUV with plates that say "10K Gold," Pat teases Billy, calling him "a Fair Oakian now." Fair Oaks city policy is officially friendly toward chickens – a curious distinction. Before parking, Billy waits patiently for a black rooster to strut with dignity across the street.

In the driver's seat he voices his regrets about racing. He quit 11 months after his Olympic win, just after the official tie with Gerry Lindgren in San Diego for the world record. Twice he underwent heavy training regimens to return to competition, but injuries plagued him both times. One or two great wins alone fail to satisfy. Billy's stories from his college and racing days are full of what-ifs and might-have-beens. What if he had

begun speed work earlier? What if he hadn't pulled a muscle before the 1968 Olympic trials? These things are still painful. He still worries about being called a flash-in-the-pan. He seems to be the only one who does.

But his gold medal didn't bring him to California. Indeed, given the possibility for self-doubt and recrimination, the performance that won him the medal might have been the last great thing he did with his life. Instead Billy began another, less glamorous road. He did his best to take care of his family and himself. After the Olympics he left the Marines as a captain, "only because of Vietnam," he adds. In the decade after Tokyo, Billy and Pat moved with their four daughters to Sacramento, where he sold life insurance and dreamed of a better future. His daughters used his trophies as toys while he and his wife wrote a treatment for a movie, entitled *Running Brave*, based on his life. The two found a producer, Ira Englander, who had produced educational videos for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. After Englander agreed to try to make the film, they found financing from the Erminskine Band of Crees in Canada. It was a serendipitous match. The Millses had been in Canada for another event. Afterward, talking and joking with some of the principals of the Erminskine band, Billy described the film he wanted to make. The council members were intrigued, and soon a deal was in the works. "It happened just like that, over coffee," Pat recalls.

It all added up to a distinctly un-Hollywood crowd. Pat says, "What were the odds of getting the movie made and distributed? Zero."

The 1983 movie catapulted Billy into what he calls a quasi-celebrity status. Since then he has been a professional inspirational speaker. He's also a spokesman for Christian Relief Services, a nonprofit based in Virginia that meets the Better Business Bureau's standards for accountability and transparency for charities. One of the CRS branches is called Running Strong for American Indian Youth, which gives about a million dollars annually in cash and in-kind support to an array of initiatives, from helping to pay home heating costs for reservation families to building houses and funding running clubs and youth centers. In August 2003 Running Strong donated \$500,000 to the National Museum of the American Indian to help pay for the Lakota exhibit in the Mall museum. Mills also speaks in support of causes he likes. He enjoys the work and has no plans to retire, although he might ease back on his speaking engagements.

A few years ago Mills traveled to the Lapwai Reservation in Idaho for an appearance on behalf of a wolf reintroduction project. Supporters there organized a 5K run. The T-shirts for the run were fantastic, Billy said: On the front of the shirt was the head-on victory photograph of him at the Olympics, his arms raised as he crossed the finish line. Superimposed around him is a pack of wolves. "That photo was really something," he says, smiling.

This Sunday morning he eats breakfast at a bistro across from the grassy square in Fair Oaks. The trees in the park are a deep summer green. Chickens scratch and peck in the gutters. In the Marines, Billy said, his mentor Earl "Tommy" Thomson Sr. helped "lead me on a journey to the center of my soul." Billy doesn't get more descriptive than that; instead he uses phrases such as "value-based concepts" and the "parallel values of Lakota and Christian spirituality." But those are important words to Billy. Within them is the source of his sprint back in 1964, as well as his long, slow success story ever since.

In the middle of a soft-spoken argument that Native American Rights Fund attorney John Echohawk (Pawnee) be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, he interrupts himself. Something in the conversation reminds him of some chipped tile at his daughter's new house. Over the past few decades Billy has become rather particular about domestic details. But then he's back on the subject of Echohawk, and he segues into one of his mantras: "Unity through diversity. You've got to live your life with passion." Somewhere outside a rooster crows. It's 1,034 miles from Sacramento to Pine Ridge, S.D., but it doesn't seem like a long way at all. ■

Robert Struckman is a freelance writer in St. Ignatius, Mont. He's working on his first book, a biography of Whitney Shepardson, a little-known but influential figure in 20th-century foreign affairs.

Creating New

by Maya Dollarhide

When Wendy Ponca looks up into the night sky, she finds inspiration not only in the stars above but also in the spacecrafts that troll the interplanetary highways. "My clan's name is the Ponca Washtage, or The Star That Fell To The Earth Clan," says Ponca (Osage), whose favorite material to fashion clothing from is Mylar, a silvery synthetic material that NASA uses to cover space shuttles. "My people came from the stars and Mylar literally goes up to the heavens on space shuttles," she says.

Margaret Roach Wheeler's
(Chickasaw/Choctaw)
handwoven Pueblo Dress
features a matching
shawl.

Ponca says she learned about Mylar when she was growing up just outside of Austin, Tex. She used to visit the McDonald Observatory, located in the Davis Mountains about 450 miles west of Austin. "The material is actually part of a spacecraft," says Ponca. "But when you use it to make clothing, it flows like a piece of fabric."

Just as Ponca uses her clan's legends and symbols in her designs, Shannon Kilroy, a member of the Lower Nicola band, which is part of the Nlaka 'Pamux Nation, says she uses symbols like mountains and animals that have been used by Nlaka 'Pamux women for centuries.

Kilroy visits her grandmother, aunts, and tribal elders to ask about traditional designs and techniques. "When I first started doing cutwork designs, which is cutting pictures out of the fabric of an article of clothing, I learned from older women in my tribe that traditionally we used to cut symbols out of leather hides to keep cool in the summertime. The open cuts in the leather made it possible to have circulation through a dress or jacket."

Kilroy runs the design business from her home studio on the Lower Nicola Reserve in Merritt, B.C., located in the Nicola Valley.

"I'll use cutouts to make patterns for stars and mountains. My people live up in the mountains so we use a triangle design a lot," she says. "The name and logo of my company, Earthline, represent the mountains, trees, and the circular design of the earth that divides the earth and sky. I also use geometric shapes to represent the Rocky Mountains that are close by." Kilroy explains that on the coast of British Columbia, killer whale, shark, and wave patterns reflect the designs used by coastal First Nations.

"Lately, I've been doing a lot of what I call legend jackets, which are made out of black wool," she says. "I've been using Pendleton

blankets, too. I use the bright colored blankets and put black wool underneath. Then I do cutwork on the blanket so that the shapes will show up against the black wool. If someone has a vision of their spirit animal, I will make a jacket with that cutout image on it," says Kilroy. Her customers order from her directly, but her clothing can also be found in clothing boutiques in Vancouver, Toronto, San Francisco, and Switzerland.

She was recently commissioned to create legend jackets for the First Nations' Child and Family agency workers on the Lower Nicola. "They asked me to design legend jackets for the employees as a way for them to be recognized in the community. The agency wanted jackets with animals on them that are sacred to us, like the bear or the cougar, so that when the children see them, they can identify with the agents who are from our band. They will see that they are all connected together through our history."

Virginia Yazzie Ballenger uses Navajo cultural history to create prize-winning traditional and contemporary pieces in velvet, silk, and cotton. Navajo Spirit, her retail store in Gallup, N.M., sells children's apparel, bridalwear, skirts, and dresses.

Ballenger started designing and sewing clothing back in her high school days, when she took part in Indian Queen competitions. "I held six different titles, the last of which was Miss Indian New Mexico. My mother, Chee Bah Yazzie, and my aunt, Minnie Browning, used to sew my clothes, but my mother taught me how to sew more complicated velvet and satin shirts and dresses," she says.

She started to travel throughout the Southwest to Indian art shows like the Santa Fe Indian Market in her home state and the Colorado Indian Market in Denver, Colo. She won awards for her designs, and customers began to request custom-made pieces.

