NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE PUBLIC

A HUMAN VALUES PERSPECTIVE

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Friends Committee on National Legislation

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Includes a Conference Report on the "Hear Our Story" Media Symposium

Foreword by Wilma Mankiller

This paper addresses the matter of public perception of Native Americans, one of the most important challenges facing Native people in the early 21st century.

Most Americans know very little about the governments of indigenous people and even less about our diverse cultures, values, and life ways. When complex taxation, water and fishing rights, and land claims issues are chronicled in the press or debated in the Congress, they bewilder many Americans who have no historical context for these issues.

This report, and the conference that preceded it, is an effort to encourage the development of a measured, strategic national media campaign to educate the public about Native people. Native leaders are beginning to place public perception and media relations much higher on their agenda. The media should make an effort to place more Native Americans in newsrooms, learn more about Native American history as well as contemporary issues and the editorial boards should meet with tribal leaders in their respective areas. The only time Native Americans appear in the major media is when a controversy arises. There are almost no human interest stories or profiles of Native Americans. The Freedom Forum's Diversity Institute is one of the few news organizations that has made a long-term commitment to recruiting, training and placing Native American journalists.

During the past decade a number of misleading and negative media reports about tribal governments, especially those involved in gaming, has caused a perceptible shift in the overall national perception of Native people. This report challenges readers to consider the fact that there is a direct link between public perception and public policy and that if negative perception gains momentum, it has the potential to be as much of a threat as anti-sovereignty legislation or a negative judicial decision.

Non-governmental organizations and individuals can partner with tribal governments and organizations to help educate the general public about Native American people and their issues. This report is the result of a collaboration between Native and non-Native people.

In l963, President John F. Kennedy said, "For a subject worked and reworked so often in novels, motion pictures, and television, American Indians are the least understood and the most misunderstood of us all." Regrettably, this statement is as true today as it was more than forty years ago. To change this situation, we have to tell our own stories: stories about our history, plans for the future, remarkable indigenous leadership and innovation, about the enterprises, hospitals, schools and health clinics we operate, the expansion of tribal colleges, language immersion programs and much, much more.

This report is a call for Native people to take charge of their own image, just as they have retained control over their lands and resources and to frame their own issues. It is critical that tribal people themselves frame the way information is presented about the issues important to them. If they don't, their opponents most certainly will. It is also a call for non-Native people or leaders in civil society organizations to learn as much as they can about the history and partner with tribal people to help eliminate negative stereotypes about Native Americans and educate the public about the complex issues facing Native people today. It is a call to Congress to understand and uphold the treaty rights and long-standing legal basis for the government to government relationship between tribal governments and the U.S. It is also a call to understand the enormous contributions of indigenous people to the United States throughout history as well as their current contributions to virtually every aspect of society.

The history, contemporary lives and future of Native America are intertwined with that of surrounding communities. Tribal governments and organizations do not conduct their lives and work in a vacuum. Tribal governments collectively contribute billions to the economy and employ thousands of people. There are hundreds of partnerships, cooperative agreements and coalitions between tribal communities and governmental and non-governmental organizations on issues ranging from health care to law enforcement. When tribal governments build roads, water systems, develop business enterprises or provide an array of family services, it benefits everyone in the community, not just tribal members.

Wilma Mankiller, former principal chief of the Cherokees
author of *Everyday is a Good Day: Reflections of Contemporary Indigenous Women*

Aloha

The theme of this conference, "Hear Our Story," encompasses not only the fact that stories of our Native brothers and sisters have not been told, but that, in fast-paced work environments, popular culture and the media pick and choose which stories to tell. This, in turn, leads to misinterpretations and misunderstandings about Native America. A perfect example of this occurred this past summer during the consideration of S. 147, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act. I was disheartened to hear some of my colleagues discuss Native Hawaiian history in the manner they did – with complete disregard for the actual history as if it never happened. This is why it is important to tell your stories. I encourage all of you to take the time and learn and grow from these stories.

In the modern world in which we live, technology and media play key roles in our lives. There have been many instances when Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have been misrepresented in the media. This mostly happens due to a lack of understanding, and the fact that Natives only represent a small portion of the population. This could have the potential to have detrimental effects not only on tribes or Native peoples, but also on those whose opinions are formulated based upon these stories.

Now is the time to bridge the gap between the world of communications and Native America. I wish you all the best as we continue to work toward a better future for all Native peoples.

Senator Daniel K. Inouye
Vice-chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

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Attendees of all races and ages participated in the "Hear Our Story" event. They had different levels of familiarity with Native culture and concerns, and were at different points on a learning curve. In this section, some of the non-Natives in attendance share their reactions in a range from heartfelt to analytical to the many stories they heard.

Acknowledgements

The inspiration for the media project and symposium "Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" came from Wilma Mankiller, Senator Daniel Inouye, and former Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, all of whom have emphasized the role of the media in public policy as it affects indigenous people in the United States. We were pleased that Ken Burns and Buffy Sainte-Marie endorsed the symposium to give it visibility and credibility. We thank the 23 organizations that came together to co-sponsor the symposium. Their desire for change and belief in the mission was a catalyst for organizing "Hear Our Story." Their work at the national level continues to be starkly under-funded and yet splendid. We thank the diverse array of American Indian speakers, moderators, and workshop leaders, and their non-Native counterparts who spoke at the symposium. Public conceptions stand in contrast to the personal experience, accounts, and anecdotes they shared at the symposium. And we appreciate those who came to hear (and share) histories, stories, and strategies.

The symposium was launched and coordinated by Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker organization headed by Joe Volk, who encouraged the media project out of his strong convictions about social and economic justice. Almost the entire staff of FCNL assisted at some point before, during, or after the event. FCNL's communications director Jim Cason worked closely with representatives of the mainstream media. Portia Wenze-Danley handled logistics. The key player was Adam Klepper, Legislative Assistant for FCNL's Native American Advocacy Program. He was the liaison to the participants, helped with every aspect of the program, and wrote several portions of this paper. Event assistant Carolyn Finegar did many behind-the-scenes activities and communicated with the speakers. Also contributing greatly to the success of the event was volunteer Tom Harvey, who assisted every weekend for five months. While the number of Quaker advisors and volunteers is too numerous to list, we thank them heartily.

José Barreiro of the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative, Kim Baca of the Native American Journalists Association, and Kristy Alberty of the National Indian Child Welfare Association helped FCNL plan the event and the program. Jason McCarty, Jackie Johnson, and Adam McMullin of the National Congress of American Indians and Aura Kanegis provided helpful consultation. Gail Gallik arranged the appearance of Governor Brian Schweitzer, Jean Cooper the appearance of Representative Tom Cole, Matthew Felling the appearance of Dr. Robert Lichter, and Janet Erickson the planned appearance of Senator Daniel Inouye whose wife died that week.

The financial assistance of a number of Quaker and other foundations and funds made the media project possible. The symposium funders were: AMB Foundation, Chace Fund of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Indian Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, William and Mary Shoemaker Fund, Lindley Murray Fund of New York Yearly Meeting, Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund, and H.C. Gemmer Christian Family Foundation. Two foundations contributed to the preparation of this paper and conference report-- the Sara Bowers Fund and the Lindley Murray Fund. Mark Jacobson and Andrew Peterson of FCNL raised the money.

Jay Mallin and Rick Reinhardt took all the photographs with the exception of the first picture of Native Pride and canoes, which was taken by Frances Mallone of Washington State. Symposium scribe Sara Lee typed notes throughout the symposium and wrote many of the summaries presented in part two; she made sure the report was complete and completed. The paper also benefited from review and professional editing by Alison Owings, a workshop presenter at the symposium. Errors or omissions are the responsibility of FCNL's Native American program.

INTRODUCTION

"Non-Indian people have very little accurate information about Native American anything, and Native Americans suffer from being misperceived all our lives because of this lack of information. Our history is still fictionalized then exploited, and our contemporary realities are mostly absent from schools and the public eye. It is no wonder Indian people have a hole where our self esteem ought to be. (Buffy Sainte-Marie, singer, educator)

This paper celebrates contemporary Native Americans and the stories they wish to tell. Many in anthropology and folklore have sought out tribal storytellers and pushed to record traditional tales, but many stories go unheard. The paper focuses on communication issues today and includes remarks from leaders who seek to bring representative voices into policy, news, and entertainment, and seek a forum to detail today's accomplishments in Indian Country.

Many say a renaissance is taking place in Indian Country. Thanks to the efforts of Native activists and their grassroots organizations, economic and political progress is being made, but the "how" and "why" are largely unknown or misinterpreted. Furthermore, a subtle hostility towards tribes, particularly by pundits and opinionists, has affected lobbying on Capitol Hill. That is precisely why 23 national organizations created a forum called "Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans. It brought together several hundred people - Natives and non-Natives - in Washington, DC on March 2nd and 3rd, 2006.

One objective was to seek common ground among all participants, and among those the participants represented. Another objective was to let people know about important federal legislation - already passed or in the works- affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians that are not on "Page One" of news publications.

A special objective was to gain a better understanding about how non-Indigenous people receive information about indigenous Americans and how this process shapes the consequent perceptions of Indian Country, its tribal governments, and its people. A last objective was to encourage tribes to engage more with Native journalists and with non-Native community or national media and to allow their representatives to cross into sovereign tribal territories.

Participants included religious leaders, opinion makers, members of the Native media, members of the major media, experts and novices on Native rights and sovereignty, individuals who have dedicated their lives to improving the lives of Native peoples, and a handful who had never before had the opportunity to meet a Native person. Citizens of 49 Native Nations participated in the forum.

To tell "the story" and to discuss communications methodologies, 59 outstanding Native and non-Native speakers, moderators, and workshop facilitators, including professionals from mainstream and independent media and communication centers, gave their time to create an exceptional learning experience. In response, numerous non-Natives stated that this was the most impressive array of talent they have experienced at any conference.

In terms of dedication to, and knowledge of, Native affairs, participants of "Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" represented a rough inverse of

United States society. Most attendees were Native or non-Natives who are deeply involved and committed to Native rights and advocacy. A small number of attendees participated in the symposium to learn, for the first time, about this country's indigenous people, about diversity within Indian Country and about the concerns, struggles, accomplishments, and perspectives of Native peoples. And learn they did.