"I use a lot of sky colors traditional to Navajo culture - reds and oranges, which are colors of the sky around here. I also use a lot of velvet and velveteen, a lighter cotton velvet, year round in colors like purple, burgundy, and blue, which are the colors velvet originally came in," she says.



"The snow goose myth is from my imagination, but the images were influenced by the coming-of-age ceremonies of many different tribes. I also borrowed from the Hopi tradition of women wearing a cape in a wedding ceremony."

— MARGARET ROACH WHEELER

Left: The Snow Goose costume, part of Margaret Roach Wheeler's *The Marriage of the Snow Goose*, represents the life of a woman.



Traditions

Forest Dweller by Margaret Roach Wheeler (Chickasaw/Choctaw), a handwoven silk/wool vest, features a bear headdress.

During the mid-1800s, expansion into western land by pioneers and ranchers made it difficult for the Navajo people to keep their lands and traditional ways of life. In an effort to claim the land belonging to the Navajo living in the New Mexico territory, the U.S. Army, led by Kit Carson, fought the Navajo people in 1864. The Navajo were defeated and subsequently held captive at Fort Sumner and at the Bosque Redondo Reservation until 1868, when the U.S. government acknowledged Navajo sovereignty in the Treaty of 1868, which allowed the Navajos to return to their land in the New Mexico territories.

Upon the release of the Navajo people, among the gifts offered by the U.S. government officers was velvet. Navajo women adopted some of the styles of Victorian dress worn by the army officers' wives at Fort Sumner. "My understanding is that Navajo women used the velvet to create tiered skirts and shirts out of velveteen fabric, crafting shirts with silver buttons and coins," says Ballenger. "Today, I use a lot of rayon velvet, which looks just as good but the fabric is lighter and you can wear it year round."

Ballenger researched historic Navajo garments in 1998 when she received a visiting scholar fellowship from the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) to study in New York City. The fellowship allows Native artists to conduct research and study collections at various museums in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Ballenger wanted to identify specific periods in history to reference the designs in her work. She studied woven rug dresses from the mid-1800s. The dresses are woolen, usually with a cotton sheath underneath them, and their designs and colors are similar to those used in Navajo rugs.

"The dresses are as heavy as a rug," says Ballenger. "The Navajo women used to wear them before their captivity in Fort Sumner; you often see Navajo women in pictures prior to the 1864 captivity wearing these wool dresses."

Ballenger also used the three-week fellowship to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she studied the collections of Chanel, Versace, and Christian Dior. "I love Chanel suits. I wanted to see

how I could design one with a Native look or how I could take a design by Christian Dior and incorporate a Native perspective on an evening gown. You would do that by using turquoise or coral or silver buttons and then add touches of geometric patterns onto the clothing, instead of the pearls or sequins you'd find on a Dior gown."

Like Ballenger, Ponca also became a visiting scholar at the NMAI, and she took the opportunity to study tattooing bundles containing the tools used by the Osage at the NMAI Research Branch in the Bronx. She says she found copies of pictures of Osage people in New York at the New-York Historical Society.

She studied Osage tattooing bundles at the George Gustav Heye Center, the New-York Historical Society, and the American Museum of Natural History. "My clan was a tattooing clan, so I took an inventory of the tattoo bundles I found," she says. "Tattoos were a religious and prestigious part of the Osage religion. In order for an Osage man to get tattoos, he had to complete eight war honors. After an Osage man had his tattoos he then could pay to have one of his wives, daughters, or nieces tattooed."

Tattoos complement her clothing designs. For women, she silk-screens Osage tattoo designs, like a symbol of a spider, onto shirts and dresses.

"Last summer, I went to the National Anthropological Archives in Washington, D.C., and found some more information on Osage tattoos, which I am going to use for the book that I'm writing about this process," she says. "I hope to keep this part of our lost religion for my grandchildren or anyone else who is interested in this form of religious body adornment."

Ponca says that some of her designs are based on Osage creation myths, like the one about her clan coming to the earth from the heavens and then intermarrying with the Native people they found living there.

"The Osage Nation is considered to be partially of the earth and of the sky," says Ponca, who uses star and earth symbols in her designs. "I find the Mylar material is very good to use as a representation of

the Osage connection to the sky - because it is light and airy, and the silver is like stars. But I also use traditional wool and buckskin, too, as those fabrics represent the earth aspect of the Osage nation," she says.

Ponca considers Dorothy Grant (Haida), a Vancouver-based designer, her hero. "I think of her as a Northeast Coast Indian meets Ann Taylor." Grant, like Shannon Kilroy, is from British Columbia, but Grant's coastal roots show up in her designs as killer whales and sharks. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Que. Grant has two fashion labels - Feastwear (which Grant refers to as "Haida haute couture") and a line called Dorothy Grant.

Margaret Roach Wheeler (Chickasaw/Choctaw) named her fashion label after her great-great-great-great-grandmother Mahota, who was a survivor of the removal of the Chickasaws from Mississippi to Oklahoma in the mid-19th century. "I make blouses and long wool coats that are a mix of two panels of different blocks of wool. One of my favorite pieces this year is the ghost shirt, made out of cottons, silks, and linens," she says.

Wheeler explains that the ghost shirt is reminiscent of the Ghost Dances, which began in January 1889, when Wokova (Paiute) had a revelation during an eclipse of the sun. His vision was of a dance that would reunite Indians with their friends and relatives in the ghost world. This concept and the dance he envisioned became a religious movement that spread rapidly among many different tribes. The belief was that if all Indian nations could do the ghost dance, they would be suspended in air and time while the earth swallowed all those who were not Indian and the world could begin again. The movement came to an abrupt end in December 1890 at the Battle of Wounded Knee, where about 200 Lakota women, men, and children were killed. They all wore ghost shirts, which they believed would make them immune to bullets. Wheeler says the re-creation of the shirts will help preserve the history of the Ghost Dance movement

Navajo designer Virginia Yazzie Ballenger's Bosque Redondo style dresses are inspired by the women who adopted some of the styles of Victorian dress worn by army officers' wives in the 19th century.



Photo by Imagecatchers

Osage designer Wendy Ponca makes clothing from Mylar, a synthetic material used in construction of the space shuttles.



Photos courtesy of Wendy Ponca

and the designs of the ghost shirts.

In 2000, she received a visiting scholar fellowship from the NMAI to further her study of Indian arts. She examined fabric remnants from the Spiro Mounds (an Oklahoma mound) at NMAI's Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md.

Wheeler hoped to discover information about the sacred poles used by the Mound-Builders, who were made up of the original tribes of pre-Columbian American Indians who lived all over North America but primarily were concentrated in what are now the southern states, but she found scant information. She chose to study textiles of mound builders whose mounds still exist outside of St. Louis, Mo.

After she completed the fellowship, Wheeler designed woven garments to put onto poles reminiscent of the project she originally wanted to study. She hoped to design the garments to illustrate the Chickasaw migration story to exhibit at the Chickasaw annual festival in Oklahoma.

"I have been fascinated by the sacred poles of all tribes since college in the '70s, when I first saw Bodner's paintings of the Mandan villages with poles by each lodge," says Wheeler. Karl Bodner was a Swiss artist who captured Native American life on canvas in the 1830s. "I had to do a project for my fellowship within 6 months, and I decided to make a pole for the Chickasaw Festival using the images I saw on the remnants."

Wheeler since has created a Mahotan line, an

imaginary tribe of characters wearing handwoven robes and headdress that represent imaginary clans of Indians. The figures are all sculptural art. "I have created an imaginary tribe with different clans. One clan is the Wind People Clan, which are outdoor sculpture. The Woodland Clan stand 3 feet tall and have hand-carved faces. The Venetian Clan have lamp-worked glass bead heads," she says.

She also creates spirit animals, like the wolf and raven, presented on stands or poles like sculpture. She says that most of her favorite designs are what she calls "wearable art." One of the spirit animals, a wolf, wears pants and a shirt woven of cotton to look like buckskin. Wheeler said the clothing on the sculptures can be worn off the stand.

She researches myths and then creates pieces for fashion shows. "Last year in Vancouver, I did a 'myth' about a snow goose that was created out of three different designs," she says. The clothing symbolizes phases of a woman's life.

"The snow goose myth is from my imagination, but the images were influenced by the coming-of-age ceremonies of many different tribes. I also borrowed from the Hopi tradition of women wearing a cape in a wedding ceremony. After the ceremony the women keep the cape for the rest of their lives. Then when they die the cape is placed beside them, as the cape is thought to help them ascend to the next world."

For the snow goose, the first image is called the "Handmaiden of Life," which illustrates the blos-

soming of a young woman in a handwoven skirt and top, a headdress in red and white stripes, and a turban with a bird sculpted out of red leather. The second piece, the snow goose bride, is a mantle made out of white cotton but fashioned as a goose around the shoulders and neck. Underneath the mantle, a gray and white skirt and shirt, with the design of a compass on the shirt, represent the four directions. The last piece, a hand-woven black and white striped skirt and shirt, represents the "Handmaiden of Death." The turban is black cotton with a black bird sculpture in the headdress. All of the snow goose pieces can be worn or displayed as art objects.

Wheeler sees nature as an artists' palette of color and texture for her designs.

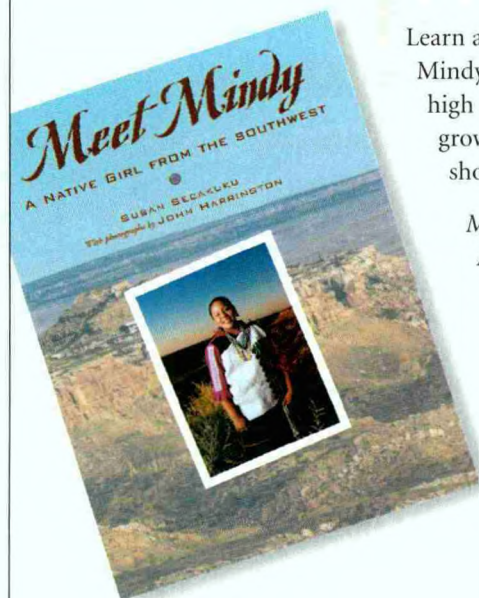
"The mound builders are the early relatives of the Five Civilized Tribes; the Chickasaws, being one of those tribes, used the inner bark of mulberry trees to weave into a fiber to sew clothing from," she says. "It's wonderful to use objects from the earth in one's work."

Like their ancestors of old, today's fashion designers draw inspiration from the earth and the skies. ■

Maya Dollarhide (Oglala Lakota) is a freelance journalist living in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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My World: Young Native Americans Today—published by the National Museum of the American Indian in association with Beyond Words Publishing, each volume in this series for 8- to 12-year-olds profiles a young Native American from a different region.

Also available in the series—*Meet Naiche: A Native Boy from the Chesapeake Bay Area* by Gabrielle Tayac (Piscataway), with photographs by John Harrington (Siletz).

"A great resource for teachers who want to give a human face to Native American studies..." —School Library Journal

For information, or to place an order, email nmai-pubs@si.edu or visit the Bookshop at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu.

By Susan Secakuku (Hopi)
Photographs by John Harrington (Siletz)



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

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0403SW

Coyote's Place

by Shawn Termin and Johanna Gorelick

Did you know

that there are Indian cowboys who work on ranches and ride in rodeos all throughout North America?

You shouldn't be surprised. Many Native Americans, especially those from the Plains, are known for their amazing horsemanship. For Native people, many rodeo skills were developed after their nations were placed on reservations in the 1880s and they were introduced to farming and ranching. Many times, competitions were held by Native and non-Native cowboys to see who had the best "cowboy" skills. Over time, these competitions grew larger and became what are known today as rodeos.

Yip-e-i-o!
Ride'em, cowboys!

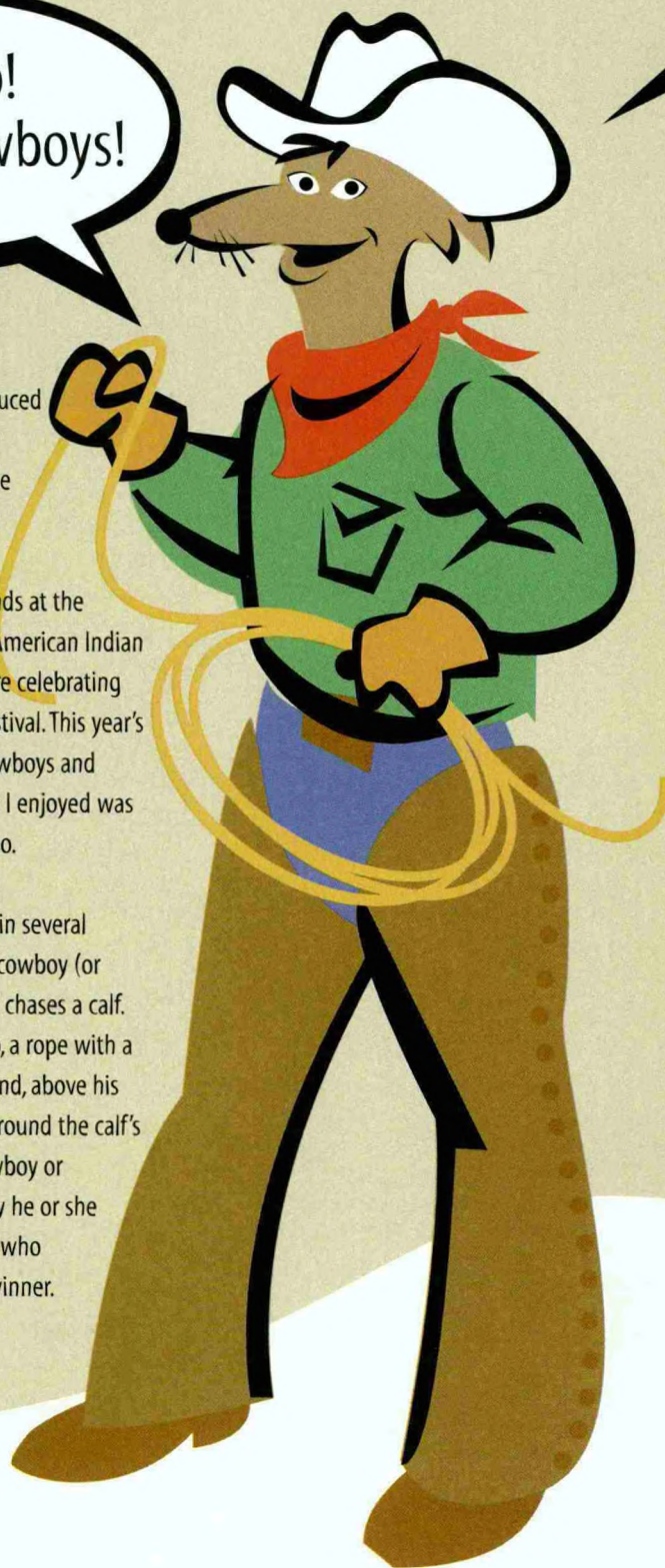


Photo by Mary Cathryn Ross

Recently, I visited my friends at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City. They were celebrating their annual Children's Festival. This year's theme featured Indian cowboys and rodeo games. One activity I enjoyed was learning how to use a lasso.

In rodeos, lassos are used in several events. In calf roping, the cowboy (or cowgirl) rides a horse and chases a calf. The roper swings his lasso, a rope with a big loop or noose at the end, above his head before throwing it around the calf's neck. Judges time the cowboy or cowgirl to see how quickly he or she can rope the calf. The one who does it the fastest is the winner.