The symposium was scheduled to follow the winter session of the National Congress of American Indians that met in Washington, DC. The timing was right. It allowed more people from around the country to participate. Unlike the usual Native American conference, the "Hear Our Story" symposium was open to the public. It also deliberately involved a mix of people on panels who had similar experiences or who could open doors in the worlds of news and entertainment for each other in the future. Non-Native presenters included those who through films or politics or grass roots advocacy have represented Jewish, Puerto Rican, African American, and other groups often pushed aside. Natural allies found each other.

New Era, Old Challenges

Native Americans are no longer the "vanishing race," although they represent only about one percent of the United States population. The advent of hefty gambling revenues accrued by *some* tribes has ensured that Native Americans are more present in the public's consciousness. Specialized publications are also paying more attention. For example, The Hill newspaper carries regular stories--based on input from major players and Washington insiders--about top lobbyists in a particular area, and recently listed the most effective individuals and firms specializing in Indian Affairs. Roll Call ran a column by a top Native leader. Also, an array of Native managed magazines, newspapers, and websites focuses on Native populations.

Lamentably, however, getting to "good news" in the commercial media is an uphill battle. Too few stories beckon the rest of us into the world of contemporary Native Americans. The stereotype of "rich casino Indians" seems to predominate in some minds. Furthermore, there is a basic lack of interpretation and context about the background of the casinos, including how resilient and flexible people are using gaming to do such things as raise their employment rate.

Here is a contrasting economic story. In 2001, both the Fitch international rating agency and Standard and Poors gave the Southern Ute Native Nation an AAA credit rating. Not only is that the highest rating, it meant the tribe had a rating equal to England and the U.S. and higher than some close U.S. allies. The Ute tribe used a growth fund to increase its worth, made energy investments by acquiring Red Willow Production and WestGas, reached a settlement with Amoco, and diversified into many businesses. Gaming is a tiny part of their income stream. The Wall Street Journal did publish an article on this tribe. Economic development has been covered by a number of publications such as the Christian Science Monitor, especially after Harvard published a study using census data. Thus, mainstream reporters can and do write informative, balanced articles when editors give them the green light.

The near ignorance by many non-Natives does not serve tribes well today. Community people, including those somewhat sympathetic to tribes, are expressing prejudice fostered by fear that casinos will be built in their towns or counties. (Vigorous opposition to a new casino can be appropriate; tirades about "Indian incursions" are not.) Tribes were also forcibly brought to the attention of Congress and the public when the power-wielding fundraiser and lobbyist Jack

Abramoff decided to capitalize on his contacts in the Bush administration. His adroitness in "ripping off" enormous sums of money from six tribes he represented, while giving money to his own organizations and attempting to bribe members of Congress, created a national uproar.

The lack of regular news from Indian Country is problematic. Despite the renewed, albeit distorted attention to tribal governments, continuing crises in Indian Country are still "quiet." They remain un-addressed by our political leaders and those who set the issue agenda and are absent from the consciousness of the general public. There are too many examples. Sacred sites continue to be ruined – some by ranchers, some by industry, and some by mountain climbers, among others. As many as 537,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives are below the poverty line--a manageable number to assist, if only they were not ignored. Unemployment and alcoholism are at terrible levels on some reservations. So is spousal abuse. Monies owed Natives by the federal government would help address some problems, but although some ethical lapses by the Department of Interior and abrogation of other trust responsibilities receive coverage, the billions of dollars owed to some 500,000 Individual Indian Money account holders are not mentioned in those stories about the agency.

The symposium also made clear that tribal sovereignty, the cornerstone of Native existence, is threatened by a lack of information among the general American population. The "average person," if such a species exists, is simply, but dangerously, ignorant about tribal sovereignty, and is vulnerable to another threat, the one that comes from a combination of anti-Indian racists, anti-sovereignty foes, business competitors, immoderate anti-gaming advocates, and right-wing zealots, some of whom are organized, visible, and hence influential in some regions of the country. It became clear that the only way the powerful foes of sovereignty can be decreased is through education of the public. That education includes changing the existing public paradigm about Natives, the one that has been shaped by mainstream media.

The problem is, mainstream media and producers of popular culture are predominantly members of the majority, who too often propagate misinformation, skewed perspectives, and inappropriate depictions of Native peoples that then become internalized by others. If a fact does not fit conventional wisdom, it is ignored. This is why, for example, many Americans believe the Native Americans live solely in the west, possibly in tipis. East coast tribes are seldom on the popular radar, unless, of course, Pochohantas returns in one manifestation or another, and her tribal descendants get a few minutes of microphone time. Such criticism is not universal. Many newspapers such as the Billings Gazette provide regular and useful coverage

There was one big blip on the popular screen; the new Museum of the American Indian on the mall in Washington, DC brought a year or two of positive attention to Native Americans. Then media interest in indigenous peoples faded. How can we who care about Native Americans keep the positive attention going? We in the religious community, among other allies, want to build on previous communications efforts to make sure every voice is heard and to bring diversity and multiple perspectives to the airways, magazines, and elsewhere. But how can we? How can Natives and non-Natives alike change the media's, the entertainment industry's, and the public's perception of "casino Indians" or "selfish Indians" to "sovereign Indians"? How can we focus our nation's attention and resources on the problems remaining in Indian Country? How can we ratchet up public recognition about the great successes, hard work, and generations of sacrifice within Native communities? How can we renew societal interest in the greater good

and unity with the First Americans? How can we bring out the best in the body politic? How can the media of the larger society coordinate with emerging ethnic communication outlets and tribal publications and programs to contribute to progress and solutions? These were some of the questions asked and debated during "Hear Our Story."

To address these questions, many speakers and participants offered strategies and helpful advice from years and decades of experience working towards common goals. Native experts in particular shared information about the gamut of communication vehicles now available. Certainly, it would be unfair to make the major media the "whipping boy." Casual prejudice exists among too many in our society to blame the media for every ill. The consensus at the symposium was that mainstream media, despite its faults of simplification, can be used positively. Reporters whose beat is civil rights or race are already responsive; the challenge is engaging reporters who work on other topics that affect Native Americans along with the rest of society. We learned that a growing number of managers in commercial media are exploring proposals initiated by disparate indigenous people in this country. Simply learning about successes in this direction made it worthwhile to attend the symposium.

Plans by different organizations, tribes, groups, and individuals vary in methods and objectives, but the symposium encapsulated two major themes for moving forward. First, the combined strength of Natives and non-Natives working together towards a shared dream, based on a morally grounded perspective, is a powerful building block. Second, the goals of the symposium are attainable, in part because the work to achieve those goals was started long ago.

As they have worked to create a stronger Native voice in the United States, the symposium's excellent and dedicated speakers and participants have gained much collective experience, and stories of success. All this they carried to the symposium to share. Participants were excited to learn what Native peoples are undertaking in terms of new projects and the application of new technologies to those projects, and the sizeable number of talented Native Americans who are seeking to fill information and entertainment gaps. The narratives and reports and updates have the effect of bringing more and more people into the communications circle. As more people gain a multi-dimensional and realistic understanding of Indian Country, its governments, and its people, we cannot help but feel we will be stronger moving forward. Good stories inspire others, and thus multiply.

A cross-section of faith-based organizations supported the symposium. Friends Committee on National Legislation, the coordinator, uses the phrase "*Honor the Promises*." Those words capture the intention of many organizations in attendance. Nevertheless, religious groups are keenly aware of ways they have been hurtful to tribes in the past, such as running boarding schools, and ways that non-Natives can become patronizing or controlling. Although seeking to promote the values of dignity and justice, we must watch becoming sanctimonious with journalists and with others who are uninvolved with Indian Country. Co-sponsoring the event is a bare beginning.

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This report focuses on communications, particularly the media. Because our intent has been to examine the current situation of an uncomprehending public and to look for ways to

make it more comprehending, the report looks at problems as well as solutions. Although documentation of problems can create a negative tone, the people who designed the symposium did not start with the idea that most Americans harbor hostile feelings toward Native Americans; indeed the assumptions were that there is much good will to be drawn upon. The media was not viewed as monolithic. Influential journalists were often viewed as potential saviors because they can act as an antidote to societal prejudice. Thus, change is feasible. Indigenous people and non-indigenous people can coalesce around an agenda of education, respect, dignity, and fair play.

Not everyone at the symposium agreed with such an upbeat view. On the subject of the ability to influence the media, to use independent and alternative communication outlets, and to bring about change, Native journalists and entertainment professionals expressed more optimism than did professionals who work on policy issues. Indeed, research reveals there are dozens and dozens of neutral or positive stories about Native Americans in major newspapers, but also a startling number of hostile pieces that appear in op-eds and syndicated columns. However, our expectations are in line with the ideals and philosophy of most professionals who work in the communications field. The Public Journalism Network makes these declarations among others:

"We believe journalism and democracy work best when news, information and ideas flow freely; when news fairly portrays the full range and variety of life and culture of all communities; when public deliberation is encouraged and amplified; and when news helps people function as political actors and not just as political consumers.

We believe the diversity and fragmentation of society call for new techniques for storytelling and information-sharing to help individual communities define themselves singularly and as part of the whole set of communities.

We believe the stories and images journalists produce can help or hinder as people struggle to reach sound judgments about their personal lives and their common well-being.

We believe the best journalism helps people see the world as a whole and helps them take responsibility for what they see."

* * * * * *

There are three parts to our paper. Part one provides overviews about how communications and media "work" and the latest thinking about media influence. It contains examples of what Native American leaders and journalists have observed, described, and analyzed in the past decade, that is, a framework of both accurate and culturally insensitive coverage. This section also includes events and news stories that happened before and after the March 2006 symposium.

Part two contains symposium highlights as recorded by note takers and on videotape. Native American speakers had much to say. To explore shared interests, each plenary session and workshop had non-Native speakers as well. The content of some of the individual workshops or breakout sessions is included. Readers will appreciate hearing from diverse people-- in formal and informal ways such as question and answer sessions. While it is hard to convey the reverence of invocations and the warmth of greetings in ancestral languages, the comments and insights of Indian leaders are down-to-earth**.** Because so few of us have the opportunity to hear directly from Native Americans, this section will be of particular interest.