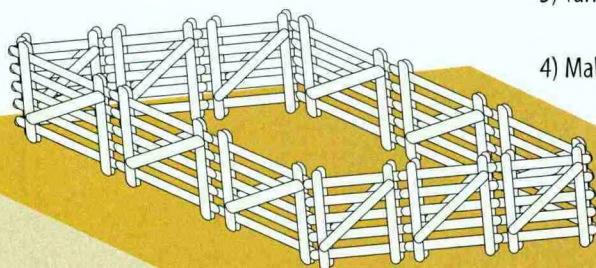
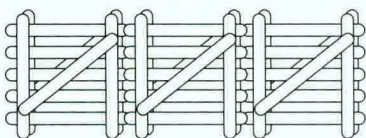
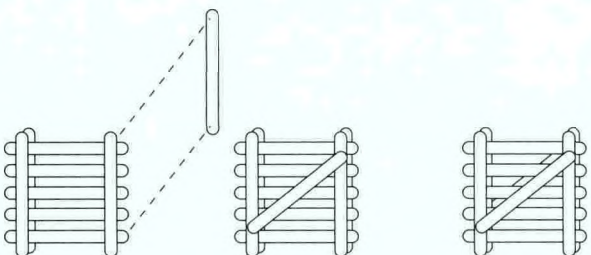
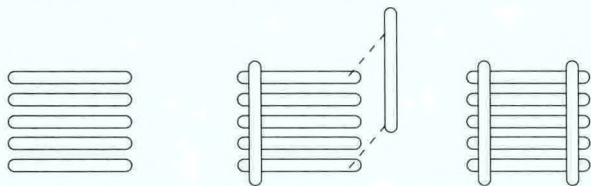
Meet my friend Nelson Aguate.

He is Blackfeet and lives on a Montana ranch. He demonstrated roping to our visitors at the last Children's Festival in New York City.

Ranchers use corrals to hold horses and cattle. You can make a miniature corral out of Popsicle sticks and glue.

Activity

Designed with assistance from
Angela Friedlander (Metis)



What you will need:

- 132 Popsicle sticks
- Glue
- A one-foot-square piece of cardboard (to mount the corral on)
- Pipe cleaners (optional)

Directions

- 1) Lay five Popsicle sticks flat, approximately 1/2 inch apart and parallel to each other.
- 2) Put a spot of glue on both ends of each stick. Lay a Popsicle stick perpendicular over each end, on top of the glue.
- 3) Turn over and repeat step 2.
- 4) Make 12 fence sections.

5) Lay three fence sections side by side. Put glue on the end of the middle section and press the two end sections to the glue. Let dry for several minutes.

6) Set reinforcing sticks diagonally across the section."

7) Do the same three more times.


8) When all sides are dry, stand the sections on end and glue the four corners together.

9) If you want to have one of the fence sections be a door, make hinges using pipe cleaners.

If you do not have plastic farm animals, you can make your own out of pipe cleaners.

A photograph of a man, Jarrett Medicine Elk, standing in a vast, snow-covered field. He is wearing a brown jacket and has his arms outstretched, looking up at the sky with a joyful expression. The background shows rolling hills under a bright, hazy sky.

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A REAL INDIAN?

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CALENDAR of EVENTS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003 • JANUARY 2004

Photo courtesy V. Blackhawk Aamodt



A still from the film *The Ghost Riders* by V. Blackhawk Aamodt (Blackfoot/Lakota/Mexican) which will be screened as part of the 12th Native American Film + Video Festival to be held in New York City, December 4-7, 2003.

EXHIBITIONS

CONTINUUM: TWELVE ARTISTS Through Nov. 28, 2004

This 18-month exhibition series features works by contemporary Native American artists, two at a time, from a changing selection of those who represent the succeeding generations of art begun by George Morrison (1919-2000; Grand Portage Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe) and Allan Houser (1914-94; Warm Springs Chiricahua Apache), two major figures of 20th-century Native American art. Like Morrison and Houser, these artists draw from a variety of influences, both within and outside art schools and universities. Exploring new directions, they have established reputations as groundbreakers in the realm of contemporary art and Native American art history. The series has showcased the works of Kay WalkingStick (Cherokee), Rick Bartow (Yurok-Mad River Blood Band), Joe Feddersen (Colville), and Harry Fonseca (Nisenan Maidu/Hawaiian/Portuguese). Opening on Nov. 6 will be Richard Ray Whitman (Yuchi) and, on Nov. 20, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne/Arapaho.) Other artists in the series will include George Longfish, Judith Lowry, Nora Naranjo Morse, Shelley Niro, Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith, and Marie Watt. The artists in the exhibition represent the Arapaho, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Colville, Cree, Flathead, Hamowi-Pit River, Hawaiian, Mohawk, Mountain Maidu, Nisenan Maidu, Pueblo Santa Clara, Seneca, Shoshone, Tularora, Yuchi, and Yurok cultures.

CONTINUUM: TWELVE ARTISTS CURATOR'S AND ARTIST'S DIA- LOGUE

Nov. 6, 5 p.m.
Richard Ray Whitman

Nov. 20, 5 p.m.
Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds

LEGENDS OF OUR TIMES: NATIVE RANCHING AND RODEO LIFE ON THE PLAINS AND THE PLATEAU Through March 7, 2004

This exhibition traces the history of Native people as buffalo hunters, horse-men, ranchers, and cowboys and as entertainers and participants in the sport of rodeo. With 700 objects including saddles, blankets, clothing, and horse equipment, the exhibition presents the connections between traditional Plains and Plateau cultures and such animals as the horse, the buffalo, and the dog and explains how these connections influenced the Native cowboy's perspective on ranching and rodeo life.

THE LANGUAGE OF NATIVE AMERICAN BASKETS: FROM THE WEAVERS' VIEW Through Jan. 9, 2005

This exhibition will feature more than 200 baskets from the NMAI collection and will present basketmaking according to the Native cultural viewpoint, focusing on the process of making a basket rather than the finished basket as an object.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

STORYBOOK READINGS: FROM THE SHELVES OF THE RESOURCE CENTER

Second Saturday of every month
at 2 p.m.

Join us for storybook readings featuring stories about the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. For children of all ages. Resource Center, second floor.

CELEBRATING AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Celebrate American Indian Heritage Month in this series of workshops especially for kids, ages eight and up, and families, with a theme of various forms of American Indian weaving. Parents/chaperones are required to attend and assist their children. Workshops are free, but pre-registration is required. Call (212) 514-3714.

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS WEAVING WORKSHOP

Nov. 8, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Orientation Room, first floor

Cultural interpreter Juanita Velasco (Maya) leads a hands-on workshop to make friendship bracelets while discussing her Mayan heritage. Friendship bracelets are exchanged between friends to make their friendship deeper and more memorable.

NATIVE BASKET WEAVING WORKSHOP

Nov. 13, 4:30 p.m.
Education Classroom, second floor

Angela Friedlander (Metis), NMAI cultural interpreter, will lead families through the Native basket exhibit *The Language of Native American Baskets: From the Weavers' View*. Workshop participants will make a basket sample using plastic cups and yarn.

EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS/DAY OF THE DEAD

Nov. 2, 1 - 4 p.m.
Rotunda

Honor the memory of ancestors, family, and friends who have departed in this celebration that has roots in the indigenous cultures of Mexico. Join NMAI staff in a day of performances and hands-on workshops.

THE NUNUMTA YUP'IK ESKIMO DANCERS

Nov. 14 and 15, 2 p.m.
[Location TBD]

This dance troupe from southwestern Alaska presents traditional song, dance, and story in beautiful Yup'ik regalia. The group's leader, Chuna McIntyre, is a highly regarded teacher and an expert in Yup'ik language, music and dance traditions, and clothing.

VISIONS AND VOICES OF THE PUEBLO IMAGINATION

Nov. 22, 2 p.m.
Auditorium

In collaboration with Beacon Press, the NMAI presents photographer Lee Marmon (Laguna Pueblo) and poet Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) in a celebration of the newly released book, *The Pueblo Imagination: Landscape and Memory in the Photography of Lee Marmon*. A book signing follows the program in the museum gift shop.