Part three contains reactions from some attendees, plus lists of speakers and participants, and other supplementary symposium materials.

We are sharing more than a record of a symposium, which most readers will not have attended. Instead, this paper acts as a primer. It offers ideas that readers can use to enhance their knowledge about how to take informed action and partner with Native Americans. We provide a framework of why communications, especially mass communications, are so important and provide highlights from the symposium. We try to capture stories and narratives: historical, societal, communal, cultural, allegorical, and personal. Speakers at the symposium discussed, illustrated, or exemplified, every single type.

To make the standard disclaimer: the successes of "Hear Our Story" as captured in this report are attributable to the co-sponsors, speakers, planners, and funders, while FCNL staffers who wrote the report take responsibility for the glitches. Many people, topics, and even customs are mentioned that will require additional study; this is not an encyclopedia or text of Indian Affairs. We hope people will be intrigued enough to want to learn more by exploring textbooks, articles, news stories, features, radio shows, internet websites, and documentaries. Most of all, we hope they learn from Native Americans themselves.

A word on quotes and epigraphs. Not every quote is attributed to a particular person; many are from conference speakers and participants, but others are from Native American communication experts and practitioners. In part two, all quotes come from the event. There are a number of extended paraphrases and summaries of the talks. Part three includes written reactions from some of the participants. We have included a number of photographs from the symposium. Speakers are identified.

The overall intention is to provide perspectives from the diverse group of people who are part of the Indian Country world. In order to capture current ideas from Native spokespersons, we have used insights and brief quotes from publications focusing on indigenous peoples in the United States. This is not an academic monograph, however. Seeking to reach a broad audience, we decided not to bog down the paper with all the attributions, footnotes, and bibliographies that are mandated in academic papers. The narrative part of this report explains assumptions driving the need for systematic reform and puts points made during the symposium into context.

Those who convened the symposium were of the belief that while all of us have difficulty shifting our viewpoints about another group, we nonetheless can, if we are aided by personal interaction and increased knowledge.

Patricia Powers, Director
Native American Advocacy Program
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Laughter and Lament
stories

DORREEN YELLOW BIRD (excerpts from June 10, 2006 column)
Reprinted with permission of Grand Forks Herald

I had at least a 10-minute hearty laugh Tuesday when a grandmother friend of mine from Spirit Lake told me about her grandson. The incident made me laugh out loud in my car. I stopped when I heard myself laughing and looked around - really. We are so programmed to laugh only when there's something to laugh at and when everyone knows there's something to laugh at.

Here's why her story made me laugh again the next day: Her grandson was born premature and has overcome some difficulties. I met him when he was only a few days old. I've seen this little guy progress until he is now a hulking toddler, probably because his mother dotes on, coaxes and loves him without end.

This toddler has a teacher who comes to their house each day to help him. The teacher always is cheerful, my friend says, and usually comes into the house and immediately asks "Well, what have we learned today?" So, the other day he gave her his pat answer, and she asked again, "Well, what ELSE have we learned?" He looked around, then back at the teacher, thought for a minute and then said, "To poop."

Maybe that's only funny to grandmothers with strange senses of humor, but she and I had a good laugh. I've always had a strong sense of humor that unfortunately has weakened with age; I guess I am more aware of what is socially acceptable. When I was a youngster and lived with my eight sisters, four brothers and cousins, we would get together and have what I'd call rolling laughter. This meant the "funny" started with one and was picked up by the next and the next until we were all howling and holding our stomachs.

In Indian country, there is that same kind of group gathering where a "funny" starts and then grows and grows until you're laughing so hard you can't breathe. Of course, as you get older, not being able to breathe puts a damper on the laughing.

I know some of the things are funny because of the culture. I remember my ex-husband, who is fluent in Hidatsa, telling a story about a horseback rider who roped a deer. I couldn't see any humor in it, though I laughed at their laughter. He told me afterwards that the language is so descriptive that it paints a picture that couldn't really be explained in English, and that picture is really funny.

I talk about laughter in our lives because my friend's grandson helped me remember how marvelous laughing can be and not to take myself too seriously. It reminded me to laugh long and loud as often as possible.

DAVE RANNEY (LJ World, Haskell News, June 20, 2006)

Global warming is squeezing the life out of Oscar Karalee's culture. "It is scary," he said. "Cold is what makes my language, my culture, my identity. What am I going to do without cold?"

Savagely, 71, grew up in Bethel, Alaska, an Inupiaq village where, he said, "as a boy, we depended on seal for meat, for seal oil and for clothing." Nowadays, he said, seals are scarce.

"They are getting harder and harder to find because the ice is getting farther and farther out, and it's not as thick," Kawagley said. "Seals have to have ice for their pups - so do walrus - but it is disappearing."

Kawagley spoke Monday at "Impact of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples," a three-day symposium at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Some personal accounts are universal and speak broadly to the human condition.

Revelation. Fear. Courage. Pain. Chemo. Recovery. Sharing.

Native journalist Kara Briggs has written a series of articles chronicling her extended battle with breast cancer to encourage women to have regular mammograms, to attain more resources and utilization of health tests, and to critique the way doctors deal with Native American women. She suggests [poetically] that "cancer cells are those which have lost their story." This intriguing comment suggests the myriad of stories that can be told and the insights to be gained from them.

Facts unimaginable to those of us in urban areas.

A teacher in Alaska says milk costs over $9.00 in her village.

A son drives 90 miles-per-hour to save his father who had the misfortune to fall off his horse in a North Dakota area lacking health facilities.

A small town Navajo reservation resident travels 26 miles to reach the nearest post office.

A meals-on-wheels driver makes a 100 mile round trip Mon-Fri to reach a frail Indian elder

Life's Frustrations (excerpts from column commentary, September 26, 2006)

It was shocking to behold a gigantic caricature of a Native American face emblazoned on the middle of the field. By my estimation, the face and feather were 30 feet wide. The same awful caricature vibrated garishly on huge digital billboards at both ends of the stadium.

There were sporadic chants of "Let's go, Redskins, let's go Redskins."

Any doubt that I was standing at ground zero of Native American Hell was dispelled when I saw what must be the largest and most blatant public display of a racial epithet anywhere in the world — the word REDSKINS painted in massive block letters across both end zones.

To grasp Native Americans' outrage and humiliation, try to imagine the most hateful and disgusting racial or religious slur that could be used to describe you displayed in colorful, 25-foot letters throughout your community.

George Benge (Cherokee, Gannett news executive), Gannett News Service

Life's Difficulties

Straddling two cultures as the only Native American in his class, an urban Indian wears his hair in a long braid but buys brand-name basketball shoes to "fit in" although all he can afford are used shoes too small for him.

New to the city, a young woman is unaware that her boyfriend is bisexual until she is diagnosed with AIDS; too timid to seek services, she dies alone.

A man has to tolerate person after person calling or nicknaming him "Chief."

A family with a "weird" name such as Weasel Bear or Windy Bear is teased, while a family named Smith is scoffed at for not really being Indian.

"Nine out of 10 people think that, as a Native American woman, I'm supposed to look like that Land-O-Lakes butter girl or Disney's Pocahontas," says Charlotte Chi nana, a 22-year-old, New Mexico-based Native youth activist of Dineh and Jemez Pueblo blood

Different complexities of modern identity are captured in Sherman Alexi's urban mystery novel Indian Killer about a child adopted by a caring white family.

Life's Joys

(Yá 'á t'ééh) Hi, my name is KyLin Holcomb. I am a member of the Diné Tribe. I live in Bitburg, Germany with my family. My father is in the Air Force and is stationed here. I attend Bitburg Middle school. I have four brothers and hope to one day have a sister. I am in band and play the flute. I also am in gymnastics and basketball. Living in another country is interesting and at times I miss my grandparents back home on the rez. My hobbies are reading, drawing, horseback riding, and playing volley ball. After I finish high school I plan to go college and become a Pediatrician. My message to Native Youth: Be proud of who you are and make your elders proud of you!

11-year-old girl (from Native Youth Magazine)

PART ONE:

IMPORTANCE AND EFFECTS OF NATIONAL MEDIA IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

"It often seems as though I have the best reporting job in the newspaper business. The communities I cover exist within a complex political system unique to the Americas. It includes communities that embrace belief systems which reflect boundless spiritual beauty. And while many of these communities battle with some of the country's most significant poverty-related social ills, others have risen into a world of economic prosperity." (Jodi Rave, Lee Enterprises)

Just as teachers can influence students over the course of their academic program, so can media personalities influence their readers, listeners, and viewers. "Information" is conveyed as if it is the common understanding. Much of the critical analysis of media coverage focuses on objectivity and bias and, in the case of marginalized groups, on the unconscious racism that may be involved. However, analysis must go beyond such topics to examine what is or is not spotlighted by the media; who is allowed to speak out; how the media contributes to public conversation about a topic; and whether the media affects power and policy. The National American Indian Housing Council complains:

> Organizations fighting for Indian Country hear the stereotypes all the time--from the entertainment industry, the press, potential funders and the public--that all tribes are rich from gaming and do not need resources for affordable housing and other basic human needs. This myth ignores the fact that homeownership is low for Native Americans on reservations (half that of the general population), housing conditions are substandard, and unemployment rates are high--and that gaming is not a cure-all for these conditions.

Any group with an interest in obtaining respect or achieving success in the larger world knows that portrayals have consequences. An image created by a group's own actions or by the media can affect all outside interactions, including those by policy makers. The less powerful a group, the less able a group is to avoid the negative consequences of its collective portrayal. So much can depend on how the larger public thinks about you. So much can depend on what they "know," even if it is not verifiable, about "the way things are." At a personal level, it hurts to be dismissed for who you aren't and, even more, to be mocked for who you are. Native Americans often reap a double-sided consequence from negative portrayals: dismissiveness on the one hand, mockery on the other.