IROQUOIS CORNHUSK DOLL AND STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

Dec. 11, 4:30 p.m.
Education Classroom, second floor

Listen to and learn the importance of storytelling in Iroquois culture, while making a cornhusk doll as Paul Betancourt (Seneca) conducts a hands-on workshop for families. Pre-registration is required. Call (212) 514-3714. Ages 8 years and up.

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS: THE CODE THAT COULDN'T BE BROKEN

Dec. 14, 2:30 p.m.
Safra Hall, Museum of Jewish Heritage

The NMAI joins the Museum of Jewish Heritage to celebrate one of WWII's best-kept secrets - the Navajo Code Talkers. In a panel discussion, Sam Billison, president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association, will join WWII scholars to discuss how the Navajo language helped win the war. Learn how their unique code system worked and why it could never be deciphered by the enemy.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

ART TALK

Jan. 9, noon

Video Viewing Room, second floor

Photographer and new media artist Jesse Cooday (Tlingit) will conduct a visual lecture based on the work featured in the American Indian Community House Gallery exhibition *Secret Treaties*.

PLAINS BEADING WORKSHOP SERIES

Jan. 15, 4 - 7 p.m.

Jan. 17, noon - 4 p.m.
Education Classroom

Join Amy Tall Chief (Osage), NMAI cultural interpreter, as she conducts a two-day series on Plains beadwork from beginner to intermediate levels. Participants will tour the Legends of Our Time exhibit to look at examples of beadwork and design. Please note that the beads are small and good eyesight and hand-eye coordination are required. Enrollment is limited. Advance registration is required. Call (212) 514-3714. Materials fee is \$20 (\$16 for members). Ages 16 years and up.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

MUSIC, DANCE, AND STORYTELLING

Robert "Tree" Cody and Dovie Thomasen

Nov. 8, afternoon

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street NW.

Robert "Tree" Cody (Salt River Pima Maricopa and Dakota) and storyteller Dovie Thomasen (Lakota) present music and stories from the Great Plains in the Renwick's Grand Salon amid George Catlin's portraits of Native Americans from the mid-19th century. Call (202) 357-2700 for program details or visit the NMAI Web site. Free.

THE NUNUMTA YUP'IK ESKIMO DANCERS

Nov. 12, noon

Coolidge Auditorium,
Library of Congress,
First and East Capitol
Streets NE

6 p.m.

Millennium Stage, Kennedy Center, Rock Creek Parkway and Virginia Avenue NW

The dance troupe from southwestern Alaska presents traditional song, dance, and story in beautiful Yup'ik regalia. The group's leader,

Right: Chuna McIntyre, director of the Nunumta Yup'ik Eskimo Dancers, performs with his dance troupe November 12 in Washington, D.C. and November 14 and 15 in New York City.

Chuna McIntyre, is a highly regarded teacher and an expert in Yup'ik language, music and dance traditions, and clothing. Call (202) 287-2020 ext. 137 for more information. Free.

SENECA SOCIAL DANCE WITH BILL CROUSE AND THE ALLEGHENY RIVER INDIAN DANCERS

Nov. 15, 4 p.m.

NOAA Auditorium, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Springs MD.

Join Seneca singer, dance leader, and wow-announcer Bill Crouse and his family for an evening of Iroquois social dancing and performance. Call (202) 357-2700 or visit the NMAI Web site for details. Free.

FILM & VIDEO

REEL NATIVES: CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS FILMS

Nov. 5, 12, 19, 7 p.m.

Ring Auditorium, Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Independence Ave. at Seventh St. SW

With the success of films such as *Whale Rider*, *Smoke Signals*, *Atanarquat: The Fast Runner*, and others, Native films continue to show strength as a genre. This series, cosponsored with the Smithsonian Associates, presents three films that bring Native voices and images to wider audiences.

Nov. 5

TRUE WHISPERS (2002, 90 min., USA) Director, producer, and writer Valerie Red-Horse joins us for a screening of her moving and personal story of the WWII

Navajo Code Talkers. This documentary, uniquely positioned from the code talkers' point of view, is a long-overdue portrait of heroism.



Photo by Alexis Bierman

Nov. 12

IS THE CROWN AT WAR WITH US? (2002, 96 min., Canada)

Canadian Genie Award nominee for best documentary and shown at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, this work is a powerful and painstakingly researched look at the conflict over fishing rights in the Miramichi Bay between the Mi'gmaq people of Esengenopetitj (Burnt Church), New Brunswick, and their non-Native neighbors. Internationally acclaimed Canadian National Film Board director and producer Alanis Obomsawin introduces the film, a defense of the Mi'gmaq position and a gripping portrait of a community under siege.

Nov. 19

Best Film winner from the 28th Annual American Indian Film Festival, San Francisco (to be announced Nov. 13, 2003).

Series Prices: \$21 for Members of NMAI and the Smithsonian Associates
Individual Tickets: \$10 for NMAI members
(All films subject to change.)
Call (202) 357-3030 (voice) or
(TTY: (202) 633-9467) for more information.

FILM & VIDEO PROGRAMS

NATIVE AMERICAN FILM + VIDEO FESTIVAL Dec. 4 - 7

The Film and Video Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian announces the 12th Native American Film + Video Festival to be held in New York City, Dec. 4 - 7, 2003. The festival features films, videos, and radio programs of all genres, as well as Web projects and CD-ROMs from North, Central, and South America and Hawaii. It showcases productions by Native media makers, community projects, youth programs, and works reflecting Native perspectives, and brings together participants from the four directions for screenings, workshops, and special events. All programs are free to the public.

Works are chosen by a selection team made up of Native American media makers, cultural activists, and the program staff of the Film and Video Center. The Native American Film + Video Festival is a noncompetitive showcase. Updates on the festival will be posted at www.nativenetworks.si.edu (English) or www.redesindigenas.si.edu (Español).

WOVEN IN A BASKET

Sept. 22 - Nov. 30

Daily at 1 p.m. and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

The Viewing Room, second floor at State Street Corridor

Oct. 14 - Nov. 9

... AND WOMEN WOVE IT IN A BASKET ... (1989, 70 min., USA) Bushra Azzouz, Marlene Farnum, Nettie Jackson Kuneki (Klickitat). An exploration of the cedar-bark basketry of Nettie Kuneki illuminates Klickitat tradition, myth, and history.

Nov. 10 - 30

THE BEGINNING THEY TOLD (2003, 11 min., USA) Joseph Erb (Cherokee). Produced for the Cherokee Nation. In Cherokee with English subtitles. The animals living in the sky vault work together to bring about the creation of the earth from a tiny piece of mud.

ELLA MAE BLACKBEAR: CHEROKEE BASKETMAKER (1982, 25 min., USA) Scott Swearingen and Sheila Swearingen. In northeastern Oklahoma, Ella Mae Blackbear's practice of traditional Cherokee basketry is documented as she makes a buck brush basket.

OUR LIVES IN OUR HANDS (1986, 44 min., USA) Karen Carter. An exploration of the work of basketmaker Donald Sanipass and his family and the economic and cultural life of the Micmac in Maine.

AN ANIMATION CELEBRATION

Dec. 5 - Jan. 11

Daily, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Repeated as noted on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. The Viewing Room, second floor at State Street Corridor

STORIES OF THE SEVENTH FIRE-SUMMER (24 min., Canada)

Produced by Gerry Cook, Ava Karvonen, Gregory Coyes (Metis Cree), and George Johnson. In this episode of the *Tales of Wesakechak*, when the trickster hero of the series wants a new name, he discovers where strength really lies. In an episode of *Wolf Tale*, Mother Wolf (voice of Tantoo Cardinal) tells her competitive little cubs about the time when the Caribou learned the truth about power and size.

THE BEGINNING THEY TOLD (2003, 11 min., USA) Joseph Erb (Cherokee).