1. <u>Creation of Images and the Cumulative Effect of Repetition</u>

"*Media image is especially crucial because it is that image that looms large as non-Indians decide the fate of Indian people."* (Professor Rennard Strickland, University of Oregon)

Many components create an image. Peoples of the world are depicted in performances, illustrations, and other ways through a "shorthand" of traditional and/or trendy dress and head coverings, songs, folk dances, imitation of speech patterns, and depictions of dwelling places. Such light-hearted characterizations can range from superficial to innocent to demeaning. Other images can be more dangerous. In many lands, indigenous peoples have been demonized, denigrated, romanticized**,** and mythologized. One concept that attaches to Indian Country is that of a "good for nothin' lazy drunk." Another is someone "silent, stoic, stern-faced." Added to the myth mix are "Indian Princesses" and picturesque warriors. These images of Native Americans have long been grist for the merchandizing mill. Old pictures of meaningful activities prevail. Mention tribal decision-making and people will picture Indian men sitting in a circle passing around a pipe; they do not think about what Onondaga Chief and Faithkeeper Oren Lyons would call "a council of the good minds." What has seldom been conveyed is a sense of Native peoples' real concerns, problems and successes, their heterogeneity, their heroes, and their contributions to society.

Images unquestionably are important to organizations, governmental units, professions, social movements, and to racial, religious, heritage, and groups with a different political status. Mass media, book illustrations, advertisements, and movies play a decisive role in creating them. The chances of images being different in the future can be measured against a few informal axioms:

The less direct experience the public has with a specific sector of society, *the more that media depictions can shape public perceptions of that population.*

The public knows little of the diversity and heterogeneity of tribes. The headdress, bow and arrow, pow-wow, and woven rug are "stand-ins" for several million people. In positive contrast, a promotion for a public television production asks: "Where is Indian Country Today? The answer is, anywhere Indians are--whether that's the North Carolina rolling hills of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians or the urban canyons of Los Angeles where 280,000 Native Americans live." [emphasis added] The Associated Press ran an article about the efforts of Native parents to provide a cultural background for their children by creating a new charter school in Albuquerque, one of 18 charter schools serving urban Indian students. Such articles or television programs could cause many people to revise or expand their perceptions about Indians…. if, that is, the audiences were abundant.

As most Natives know, but not enough non-Natives realize, the Native universe and worldview are special, reflecting a distinct people. Native affairs are in different category than minority affairs because tribes have a government-to-government relationship with the federal government. Most people in the United States lack direct experience with Native culture or tribal governments. Instead, they receive whatever information they have about Native Americans at school, through popular culture, and via mass communication outlets – not, unfortunately, through in personal contacts**.** At the other extreme, sometimes when non-Natives seek an understanding, they demand sudden and total openness. However, tribal peoples believe some information--particularly ceremonial--should not be divulged. Thoughtful writers and broadcasters could help explain cultural values.

The less control a group has over mainstream media, the less likely members of the group will recognize themselves as they are portrayed.

Lack of money, numbers, and access to the commercial media has meant that indigenous peoples in the United States lack control of their public portrayals. Most stories are about them, from a non-Native perspective, not from them. Equally problematic, context is usually absent in portrayals of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. To quote author and Cherokee leader Wilma Mankiller, "Few members of Congress or their constituents across the U.S. know much about either the history or contemporary lives of Native people. When complex tribal land, water rights, taxation and jurisdiction issues are debated in Congress or chronicled in media reports, it is difficult for people without any kind of historical context to understand the issues."

In the view of Native Americans, the same stories about them are told over and over. An overabundance of stories about pathology in Indian Country, for instance, leads many well-intentioned non-Natives to adopt rescuer roles. Such "rescuers" sometimes insist that everybody concerned with Native affairs should spend all their time on alcoholism intervention--especially fetal alcohol syndrome--while ignoring traditional healing and other approaches to solutions that Native people are re-introducing to help solve the problem. A preoccupation with deviance can also cause good people to ignore indigenous people's strengths, as well as their other concerns about such matters as sovereignty and cultural preservation of languages.

The public may like or dislike a group as it is depicted. It may also like or dislike the representatives selected by the media to speak for or about that group. The public may object to what it believes are the major activities of the group.

As recently as 2005, a group of people who were asked to name any Indian personality or leader came up with "Tonto," a character who was created for the Lone Ranger radio show in 1933 and was also part of the later television show. Over the years, non-Native children and adults have thoroughly enjoyed imitating Tonto's limited dialogue and stereotypical gestures.

In post-Tonto years, as environmental concerns grew, American Indians were often viewed as good stewards of the land, as a population that lived gently and simply upon the earth. Dirk Kempthorne, the new Secretary of the Interior Department, spoke to the National Congress of American Indians on June 20, 2006 saying, "You are in countless ways the conservation teachers of this land that we all share." Although the public may like this depiction, in truth, it too is an over-generalization. Native author Sherman Alexie has said “Indians have no monopoly on environmentalism. That's one of the great myths. But we were subsistence livers. They're two different things. Environmentalism is a conscious choice and subsistence is the absence of choice. We had to use everything to survive. And now that we've been assimilated and colonized and we have luxuries and excesses, we're just as wasteful as other people." Professor Ines Talamentez of the University of California agrees, "Don't forget that Native Americans have been socialized to mainstream culture and participate in destroying the environment." Of course, many still tend the earth and all value ancestral land.

Now, a decade or two later, American Indians are often viewed as a people getting away

with something, that something being casinos. Reactions are expressed in different ways: "How could they!" or "It's great they've turned the tables and are exploiting white men" or "They've got some kind of deal where they don't even pay taxes" or "What have the Indians turned into?" Such views are expressed on blogs and in conversation as well as in printed columns. To a growing number of non-Natives, the Image has become Reality.

The New York Times Magazine ran a fashion story featuring wealthy people in Aspen, Colorado. One picture showed a Caucasian male wearing a *parka* priced at $4,485. The man photographed in his family's Aspen retreat was identified as an executive with the TVG interactive horse-racing network. By coincidence, on the back of that page, an appeal from the American Indian College Fund featured a photograph of a female tribal college student on the Flathead Reservation. Because of the emphasis on Indian gambling in the media, would members of the public be more likely to ask the young Native woman about revenues from gaming, or the middle-aged man who directly manages a gambling operation?

The public absorbs key phrases through repetition. National Public Radio carries a large number of excellent stories on Native Americans. Between 1999 and 2006, NPR ran eight stories on Indian trust funds grossly mismanaged by the federal government, which is an extremely high priority issue for Indian Country, plus many other solid stories about important issues. During the same time period there were references on NPR to Indian gaming in 52 stories. The mentions were frequently part of another news story, say about the Abramoff scandal. Although NPR is but one of scores of media outlets using the phrase, these numbers suggest how a particular phrase catches on with other reporters and the public.

The fact that the public can be swayed by who represents the group allows for upswings. At the height of negative coverage of gaming, the release of a major Hollywood film with a Native American star brought a month of positive attention. Scores of media outlets praised movie star Adam Beach's performance and personality and his involvement with his tribe. The publicity tour and Academy Awards build-up put the limelight on two parallel and yet contrasting narratives-- the life of soldier Ira Hayes (Pima) and of Adam Beach (Saulteaux, Ojibwa), both in their thirties-- much to the gratification of many in Indian Country.

2. **Framing**

"*How people are described can have a significant impact on how legitimate their situation seems in the minds of readers."* (John Miller, Professor of Journalism, Ryerson University, and content analysis specialist)

Unwittingly or deliberately, communicators frame people and stories in particular ways. A "frame," like a picture frame, includes and excludes. Early cowboy movies, for instance, included fighting, but excluded peaceful interactions between indigenous and white people. Similarly, they included the dreams of pioneers and excluded the dreams of the First Americans.

Communicators such as politicians and journalists use framing both consciously and unconsciously. When a statement or a report is issued, the write-up in the newspaper will often frame the organization involved, perhaps as a "liberal-leaning think tank" or "union-backed

institute." Such framing may cause many readers to ignore the report even though the intention of the journalist merely is to provide background information. Framing is interpreting.

Framing can result in glorification, trivialization, normalization, or marginalization of a group. Wilma Mankiller observes, "In recent years a number of misleading and mostly negative articles have been written about tribal governments, especially those involved in gaming enterprises. If these types of stories are left unanswered, they can ultimately impact federal policy as it relates to tribal governments and citizens. There is a direct link between public perception and public policies affecting tribal people."

> In the eyes of some political observers, the Abramoff scandal is linked to a general weakening of tribal support throughout Congress and represents a barometer of the generally negative image of U.S. tribes that prevails in the national media and inside the Washington Beltway. There are clearly some in the media who now view all tribes though the same cynical prism as all other special interests or lobbies.
>
> Alan Parker, Evergreen professor, column in Indian Country Today

The frame need not come from an article or an ideological source. For instance, Harpers includes a widely read list of startling and amusing phenomena at the front of its publication. "Harpers' Index" is a regular magazine feature of numerical facts that make points through dramatic statistics (often in pairs). The box below shows data about Native Americans that were included in the lists in the recent past. In 1999, the fact included is important to Indian women; advocacy to stop violence has led to legislative protections. In 2004, the fact hints at a trust mismanagement situation that has triggered a huge class action suit against the government and prospective legislation. The 2003 and 2006 facts seem neutral but contribute to a picture that has hurt Indian Country. Taken out of context, "facts" establish frames in the minds of readers and numbers can be misleading. $290,000 sounds huge but the federal Individual Trust fund owes billions.