HOW THE REDBIRD GOT HIS COLOR (2003, 4 min., USA)

Produced by the American Indian Resource Center, Tallequah, Okla. In Cherokee with English subtitles. Cherokee students at the Dahlongegah Elementary School make a claymation of a traditional story that tells of a kind deed rewarded.

BOX OF DAYLIGHT (1990, 9 min., USA)

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.

TALES OF WESAKECHAK: THE FIRST SPRING FLOOD (2002, 14 min., Canada.)

Produced by Gerry Cook, Ava Karvonen, Gregory Coyes (Métis Cree), and George Johnson. From Stories from the Seventh Fire - Spring. In the time before people lived on Turtle Island (North America), the Creator put the trickster Wesakechak on earth to take care of all creatures. When he is tricked by the jealous spirit Machias, his friends come to his aid. Repeated on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

TOTEM TALK (1997, 22 min., Canada) Annie Frazier-Henry (French-Sioux-Blackfoot). Computer-animated clan totems put urban youth back in touch with their Northwest Coast heritage. Repeated on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS AT WAPOS BAY (2002, 48 min., Canada) Dennis Jackson (Cree). In Cree with English subtitles. In this claymation, three children visit their grandfather at his cabin in the woods. As they hunt a moose for food, they learn self-reliance and the spirit of the traditional Cree way of life. Repeated on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

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 5 p.m.
For information, call 212-514-3767.

WEB SITE:

Have you visited the NMAI Web sites?
<http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu>
<http://www.conexus.si.edu>

CONTINUUM: NATIVE ARTS ON FILM

Jan. 12 - Feb. 16

FAITHFUL TO CONTINUANCE: LEGACY OF THE PLATEAU PEOPLE (2003, 58 min., USA)

David Schneiderman and Penny Phillips. The power and beauty of Columbia River Native American culture, whose traditional lands extended between the Cascades and the Rockies, is examined in this documentary. It focuses on the work of six contemporary artists. In various media, traditional and nontraditional, they each make a unique contribution to the continuation of their culture.

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Oct. 14 - Nov. 9

HAUDENOSAUNEE: WAY OF THE LONGHOUSE (1982, 13 min., USA) Robert Stiles and John Akin. A look at Iroquois history and society is followed by a visit to the Akwesasne Reservation.

ROCK ART TREASURES OF ANCIENT AMERICA (1983, 25 min., USA)

Dave Caldwell. Native Americans tell myths associated with rock art sites in Southern California.

KALUSCAP AND CREATION (1992, 12 min., USA)

Produced by the Indian Island School. Penobscot children of Maine use animation to tell traditional stories.

SKYWALKERS; IROQUOIS WOMEN: THE THREE SISTERS; and THE GREAT LAW OF THE IROQUOIS (1998, 34 min., USA)

Pat Ferrero. Produced by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Three videos about Iroquois life feature interviews with ironworkers, the important role of women in Iroquois culture, and the spiritual teaching of the Great Law of Peace.

Nov. 10 - Dec. 1

KNOW YOUR ROOTS (1995, 23 min., USA)

Joshua Homnick. In a lively video collage, Mescalero Apache youth share their thoughts on Apache history, language, and identity.

LETTER FROM AN APACHE (1983, 12 min., USA)

Barbara Wilk. An animated film tells the remarkable story of Carlos Montezuma, or Wassajah, who became one of the first American Indian medical doctors.

WE'LL STILL BE DANCING (1992, 3 min., USA)

Dan Jones (Ponca). Children of the Ponca tribe of Oklahoma practice their traditions. Shown with permission of Sesame Street.

TOTEM TALK (1997, 22 min., Canada.) Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux-Blackfoot-French)

Dec. 15 - Jan. 11

See An Animation Celebration

Jan. 12 - Feb. 16

ICEFISHING FOR SHEEFISH (1985, 13 min., USA)

Northwest Arctic School District. In Alaska, the Inupiat practice a special type of winter fishing.

THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL ESKIMO-INDIAN OLYMPICS (1986, 28 min., USA)

Skip Blumberg. The Alaskan event combines competitions in strength and agility and traditional skills.

THE OWL WHO MARRIED A GOOSE (1975, 8 min., Canada.)

Caroline Leaf. An Inuit tale tells of a marriage between two unmatched partners.

QUILLIG (1992, 12 min., USA)

Susan Avingag, Madeline Ivalu, Mathilda Hanniliqq, Martha Maktar, Marie-H. Cousineau. Inuit videomakers portray women singing a song about an old-fashioned seal oil lamp.



LOCATION: The NMAI Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green in lower Manhattan. Subway: 4 & 5 to Bowling Green or N & R to Whitehall Street. 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).

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. Rachahd Garguilo, Calendar Editor.

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"During this course we reached more than 400 people and I truly believe we raised their awareness about what is going on in Indian Country today. After learning more about the wonderful projects planned by the NMAI, I realized I wanted to do more than a yearly contribution. I spoke to my sons about dividing my estate between them and the NMAI. They were very excited about the idea, so the gift is from the three of us, not just me."

Thelma's gift will help ensure that the programs and collections of the National Museum of the American Indian will be available for future generations. We are indeed grateful for her generosity and foresight. Find out how you can join Thelma and her family by including the NMAI in your estate plans. Fill out the reply form on this page, or call 800-242-NMAI (6624) to request that planned giving information be mailed to you.

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Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian



Did the Incas Build the First Computer?

This khipu, one of 22 khipus in the National Museum of the American Indian collection, originates from Nasca, Peru.

By Jamie Hill

Did the Incas beat us to using computers? It may seem unlikely that computers had a working predecessor in ancient America. But a unique Incan system for recording information may be a computer system that preceded modern mathematics and electronic circuitry.

The Incas achieved much in building an empire that stretched from northern Ecuador to as far south as present-day Santiago, Chile. But scholars believed they failed to achieve a written language, a basic prerequisite to being an advanced civilization. Contemporary research on the Incas has reopened the written language question. It is now theorized that an Incan string device was used to record information in their language, Quechua, and in fact functioned like a rudimentary computer.

When the Spaniards overwhelmed the Incas in the 16th century, they discovered that the Incas recorded information using three-dimensional structures of knotted strings made

from spun fibers with various colors, knots, shapes, and intertwinings. The Incas called these devices "khipus." Spanish history contains an account of Hernando Pizarro, the brother of Conquistador leader Francisco Pizarro, encountering khipu keepers when the Spaniards took supplies from Incan storehouses. The khipu keepers acted as Incan bookkeepers. As the Spanish removed supplies, the khipu keepers would untie some knots on one section of a khipu and tie knots on another section.

As the Conquistadores began their colonization of the Incan empire after 1532, they learned it was the khipu keepers whom they had to consult to find out how the Incan empire functioned and what its history was. According to Spanish chronicles, the khipu keepers supplied tremendous amounts of information detailing Incan history, economics, demographics, rituals, tributes, calendrical organization, and genealogies — as read from the khipus. Most khipus consist of colored fiber cords to which numerous pendant cords are attached in various knotted configurations.

Today there are only about 600 khipus in collections around the world for researchers to study. The National Museum of the American Indian has 22 khipus in its collection. Though the Spanish extensively recounted the use of the khipus by the Incas, it is unfortunate for present-day researchers that they did not seek to completely understand how the khipu system worked.

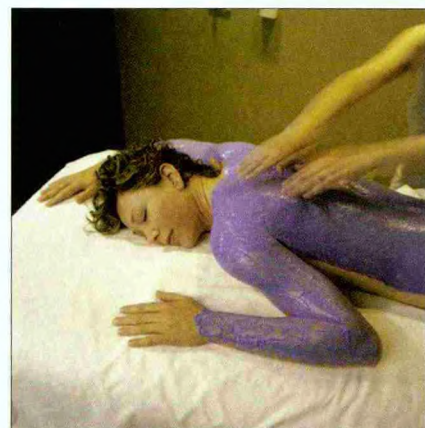
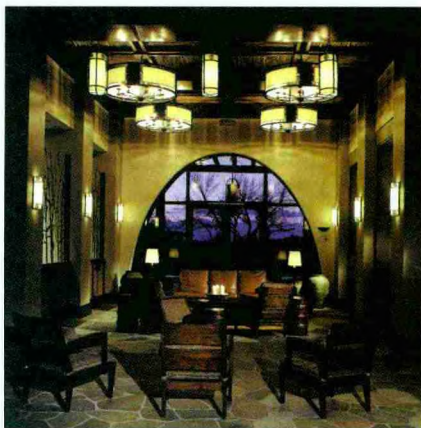
In contrast to other ancient writing systems, researchers have been unable to completely decipher khipus. Babylonian cuneiform, for instance, are one of the oldest known forms of writing. However, the modern world had no knowledge of cuneiform until Henry Rawlinson, an English army officer, found some cuneiform inscriptions on a Persian cliff in 1835. Believed to be carved sometime around 500 B.C., the cuneiforms consisted of identical texts in three languages. By 1851, Rawlinson was able to decipher 200 Babylonian cuneiform signs after translating the Persian signs. Our understanding of cuneiform came relatively quickly because Rawlinson had a type of Rosetta stone to work with.

The khipu Rosetta stone has yet to be discovered. In spite of that, much progress had been made to decode khipus. Science historian Leland Locke established in the 1920s that many khipus functioned as the Incan accounting system using the same ten-based decimal number system we use today. Recently, researchers Dr. Marcia Ascher and Dr. Robert Ascher have made compelling arguments that the Incas did use the khipu as a writing system.

The cutting edge of khipu theory is offered by Gary Urton, a Harvard University anthropologist, in his book *Signs of the Inca Khipu, Binary Coding in the Andean Knotted-String Records*. He believes that the khipus doubled as a decimal-based accounting system and as a versatile binary/symbolic device for managing language-type information to record stories, names, and events. Those two functions are essentially what computers do for us today.

Urton works with mathematician Dr. Carrie Brezine to develop a khipu database at Harvard. They believe information is contained in the khipus according to knot types, knot positions, cord twist directions, fiber colors, and other qualities. They hope the database will help them identify khipu patterns and meanings that so far remain hidden. Maybe it takes a new computer to understand a very old one. ■

Jamie Hill (Mohawk) freelances as a writer from his home on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario.



Desert Sanctuary

By Russ Tall Chief

Dust devils can often be seen swirling through Wild Horse Pass, a strip of the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona that splits two mountain ranges – the Estrella and South Mountains. But at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort, which opened a year ago south of Phoenix in the Gila River Indian Community, visitors may not realize that what often appears to be a dust devil on the horizon is actually a herd of galloping wild horses, the descendants of horses left by Cortes in 1520. The wild horses' ancestors carried Pima and Maricopa warriors in battles against the Apache and Yuma and helped farm the vastly irrigated Gila River region, now a reservation spanning 372,000 acres.

The resort's 500 rooms split into two wings: one showcases Pima basketry designs; the other celebrates Maricopa pottery designs. Hallway light fixtures resemble devil's claw root, a traditional material woven into Pima baskets. Maricopa pottery designs are etched into the glass doors. The appreciation of Pima and Maricopa presence throughout the resort pays homage to the historic merging of the two peoples in the late 18th century.

The Pima, or Akimel O'otham, trace their roots in the Gila River Valley to the ancient *Huhugam*, meaning "those who have gone," dating back to around 300 B.C., explains Sara Bird-in-Ground (Pima/Crow/Seneca), the



Facing page, clockwise from top: The Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa sits on 1,600 acres of the Gila River Indian Reservation just minutes from Phoenix, Ariz. and features a spa, an equestrian center, and 36 holes of golf. The Blue Coyote Wrap, a signature treatment at the Aji Spa, is based on a Pima tribal legend of the Bluebird and Coyote. Envious of Bluebird's beautiful color, Coyote turns his own coat blue. He ultimately sheds the blue and returns to his true color but more beautiful than before. Visitors can spot wild horses that roam the surrounding desert lands in specially designed rooms with views of the golf course, the Estrella Mountains, or the Gila River. The Estrella Mountains can be seen from the interior of the luxurious Aji Spa. This page, clockwise from top: Horseback riders enjoy stories told by Pima cowboys. The Aji Spa takes its name and inspiration from the safe haven used by women and children of the Pima and Maricopa tribes during times of battle. The sanctuary of Aji offered a place from which one could see great distances with clarity. Sandy Garcia (San Juan Pueblo), the chef de cuisine, prepares frybread at the resort's award-winning restaurant Kai.

Cultural Baggage?



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Located just down the road from the resort is the Huhugam Heritage Center, which is expected to open in early 2004. The center will be a place to tell the stories of the Pima and Maricopa people through exhibitions of cultural materials, performances, and educational programs.

resort's cultural theme manager. After the Maricopa, or Pee Posh people, migrated from the southern Colorado River area, the two agricultural tribes developed canals to irrigate the Gila Basin for crops like corn, beans, squash, tobacco, and cotton. Prickly pear pads, cactus fruit, and cholla cactus buds supplemented their lean diet.

In the resort's two restaurants, Chef Sandy Garcia (San Juan Pueblo) blends the traditional ingredients with classical training and techniques. Garcia's menus are inspired by cooking traditions of the region, as well as Spanish cuisine and foods imported from other tribes, like salmon, lobster, shrimp, and buffalo.

Ko'sin, which is Pima for "kitchen," offers casual dining with breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus, with a wine list as diverse as the menu. Upstairs from Ko'sin, the upscale Kai (meaning "seed" in the Pima language) restaurant features locally farmed ingredients on its dinner menu. Community members, including local schoolchildren, farm more than 35,000 acres on the reservation. The tribally owned Gila River Farms grows foods not only for the restaurants but also for export.

Located just down the road from the resort is the Huhugam Heritage Center, which is expected to open in early 2004. The center will be a place to tell the stories of the Pima and Maricopa people through exhibitions of cultural materials, performances, and educational programs. "The architectural design by StastnyBrun (an architectural firm based in Portland, Ore.) resembles the layout of the nearby ruins at Casa Grande, where our people once lived," says Jennifer Johnson (Pima), a museum technician at the center.

A short distance from the cultural center is the resort's equestrian center. Leisurely horseback rides are complemented by stories told by Pima cowboys. A massage at the resort's spa, Aji, is a relaxing treat after an hour-and-a-half of balancing on horseback.

Aji – "sanctuary" in both the Pima and Maricopa languages – is located adjacent to the hotel. Therapists, some of whom are tribal members, offer numerous spa treatments, such as the Blue Coyote Wrap, the spa's signature treatment. Inspired by the Pima tale of the Bluebird and Coyote, this 80-minute treatment begins with a dry-brush exfoliation followed by an application of azulene, a blue mud that helps nourish and heal the skin. The blue mud applied to the body recalls a story in which Coyote turned his coat blue like the Bluebird; rinsing off the mud symbolizes Coyote's return to his natural state. After the mud bath, a full-body massage with hydrating cedar-sage oil may be completed with a trip to the whirlpool, sauna, or steam room, followed by a visit to the gift shop and juice bar. Guests can also hit 36 holes on the new golf course or take a boat ride up the Gila River to the casino.

A diamond in the desert, the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort is located only 11 miles south of the Phoenix Airport on Highway 10. ■

Russ Tall Chief (Osage) is a freelance writer based in Toronto, Ont.



Photo by Ray Kaduk

Tribal Airlines Take to the Skies

By Russ Tall Chief

“You can only get here by boat, snowmobile, or plane,” Jason Berthe (Inuit) says as he stands behind the ticket counter in the Kuujuaq airport, located just off the southern tip of Ungava Bay in Nunavik, Canada. “When we started in 1983, there was one flight per day that went to Montreal,” Berthe continues. “Now we do about three to four, and sometimes more flights per day to various destinations.”