Harpers Index Excerpts

August 2006

Amount of casino profits that the Pechanga, a California tribe, paid out last year to each of its adults: $290,000

Portion of the tribe that is being expelled or has been expelled since 2004 over allegations of insufficient heritage: 1/4

May 2004

Amount the federal Individual Indian Trust cannot account for, per Native American it serves: $26,000

March 2003

Maximum number of U.S. firms whose 2001 profit exceeded the combined profits of Native American casinos: 16

Ratio of the combined annual revenue of Native American casinos to that of Las Vegas casinos: 5:3

May 1999

Chance that a black woman living in the U.S. will be a victim of violence this year: 1 in 18

Chance that a Native American woman will be: 1 in 10

If Native Americans are viewed as semi-shady characters, due to animosity towards gambling from a portion of the public, this frame becomes an intriguing one for some journalists or pundits to utilize. Worse, it becomes a calculated frame for those who dislike sovereignty to utilize. Radio and television talk show host Glenn Beck, upset about a proposed abortion clinic on a reservation in South Dakota, put it this way:

> Whatever happened to the Indians? You know, they were celebrating Mother Earth and Father Sky or whatever it is, and that was beautiful and special. Now, it's about gaming, alcohol, fireworks, and abortions. I mean, what happened to the proud Indian? **…** What fork in the road did Native Americans take? When did they decide, "Ah, crap, it's just not worth it any more. Why don't we turn our precious land into a place where we can build some slot machines?" … you know, we took their sovereignty and then loaned them a little bit of it back, but you know what I mean. I hope that contract isn't iron-clad -- when are we gonna get out of that contract with the Indians?

Writing five years before Beck's comment, Dr. Kate Spidle illustrates in the box below how outside views of tribal governments can evolve over time, sometimes within a decade. Such framing shifts can contribute directly to the ever-changing atmospherics of policy discussion.

Framing Shifts in the Media: 1990-2001

Indian Nations are Cultural/Religious Groups with Diverse Histories

Indian Nations are Sovereign Cultural Groups that Differ from other Groups

Indian Nations are Governments

Indian Nations are Governments that have Gaming Rights

Indian Nations are Businesses Running Casinos

Indian Nations are Political Groups that use Political Contributions to Support their Businesses

Indian Nations act as Interest Groups when it is Convenient and Governments when it is Convenient

Note that none of the frames is "Indians as capitalists" or "Indians as savvy business men and women." University of California law and society professor Eve Darian-Smith concludes, "Enduring stereotypes prevent mainstream society from imagining Native Americans in positions of wealth, authority, and social prestige." However, studies show a growing number of Native entrepreneurs.

As with any issue, a single view about gambling does not exist in Indian Country. One Native leader will become sentimental sharing her memories about betting as a traditional family recreational activity complete with family rules enforced by father and grandfather about good behavior after losses. Another will bemoan the split that gaming has caused in her formerly close-knit tribe.

Collectively, Native Americans request fairness and want outsiders to know more about their land and economic development. They would agree with a headline in an Indian Country Today column: "Kemosabe, why do you make rules so Tonto never wins the race? Columnist Harold Monteau continues: "Since when did economic recovery for Indians and Alaska Native become a 'loophole'? Yet Congress is ready to hold hearings and change the laws, just when we are realizing some success." He goes on to discuss what it is like to negotiate with the dominant group even as Native Americans fight and die for the country in the Armed Services**.**

The fairness frame appears regularly in Native publications, e.g., soldiers return from rebuilding Iraq and point out the miserable conditions on their reservations that receive no reconstruction funds. Competing frames are common in many other situations such as political campaigns. Other logical ways to frame Native-non Native stories are ignored. Reconciliation is a common framing concept for relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in other countries such as South Africa, Australia, and Canada. Notably, it goes unused by professionals, politicians, opinion-makers, educators, and mass communicators in the U.S.

Limitations of time and space hinder journalists from telling full stories about Indian Country, but that, at times, may be a Native advantage. An intertribal power struggle could be considered too complex for the Six O'clock News or the morning paper. Another struggle, one between Natives and another group, however, may favor the Natives.

Here is a recent news example. Hundreds of Native people have resisted interference with prayers and religious ceremonies they have held on Bear Butte in South Dakota for years. They also have resisted the more recent opening by non-Natives of bars there. The Associated Press wrote a balanced article about one protest. The first sentence was "American Indians protesting development encroaching on sacred Bear Butte peacefully confronted bikers gathering Friday for a raucous annual motorcycle rally." The headline, however, stressed conflict "American Indians confront bikers." (Carson Walker, 8/4/06, AP).

The tone in which a story is written can establish respect and legitimacy or can convey amusement or disregard. Some Native Americans believe a disproportionate number of "wacky" articles are run about them. Some sensationalize. Consider the beginning of the first sentence from an article in the New York Times about a group of Native American prisoners who obtained the right to build and use a sweat lodge for religious practices.

"Two dozen murderers, rapists and other felons sat unclothed save for shorts in the pitch darkness of a tent made of sticks and wool blankets that had been set up in the prison yard."

The second sentence moves on to information and description.

"In the middle of the dirt floor, a pit had been dug and filled with rocks left in a fire so long that any cracks glowed red. Cedar chips were thrown on the rocks, giving off a fragrance, and then lavender, sage and sweet grass." (Marek Fuchs, NYTimes.com 6/25/05)

Through provocative headlines or opening sentences, newspaper owners and managers entice busy readers to read their stories; unforeseen consequences are not their concern.

A collective portrait of any group is static and skewed and groups have every right to resist stereotypes and distortions. The new National Museum of the American Indian, counteracting this, permits indigenous peoples living in the Americas to present their own view of themselves and their homelands. Ines Talamentez of the University of California says outsiders can help with reframing: "Whatever you call us, please don't call us 'The Indian.' There is no such thing. We are many nations, many cultures, each with its own language, own view of the world, own articulation of symbolic systems, not a single entity."

In reaction to ways indigenous peoples are framed, some Native leaders say they must face the dangers and contentions in the media area and take a stance. Some mention that forthright critiques, say of the new Indian museum or of a film made by a Native American, can be respectful and are far preferable to condescension. Others argue that Indian communities, especially tribal leaders**,** could be more open to Native and non-Native journalists pursuing news and feature stories. A fourth view is that images in popular culture evolve no matter what, so while many negative characterizations persist, stronger and positive portraits are evolving too**,** because they are being created by Native people. People such as Rob Schmidt of Blue Corn Comics point out how comics are one vehicle for taking control.

However, as the following example illustrates, non-Native screenwriters still create skewed depictions:

The canceled TV series "LAX" had a Native subplot in its second episode, which aired Sept. 20, 2004. In it, Heather Locklear brings in "Hawk Man" (Steve Reevis) to deal with the airport's bird problem. His hawk will get rid of the pesky pigeons blocking the runways.

Hawk Man is a mystical, one-with-nature type. He says things like "I'm from the tribe of nobody and everybody" and "The hawk, he is my brother."
To which a maintenance man responds, "So does your tribe have a casino yet?"

Hawk Man sings and prays to spur his hawk into action. Eventually it scares the other birds away. He breaks out of the stereotypical shaman mold only once, at the end, when he asks about getting paid.

It may be that more progress has been made in novels and films than in television and major magazines; such impressions need to be checked by research. Some change has happened, albeit slowly. Starting 60 years ago a Pima Indian from the Gila River Reservation was put front and center by an iconic picture of him helping to raise a flag at Iwo Jima, by a memorial statue, by government use of him to sell war bonds, and by singer Johnny Cash's rendition of the "Ballad of Ira Hayes." Each portrayal *frames* Hayes and the trajectory of his life and frames the idea of "hero." In 1961, white actor Tony Curtis starred in "The Outsiders," which was Hayes' life story. As mentioned earlier, in 2006, Native star Adam Beach portrayed Hayes in director Clint Eastwood's big budget film "Flags of Our Fathers" and was featured on the cover of Parade magazine. Still, the frame is tragic. Native media outlets, however, provide additional stories about Gila River citizens such as this profile from Native Youth magazine.

A Gila River Indian student was recognized as an Outstanding Senior by ASU's Morrison School of Management and Agribusiness at the Polytechnic campus. Anika Enos

graduated from Arizona State University's east campus with a bachelor's degree in agribusiness and a concentration in pre-veterinary medicine.

She is an appointed member of the board of directors of the Gila River Telecommunications Corporation. She is the only woman serving on this board composed of male elders from the Gila River Indian Community. As an elected member of the board of directors she serves as vice chairperson. Previously, as treasurer, she made several trips to speak with members of congress and their staff to discuss telecommunications issues in Washington, D.C. She serves in an advisory capacity to the Gila River Indian Community to implement a telecommunications system in accordance with the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

To turn around the concept of "being framed," and to change the direction of political events and decisions, pro-Native advocates spend a good deal of time thinking about how to frame issues in ways the public and policy makers will latch onto. To give one example, it has been nearly impossible to get the problem of continuing poverty in the United States on the Congressional agenda or even on the public's radar. Studies have been commissioned to learn what phrases the public will listen to, rather than tune out. The public will react more to "hungry" than to "poverty," for example. Dozens of books have suggested how to frame one's own message. To allow people to consider different policy options, a communication organization called FrameWorks Institute notes, "When communication is inadequate, people default to the existing 'pictures in their heads,' or dominant cultural frames. When communication is effective, people can see an issue from a different perspective. This is known as 'reframing' the issue."

Advocates seek to reframe negative images. Sometimes American Indians are discussed as takers from society. However, a focus on the "code talkers," people who used their tribal languages to outfox German code breakers during World War II, suggests action and contribution. In order to frame Native issues more positively in Washington, DC, American Indian leaders have developed relationships of mutual respect with elected officials. During contentious hearings about repaying Individual Indian Money trust accounts holders, some in Congress sharply criticized Native reform leader Elouise Cobell. However, Representative Dale Kildee (MI) gave an opening address in which he thanked Ms. Cobell, discussed her courage and persistence, and said her heroism reminded him of Rosa Parks.

3. **Stereotyping**

"In America, some stories count more than others." (Mark Trahant, editorial page editor of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer)

While framing can be subtle or invisible, harmful stereotypes or beliefs cause more overt problems. They may manifest themselves in all degrees of subtlety. Unfortunately because they are embedded in the public psyche, they are often ubiquitous. Images and symbols can confine an entire group of people into a narrow box and deny them individuality. That is one reason Native Americans object to mascots, sport logos with pictures from their past, buffoon type cartoons, and appropriations of their culture. They are keenly aware of the ways these contribute to how they are viewed--or not viewed--as human beings. A soft-spoken but assertive Indian woman shared this experience:

Retailers are often unaware of offensive practices. I approached the Halloween Express store last Wednesday asking them to remove their "Indian Costumes" because it dehumanizes a race of people. The store is temporary (seasonal) and is on the border of the Oneida Reservation and the city of Green Bay. The owner refused and off-handedly compared it to dressing up like fairies. I checked the store a week later and the colorful headdresses and tomahawks were still up for sale. I handed the owner a letter with a written request and have contacted the national office.

Naming vehicles after tribes (Winnebago, Cherokee) is another example of treating people as objects. Stereotypes can be invented by, or perpetuated by, social institutions including mass media. They are not etched in stone, however. Insensitivities that infect mainstream culture as a whole can be challenged by the media.

In the more than 20 years that the mascot debate had been on the table it was only given national exposure on a widely viewed television show once. That happened several years ago when Oprah Winfrey decided to broach the subject. I was a guest on that show and I believe that one screening did more to educate people than any show before or since. Journalist Tim Giago 2003

They can also be challenged by other institutions such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In 2005, NCAA banned "hostile and abusive" Native American mascots of 18 colleges and universities from postseason tournament play

Stereotypes, whether disseminated informally through gossip or more systematically by opinion-makers, create widespread reputations. An original observation of a people may have a grain of truth**,** but the ultimate picture created is untrue. It can lead to distain, discrimination in hiring, and even a widespread rejection of an entire "race" of people. The stereotype can be a justification for inhuman treatment. More typically, the stereotypes keep people who would ordinarily care from "tuning in." In the case of American Indians, that could involve tuning in to problems of land rights, political representation, or funding reform by the federal government.

Indians are trapped/defined by stereotyping and historical images that are no longer accurate for present day circumstances. The media needs to replace/update these outdated images. Indians need to be shown as contemporary people with contemporary lives, challenges, needs, and as people holding unique spiritual values. Native people need to be seen not as symbols, but rather as real live human beings.

Majority attitudes and stereotypes of minorities change over time in two ways. First, the negative stereotypes change in form or content. Second, some manifestations of them have been successfully challenged. Over time, societies usually respond to a group's objections to words considered anti-Semitic, anti-Italian, anti-African American, or anti-American Indian or to words that are dated or offensive (squaw, papoose) or to archetypal myths about Indian princesses. Advocacy about language and about unconscionable practices forces those changes. New federal laws on protecting graves and remains of Indian people inform professionals such as archeologists. Many professionals have become indignant about past practices and aware of the benefits to be gained by consulting with tribes.

Yet, jokes about selling refrigerators to Eskimos continue. Other forms of exaggeration keep coming to the fore. Although a significant group of thinking people resists them, each era

brings new stereotypes of tribes or First Nations. In the popular imagination, in the last 100 years, American Indians have often been regarded as beset or benighted or between. Stereotypes came from Europeans because they did not have any pre-established way to relate to the new people they found in the New World. Degrading is one way of looking at Indians. The image has always been there. Europeans alternatively thought of Indians as being idealistic creatures of nature – people who were closer to nature than ordinary and who communed with nature in a special way. Indians are looked at as exotic people of the past, without lives in the present.

The historic stereotype of a savage in need of civilization and conversion, who roamed in solitary fashion aimlessly throughout the wilderness or attacked white communities for no reason, gave way to more realistic views of a people beset by thieving Indian agents or cruel boarding school personnel. In recent eras, rural American Indians living on a reservation have been stereotyped as dirty, drunk, dependent, shiftless, and stuck or stubborn for not assimilating into the melting pot. This stereotype contrasts with the American Indian's own commitment to self-determination and "doing it ourselves." In contrast to the passive stereotype, American Indians are very concerned about drinking problems among their youth.

The urban Indian, on the other hand**,** is viewed as between cultures, a lonely soul without any companions, at sea in the larger world. Those living in cities are isolated. This stereotype contrasts with the reality that today the majority of Indians reside in metropolitan areas. Often from different states and tribes, many form social networks and loose alliances. Some become advocates to deal with problems such as health, and the precarious financial situation of urban health clinics mandated to assist urban Indians. Many Native Americans are not steeped in their culture as the statement below by a young would-be journalist illustrates.

> It is hard to admit, but I am not connected with my culture. Despite being 20 years old, I have hardly made an effort to learn about my heritage and where I come from. This really hits me as I've been around fellow [journalism] students. Some of them left their reservations to come here to learn. I barely have any recollection of living on the reservation of my Navajo tribe.
>
> My parents left the reservation to find a better life for my sister and me. We have lived in places such as Boston, Phoenix, Niagara Falls and two cities in Oklahoma. During the time I was growing up, I really wanted to fit in as much as possible and sometimes, that meant wanting to forget I was Native American. My parents tried to teach me certain things, and I just forgot about them or wasn't listening in the first place.
>
> I could not tell you what clans I am a part of without looking them up on a piece of paper, which my parents wrote the night I arrived here. I do not feel the fire in me to bring the world the truth about Native Americans because I have not experienced what it is like to be one. What I know mostly about my reservation is what I see when I visit my grandparents and the rest of my relatives, a majority of whom live there.

Sometimes change can develop by building relationships with non-Natives who are open to new information. As Dorreen Yellow Bird has written, "Many stereotyping comments come out of the mouths of people who are unaware of the culture and lifestyles of tribal nations, but sincerely want to learn… They are good people who do not mean to offend and would be shocked to think they have offended." Suzan Shown Harjo, known for her passionate opposition to the display and use of monikers, nicknames, logos, and other hostile elements of stereotypes about Native Americans, believes change is possible and people can be brought along.

Since 1970, over two-thirds of schools with references to Native Americans in the names of their sports teams have dropped them; 3,000 schools have changed, 900 schools across the country are still resisting or ignoring the requests.

Old stereotypes that led to hatred and past cruelties for many peoples are one thing. Belligerent resentments that exacerbate those stereotypes and ongoing intolerance are another, and equally inexcusable**.** Dartmouth College experienced such conflicts in November 2006, as have other schools. Often presented in a cartoon or headline that can be defended as satire, statements of resentment continue the idea of the superiority of those of European descent.

On October 12, Indians from Cornell, the local community, and around the country gathered on Ho Plaza to protest the celebration of Columbus Day. The event began with some ritual chanting—perhaps to keep the rain god away on such an overcast and ominous-looking afternoon. Unfortunately, the rest of the rally was much less exciting. There was no tomahawk throwing contest, no make-up-your-own dreamcatcher game, and no Sugarhill Gang's "Apache" playing in the background. Instead, there was a libel throwing contest, a make-up-your-own genocide game, and incomprehensible chanting in the background. ..

Regardless of the caterwauling of radical Indian activists Columbus Day should not be abolished. Yes, Europeans did bad things to Indians and yes, Indians did bad things to each other and to Europeans as well. But for all of the trials and tribulations the Americas have experienced since Columbus's arrival, all of its people have benefited from the gift of Western civilization that was brought to its shores. The redeeming power of Christianity was passed on to millions who had been living in the darkness of pagan superstition.

by Eric Shive, a senior at Cornell in the conservative Cornell American

Such attitudes can play a quiet role in politics. Indigenous people in the United States have been variously exploited, aided, taken for granted, and honored under administrations of both parties. There is no clear-cut pattern of Democrats or Republicans favoring or hurting American Indians. In today's conservative climate, some members of the public believe that concern for Native Americans is automatically liberalism. Others decry what they see as tribal reliance on government largess (usually due to a misunderstanding about treaty obligations) and often have notions that are demonstrably false. Lack of information creates errors in thinking and an uncomprehending citizenry, a citizenry that certainly does not request fair treatment of Native Americans in public policy.

4. **Ignoring**

"There are cultural stories that aren't, but yet are, being told." (Stacy Bohlen, National Indian Health Board)

Invisibility is another problem often mentioned by Native Americans. No Native child watching primetime television shows dominated by the majority culture sees frequent reflections of herself or himself. According to research on identity development, this lack of representation gives children the message that they are not of value or interest. After reviewing a range of broadcasts, famed content analysis expert Robert Lichter said, "In regard to the framing of stories, Indians need to get into the frame in the first place." Native leaders and the major issues they seek to explain are ignored. Similarly, American Indians are absent in prime time television

programs and on talk shows. There is no equivalent to a Bill Cosby family show, or to routine secondary roles played increasingly by actors of color in hospital or detective shows, or to a moderator or commentator role, such as those filled by Ray Suarez and Gwen Ifill on public television, or Clarence Page and Juan Williams on Sunday morning news shows. The bookers of the Sunday morning talk shows know that network officials and audiences want "newsmakers" as guests, which is understandable. However, the same white commentators are invited, on these and other network and cable shows, to react to events and make election predictions and these slots are never filled by renowned Native journalists (or Latino pundits or pundits of different backgrounds). The absences are disappointing and disturbing.

The urban Indian is all but invisible. As is the case with aboriginal and First Nation peoples in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, most American Indians are now urban. The extraordinary forced migration that led Native people to urban centers, and resulting pan-tribalism, has hardly been discussed, though. Many provocative essays could be written about the phenomenon, in particular the challenge of maintaining any distinct indigenous culture, especially during the acceleration of mass culture and the "*mcdonaldization*" of the globe. While urban-sponsored pow-wows may be covered and Native crafts, arts, and fetishes are featured in many forms of media, in-depth discussion about tribal culture as expressed in metropolitan areas, or features about Native family life in cities are missing. One reason is simple; such articles are more challenging to research and write than a feature about, for example, Native hip-hop performers.

Even if a story does not center on Native Americans, their lives and situations could be integrated into far more articles and broadcasts. A major story about a drought or control of water and how various groups or officials are coping with it could include mention of what tribes are doing about the situation. The Native press provides many details and examples that the mainstream press could pick up on and include as part of their story as a special angle. After all, Native Americans are Americans, too**.** Serious news stories, from the obesity epidemic to the war in Iraq, affect Native Americans just as they do the rest of society. Some publications have incorporated news that fits their emphasis. For example, Corrections Today used the occasion of a Hill investigation to carry a sympathetic article in 2005 on "The State of Indian Jails in America." It quoted Senator Max Baucus who said, "The conditions are unacceptable. They must be fixed. Americans cannot fight for human rights abroad, if we fail to protect them at home. In these facilities we have failed."