The airport crew at Kuujuaq, numbering around 20, services Inuit-owned airline companies First Air and Air Inuit, among others, which have taken to the air in recent decades linking northern Canadian communities to each other and to urban hubs. Other tribally owned airlines, such as Cree-owned Air Creebec, and Wasaya Airways, which is owned by eight Ojibwe communities in Northern Ontario, are also contributing to this growing multi-million dollar tribal airline industry in Canada. The tribally owned airline industry continues to grow because many tribal airlines offer what others don't: flights into remote “fly-in” Aboriginal communities, such as Ivujivik, which Air Inuit services at the northernmost tip of Nunavik, nearly 1,500 miles north of Montreal. Another Inuit-owned airline, Canadian North, also services Nunavut to the north, and the western Arctic, among other areas.

Lucie Idlout (Inuk), a Toronto-based singer who hosts *Buffalo Tracks*, a talk show that airs on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, frequently flies First Air and Canadian North to her home in Nunavut. “With all of the competition in the industry now, the cost of travel has become a lot more reasonable,” Idlout says.

The airlines are part of major economic development initiatives in the north that have gained momentum in recent years as land rights are settled in the region. Shortly after the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, the Inuit established the Makivik Corporation, a nonprofit Inuit-owned company based in Kuujuaq, to coordinate Inuit industries such as the airline companies. In the early days of the airlines, dispatchers or pilots often radioed ahead to alert the community, which then illuminated improvised landing strips with the headlights of their ATVs or snowmobiles. Community members helped load and unload the planes. Ticket sales often took place over the kitchen table at the agent's home. Now tickets are purchased over the counter or by telephone from employees like Berthe.

“You see a lot more people traveling in and out of Kuujuaq,” Berthe says. “We're going to have to build a new building soon.” Airports are growing because the industry is expanding, led by airline giants like First Air, Canada's largest Arctic airline.

“Inuit are not the only people flying our air-

lines,” Idlout says. “Government employees and other people visiting for business or tourism are flying into our communities. People don't know much about the north, but that's changing because it is easier to get into the communities.”

The demand for pilots and ground crews is being met in part by the First Nations Technical Institute, based in the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, near Deseronto, Ont. In the three-year aviation program, students take flight training at the Tyendinaga Mohawk Airport. “When students leave the program, they are fully qualified to work for any commercial airline,” says Matt Sager (Mohawk), a student services officer. In addition to working for a major airline, students may work their way up from ground crew to pilot positions in smaller airline companies throughout Canada, such as tribally owned airlines Niigaani Air and Air Wemindji. Nevertheless, First Nations aviation program graduates can go to work for any commercial airlines. “The industry is so regulated that there is no difference between Aboriginal and mainstream airlines,” Sager says.

Idlout notes that Inuit-owned airlines do offer a northern option in their food service. The airlines have been known to serve Arctic char or caribou, she says. ■

Russ Tall Chief (Osage) is a freelance journalist who lives in Toronto, Ont.



Choose Them Carefully

From songs, jokes, stories, or just simple conversation – words can prove to be the most enduring artifacts of our experience

By Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm

Words. From the nothing comes the glimmer of a thought. Then, like that first sound of the rattle in the darkness, this stirring takes form and grows louder. It forms into language and is given life through breath or the writing of words on a page. I imagine thought as a deep universe and words and language as bright stars, incredible constellations, enigmatic planets, whirling solar systems. As an Anishnaabe woman and writer, I respect and honor words.

When I was a child I would sit silently trying to unravel the mysteries around me. Maybe it was a cultural thing. Anishnaabek love to tease and tell stories, yet we tend to be careful with our words. Words spoken, even foolishly or in anger, echo forever. It might have been my vague awareness of that – but it was also stubbornness, partly. And fear, mostly. I was shy. That child is still within. She remembers my mother's silences, my father's outbursts. As in many families, there were things not talked about.

There were kind words in our house too. Sweet words. Passionate words. We are descended on my Anishnaabe grandmother's side from Kagedonce, a name, meaning Orator, given to my great-great-grandfather. My

grandmother, Irene Akiwenzie, was a respected writer and speaker. My grandfather, Joseph V. Akiwenzie, was a man of few words, a gentle man who exuded quiet power. My Polish Canadian grandmother, Anna Damm, loved to tell funny stories and debate current issues. Throughout my childhood, songs, jokes, stories, and anecdotes filled my world. They too have formed me. Although the silences and anger resonated, those loving words sustained me.

And so the child who was so shy, so afraid, "the quiet one," has become a writer, publisher, and spoken word artist. Yet I wonder what compels someone to be a writer, speaker, or storyteller?

So often I've tried to find the right words to bring into reality the unknown treasures of my heart. I've sought reassurances that a wrong word or deed wouldn't come between friends or lovers, like a stream that grows and spreads before overflowing its banks and flooding the world around it. Too often I've failed to find healing words or have grown silent with the struggle. But perhaps it is the Kagedonce blood that compels me to keep trying. And slowly I've also grown to accept my periods of muteness. I fall into a womb of quietness. In that silence I have vivid dreams. I hear sounds I otherwise don't hear, see what I otherwise don't notice, find meaning beyond the limits of language. I

allow myself to listen and observe, not out of fear, as when I was a child, but out of necessity. Because the feelings, the knowing, have not yet formed into a shape that language can convey. I rediscover the power of words.

Words may fail me or I may fail them, but I change, adjust, start again. Through it all I hold safe a word for the man I loved and let go, keep it in a sacred place, greet the day in prayer, take another breath. Smile at the thought of this crazy world we share.

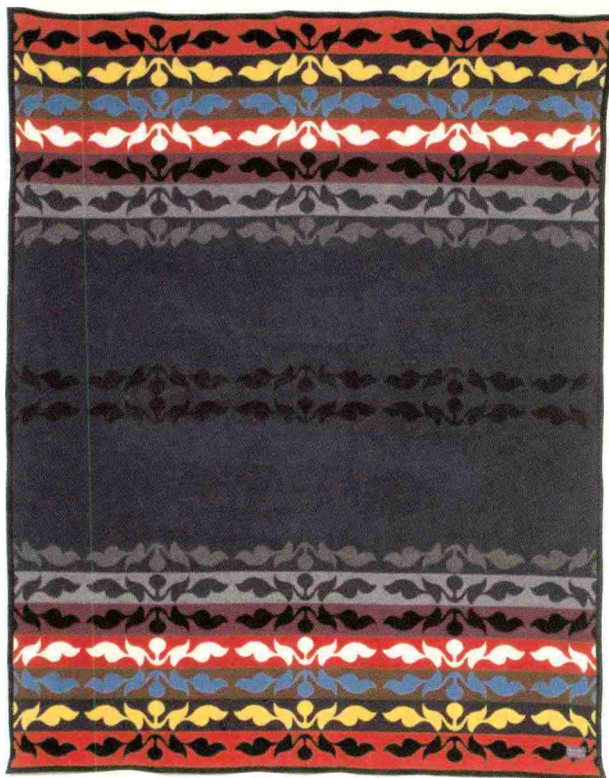
I know now that words once spoken cannot be retrieved, that words place tremendous responsibility on those who use them. I know that words have the potential to harm and to heal. I know that a single word can change a life forever.

Word after word, I learn. Take a breath. Honor what I do not understand. Yet. Take a breath and keep going.

Knowing all of this I continue to try to reach across the universe to find the right words.

And the only reason that makes sense of any of this is love. ■

Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm is a writer, spoken word artist, publisher, communications consultant, and Indigenous arts activist from the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation in Neyaashinigmiing, Cape Croker, Ontario.



Sauninga

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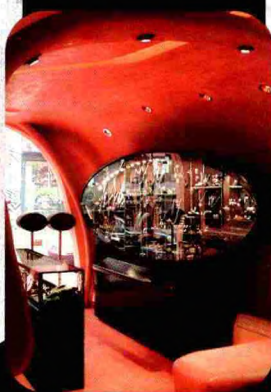


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