There are also amusing stories. A paragraph or two (or a "side bar") about Indians could be included in serious or light pieces. For example, feature stories about mainstream stand-up comedians frequently highlight African American, feminist, or gay comics, and could also include Native comedians. Again, stories about Native comics can be found in the Native press. Utilizing such sources would help the wider American audience know what Native Americans have known for years. As a Lakota woman on the Pine Ridge Reservation put it, “We Indians are very funny.”

A newspaper writer in California may write three columns a week. That is a lot of space to fill. California has the highest number of American Indians in the country. And yet, if the columnist were to write about them, chances are the column would focus on current gaming

disputes. Instead, we would urge the columnist to look for common ground and similarities, or to draw contrasts about language differences, cultural values, character, and one's innate nature as stated by individuals or tribal representatives. Ignoring such material amounts to another form of invisibility, to the detriment of Native peoples and the uninformed public.

Stories on individuals could be more widely published. American Indian Report magazine had this to say about a talented 15-year-old who created a prize-winning system for his family's hogan: "Maybe Thomas Edison was right when he said all that is needed to invent is a good imagination and some junk. Look at *Garrett Yazzie*, a Navajo who created a solar water heater with a radiator from a 1967 Pontiac, an inner tube from one of his bike's tires, 69 aluminum cans, a plastic funnel and a piece of Plexiglas." The New Mexican ran a profile in October 2006 of "*Ricardo Caté*, Santo Domingo Pueblo, a student at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., and a graduate of the Freedom Forum's 2005 American Indian Journalism Institute. A Marine Corps veteran and cartoonist, Caté does a morning radio show on college station KDUR, which reznet posts as podcasts."

One form of ignoring real people is to dress them up so they meet the expectations of the Western imagination about Indians. Sometimes this is done in order to distinguish them from other people of color. A public information poster about cancer obviously means to depict the diversity of the entire American populace. Everyone is dressed in typical casual or business garb, with the exception of one woman. She is wearing a ribbon shirt to identify her as Native American. Such a decision or depiction may have been done with the best of intentions**,** but if American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians must have long hair or appear in "costume" to be included, their individuality and present existence is being ignored. One complaint heard at a conference: a local reporter and producer encouraged a Native woman to put on different clothes so she would look more "Indian" for a television interview. People outside the culture enjoy names *of interest* such as His-Horse-Is-Thunder, Kickingbird, Running Water, Sunray, Smoke, or Tallbear and want to include Native Americans with such names in their articles or broadcasts to be sure that the public knows they are Indian.

Even a well-disposed media personality like Oprah Winfrey apparently insisted that the Navajo stage a pow-wow for a feature story, even though that is not part of the tribe's tradition, to get good visuals. It is easy to get fixated on Indian people being "colorful." In terms of their regalia, they certainly are. And they certainly know this. Sometimes they go along with the stereotype**,** knowing that pizzazz and "raiment" can be the price of getting on national programs. "It's not hard to see why the Navajo were eager to please. If Oprah wanted to visit any community in the country, plenty of people would move boulders to accommodate her," says columnist Jodi Rave who is married to a Navajo. Rave proposes a different way to show a more authentic aspect of this tribe:

> A stranger might feel out of place in the Navajo Nation's tribal council chambers, where all the tribal delegates conduct governmental meetings in the Navajo language. Priests on the reservation know the language defines the Navajos' cultural and religious existence. Knowing a language is a way to enter a closed society. I've seen white Jesuit priests conduct funeral rites entirely in Navajo. They do so out of respect for the Navajo. My visits to Navajoland have left many indelible memories -- and they don't include any powwows.

Those in journalism, marketing, graphics, and other fields can let Native people decide how they want to be depicted. They should respect that Native Americans of any tribe and any heritage can wear what they want or what they believe is appropriate to wear. None of the proceeding cautions means that talking about dress and cultural expression is taboo. The question is: who brings it up and why?

Young people and others share their experiences, including dance and regalia, in their own way. On websites that encourage them to tell their stories, such as "Native Youth Magazine," a few teenagers and young adults bring up the topic of deciding when and where to explore their traditional culture.

> When I was young I wanted to dance fancy shawl because it looked fun and exciting. Now being 20, I wanted to dance because it seemed to be a part of my identity that was missing. College was fine, but there wasn't a lot of Native culture anywhere in the curriculum or on campus and there weren't a lot of Native students attending the university. The students, who were attending at the time, weren't dancing. So I felt drawn to start dancing because it's a part of whom I am and I hadn't been actively doing it. Once I started dancing again I felt more complete as a person and in my identity as a young Native American woman growing up in world where we are definitely the minority.

Tribes may want attention paid to their traditional dress when they are featuring it as part of a larger story. One such example is the August 2006 burial of a time capsule by the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. The tribe decided to place many historical and culturally significant items selected by elders into a stainless steel vault that will stay sealed for 130 years. The plan was for the capsule or vault to be filled with:

> more than 2,000 Ponca songs and stories, dried foods, photos, illustrations of traditional homes, old-style implements and tools, articles of clothing, tribal and family stories, personal remembrances and various artifacts, including a large ceremonial drum and *an entire dance regalia outfit*. The vault will also contain maps of the original Ponca jurisdiction and documents of Ponca language and history, as well as tribal government and enrollment documents (Patti Jo King, Indian Country Today).

It is difficult for journalists, among others, to report accurately about Native Americans if there is insufficient information to draw from. Surveys, studies, and other research findings about whatever subject presented in the media often lack reference to indigenous Americans simply because indigenous Americans were not surveyed, studied, or researched about the subject in the first place. This omission adds to the out of sight- out of mind situation of indigenous people. "I'm part of the `other' category**,**" say many Native Americans.

One aspect of the problem, in terms of **academic** and government research**,** is that the population numbers were for years considered too small to bother with. While the U.S. Census has statistics on American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations, the Bureau of Labor Statistics data is less helpful. Native Americans are <u>not even mentioned in demographics</u> on college enrollment and work activity for 2005. The statistics usually focus on blacks and whites, with some attention to Hispanics.

A specific example of invisibility is found in a national research study on a particular nationwide school program in diverse communities. Details were given for Caucasians (72%),

African Americans (12%), Hispanic (11%), and Other (5%). Other! The "others" included Asian, Multi-racial, Pacific Islander, and**...** American Indian.

5. **Responding and Reframing**

"*Public policy is hugely influenced by the media. Tribes must tell their stories… we're making progress, but we have a long way to go."*

"The decency, resiliency and wise cultural cornerstones of our American Indian governments are not visible to most Americans"

Both quotes from former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell

"...historian Alvin Josephy -- then an editor at *Time* magazine -- reports that, in the 1950s and 1960s, publisher Henry Luce refused any stories about Indians on the grounds that all such individuals were `phonies.' `Whenever a correspondent in the field suggested a story on Indians, the query was simply crumpled up and thrown in the wastebasket. By edict, both *Time* and *Life* blacked out information about Indians.' The decision effectively barred Indian people from an important means by which their social and other concerns might have been brought to public attention in a period of great importance for minority civil rights."

Real Indians/Identity and the Survival of Native America (p.70) by Eva Marie Garroutte, Boston College.

Contemporary Native Americans are viewed quite differently today than they were in the 1950s and earlier, thanks in part to actions by Native Americans who have reframed their position in society and consequently their image in the media. In 1968, the formation of the American Indian Movement (AIM) put Native rights in the spotlight. So did the actions fomented by or encouraged by AIM, such as the seizures of Alcatraz island (1969) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1972), and the ultimately fatal standoff with the FBI at Wounded Knee (1973). The stands taken by emerging leaders and ordinary Indian people raised the consciousness of the public and spurred national legislation to address inequities.

Such actions also brought people with tribal heritage "out of the closet." During the long years of discrimination, many individuals and families hid their ancestry. Reporter David House of the Star Telegram wrote a feature called "Mama Minnie's Secret" about how his maternal grandmother had tried to erase Indian heritage from the family; the story brought responses from many others across the country who had similar early childhood experiences. AIM helped change such examples of shame into those of pride.

The media, to some extent, was hooked. Actions considered press-worthy brought new public attention, both approving and disapproving. At the least, however, there finally was renewed acknowledgement of the continued existence of the original inhabitants of this land. Within Indian Country, support and pride grew. Native people put themselves back into the picture of American society as a contemporary force and as a people of interest. Eventually this momentum led to Native American courses in universities and the creation of tribal colleges. What is also important about these actions is that the coverage they generated in the press helped educate the general public.

Equally important was the growing pan-tribal, or intertribal**,** unity required to start a national organization. When an individual tribe acted alone, there was little response from decision-makers. More and more tribal leaders began speaking with a collective voice. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was formed in 1944 but grew in numbers and strength later.

Today, NCAI sponsors events such as the State of Indian Nations address which directly follows the State of the Union address to Congress. It is held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC and attracts mainstream and Native reporters and broadcasters. The address and question and answer period are carried live on the Native America Calling show, which has 250,000 listeners. The State of Indian Nations address lays out the agenda for the coming year, lists priorities for policy changes, and provides an often eloquent expression of Native values.

> "The state of the Indian Nations today is strong... The spiritual outlook of the Indian Nations is found in The Four Directions, each represented by a different color, a different animal and a different meaning. Everything in the world comes from the four directions–these four powers. And they must be in balance... As Indians, our lives are elevated by our history and our rich cultures. We believe in elevating virtue to a way of life. We believe in family, tradition, and self-determination. Our tribes exist as nations with sovereign and independent governments. And we are keenly aware of the challenges we face in providing for our people."
>
> President Joe Garcia, National Congress of American Indians
> State of Indian Nations Address, Feb 2, 2006

Seizing the Initiative. As they set up their own broadcast event, Native leaders can choose whether they want to *echo* the trappings of state available to a Presidential address to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber. The room can be set up as they want and many other decisions are under their control. Native spokespersons are able to:

1. Set the tone;
2. State their educational and career backgrounds revealing how they have access to two cultures;
3. Start and end presentations with their own languages, showing the pride they have in being multi-lingual and in working to preserve their traditional languages;
4. Connect with the audience, show the big picture of Native Nations today, and illustrate the multitude of projects going on;
5. Tell about their programs and voting success stories and explain gaps in services;
6. Explain the significance of massacres and the importance of holding on to land and valuing the earth;
7. Discuss the tradition of individual independence while staying part of the collective, where many tribes work toward the same goals in their own ways; and
8. Decide whether they want to make personal offerings to the audience through songs, prayers, or rituals.

Most Native American gatherings are formal. The audience rises as a color guard with tribal flags and the national flag come down the aisle and Indian veterans enter to the sound of drums and an honor song. A prayer in a Native language is given and the audience sits down. For a

people often denied religious freedom and certain of their traditional rituals, the right to be ceremonial or not and the right to include or exclude the public and the press are important.

Dealing with mainstream media. American Indian, Native Alaska, and Native Hawaiian leaders are not naïve about the needs and practices of the media. They are glad when Native Americans receive respect; when that is not the case, the response is practical not disgruntled. They emphasize tools that tribes can use to bring their important community stories forwards. They understand the time and space constraints and the types of stories chosen. They know about hot stories that dominate the headlines for a period and about sexy stories that appeal to the media because they attract viewers, listeners**,** and readers. They are aware that the media can follow public or political opinion. They realize how difficult it is for any small group to receive widespread coverage and stories told in any length. They also know it is impossible for anyone to control a story after being interviewed. Former Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who dealt with the press from Capitol Hill for decades, observed that many news stories offer little news, but rather only opinions. The mixture of political pundits and journalists who appear together on op-ed pages and on news talk shows contributes to muddled messages.

National Native organizations are pragmatic and, when money permits, they hire communications directors with media experience. Despite the obstacles, Native spokespersons know they must become sources of information for any issue of importance to them and work with the media--through releases and relations--to reach the general public and build popular support. They know it takes publicity to get on the policy agenda and then produce reforms. They know that the media can be a vehicle for change, especially for a powerless group. Various forms of media can begin the process of problem recognition, can draw attention to the human dimension of a problem or situation and can suggest corrective action through investigations and editorials. Despite constraining journalistic routines, media can be influenced. It can change its typical story about a group. It can use nuance. Thanks to receptive reporters the media can provide ordinary tribal members with a voice.

Realizing that relying on mainstream media is too often ineffective, despite efforts to correct the situation**,** those in Indian Country have created their own news outlets such as newsletters, newspapers, websites, and broadcasting units and have produced programming and movies. Some Native broadcasters have utilized existing outlets such as public radio. National Native News creates five-minute programs that can be picked up by national or local news productions.

> National Native News started production in 1987 to provide Native and non-Native public radio listeners with a regular, timely and balanced source of news about Native issues. It covers the social, economic and cultural issues that affect every community, and helps radio listeners understand the interconnectedness between Native people and their non-Native neighbors. It seeks to appeal to radio listeners who are engaged in the world around them and who seek out a broader range of viewpoints. Not just for Natives, it is the only daily news and information program produced from a Native perspective that can be heard on public radio stations nationwide and in Canada. This news service has filled a crucial gap in the news industry, for nearly 20 years, by providing coverage of national and regional news stories from a different perspective than other news sources.

By now, Native documentary filmmakers are sophisticated about mastering the range of skills involved in making a movie, including funding it. Some of these independent filmmakers

work closely with their counterparts in public television. As one of many examples, Prairies Public Television is producing a 13-part series entitled "Indian Pride." The Fargo, North Dakota team plans for each 30-minute segment to have three parts. The first will be comprised of short documentaries showing people at their homes and events. The second part will be filmed in studios with nationally known Native guests. The third part will include performances by artists and storytellers.

A number of entrepreneurs are competing to create "niche" national television outlets for Native American viewers. A group in Washington, DC seeks to launch Native American Television as a cable channel. Another group in New Mexico plans to air reality and talk shows on the new Native American Television Network they are creating. Harlan McKosato, former host of Native America Calling, is working with the First Americans Cable Entertainment System to create a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week cable and satellite channel. Syd Beane of the National American Indian Development Corporation is part of a coalition developing programs and working with major networks, including Fox. And website creators have already demonstrated the potential of reaching out to Native Internet users; the tribally-focused Native Youth online magazine sometimes had 1,100 hits a day. When the National American Indian Housing Council started a new website on home ownership, it received 6,000 hits in one week.

On the negative side of new media, the Internet also provides new ways of circulating old stereotypes. A video game titled "Mohawk Mayhem" appeared --- but was pulled after activists protested. The game and blog creator said "sorry" and stated that a multitude of emails had caused the removal of the downloadable files.

With the growth of electronic advocacy forums, new opportunities and new forms of empowerment have arisen throughout the country. The digital divide definitely exists in Indian Country, though**,** especially for poor and rural families who lack computers. Even so, Native innovators are convinced that electronic communication is connecting indigenous people. They are experimenting with a myriad of ways to communicate with their people and with the public. They recommend citizens and grassroots groups create podcasts, personal blogs, and profiles on systems such as MySpace, and they urge Native Americans to post documents on the Internet and use interactive communication to express themselves and participate in democracy. Individuals are learning animation, graphics, and other means of capturing attention in the new blended media experience. At a more basic level, services can be provided. In Alaska and in other rural areas, new telehealth services have been successful. Income can be provided, too. Want to buy a star quilt? Go to a Native woman's website.

Thus, to generalize, most indigenous leaders and their communication departments are trying to utilize every communications avenue open to them, and yet their political voice and message remain absent or cloudy in the mainstream media. The most difficult challenge is expressing a sincere and thoughtful remonstration toward the very power structure allied with their historical oppressors. As Professor Amy Den Ouden of the University of Massachusetts points out, "There have been so many forces at work… to obscure Native peoples' critiques of and challenges to prevailing Euro-American accounts of United States history and United States government policies toward Native American peoples."

Here in Canada, when we're portrayed in the media**,** it's just as a pain in the ass. Like, 'Oh great, what are the Indians doing now?' -- whether we're fighting for our natural watersheds or to stop the logging and mining of our mountains," says Simon Reece, a staff writer for Redwire, a Vancouver, British Columbia-based magazine for Native youth. "It's different from down in the States, because I don't think they're portrayed at all in the mass media, ya know? Or when they are, it's the cheesy guy with braids, or the whole casino thing." (from Tolerance, Southern Poverty Law Center, 2002)

6. **Obstacles to Changing Media Coverage about Native America, Ways to Overcome the Obstacles, and Some Really Great Story Ideas**

"Welcome to Native America, where there's no end to good stories." (Jodi Rave)

Although major news stories about any group (Haitians, the Amish, persons with disabilities) will receive some degree of media coverage, a high percentage of human beings seem to care little about groups other than their own. One might even generalize, that neither Natives nor non-Natives want to know much about each other, at least, beyond superficialities. Nonetheless, based on Native Americans' historic and symbolic importance to the country, it would seem that they would receive more attention than they do. True, they now represent only one percent of their population, so – if we thought only in terms of mathematics -- their share of general media attention would be one percent. That is less than what they receive, though. (The equation is specious anyway. What percentage of media coverage does Paris Hilton or Anna Nicole Smith receive vis-à-vis her percentage of the population?) Whatever the percentage of attention is, or should be, toward Indian Country, real things occur there that could be, and we maintain should be, of interest to the wider non-Native society.

So, why isn't the mainstream media reporting them?

Obstacles to Changing Media Coverage

The reason for the dearth of attention points to one underlying problem: the solidity of already existing perceptions among the public of "Indians" or "Eskimos." Why bother writing an article/airing a news segment about a subject when everybody in the audience thinks they know what indigenous people are about? The serious media communicator must swim upstream against a mass of images, gleaned either from perceived centuries-old traditions, or from present-day misreadings. It seems pointless to add just a bit of information. Well-meaning activists, Native or non-Native, who take some nice little piece of Native culture, or activity, or issue of actual potential public interest and hand it to people who control or plan coverage in any media avenue do not work: such decision-makers believe the audience will view the piece in the light of the established images, and will reject it. Media decision-makers, consciously or unconsciously, find that counteracting the stereotype just by a degree or two, by adding, for example, mention of one aspect of tribal culture, will not be helpful. Yet, adding the layers of context will be too much for the project at hand. Instead, another topic is selected. And the cartoon-like stereotypes persist.

> "A producer once told me, `American Indians will start getting work when we bring back Westerns.' He thought he was being funny, but his attitude shows that we're not in the contemporary scene at all. Who's going to cast an American Indian character in an `ER' or `CSI' if all the mind sees is a half-breed in a war bonnet with long black braids?"
>
> Mark Reed, chair of American Indians in Film and Television

Until Native Americans can rid themselves of their Hollywood-type "baggage," there is no room for the messages they are trying to get across. African Americans worked for years to

end the black face minstrel "Step 'n Fetch It" caricatures, challenging stage shows, movies, and television to replace such acts and demeaning portrayals. They managed to launch a multi-dimensional image through the public television series "Roots," later various sit-coms, and serious drama on television and film. No one can argue that racist black stereotypes have been eliminated, but no one can argue either that Native Americans have achieved a comparable range of media outlets that even hints at the diversity of their population.

Many Native Americans are attempting to confront stereotypes head-on. Novelist and short story writer Sherman Alexie is one of the few "crossover" writers to have the opportunity to do this. In 1998, he was invited to participate with seven other people in the PBS Lehrer News Hour Discussion on Race with President Clinton. He has also been featured on Politically Incorrect, 60 Minutes II, and NOW with Bill Moyers, for which he wrote a special segment on insomnia and his writing process. His reputation as an imaginative and sometimes controversial author and personality gave him fame. Young people who are not Native are more likely to know his name than any other person in Indian Country, while older non-Native people are most likely to know about Cherokee leader Wilma Mankiller.

There simply are not many publicly known contemporary Native Americans outside Native circles. Some know there is/was one person in Congress, although they do not remember his name. Those interested in politics mention he switched parties from being a Democrat to a Republican. Among politically and policy oriented people, Ben Nighthorse Campbell was well-known and influential due to his seniority on key committees and his unique status as the only American Indian in the Senate. His presence was important as a point of access for tribal leaders highly respected in their own communities but powerless in the larger society. He also acted as a reminder to other legislators about the existence of American Indians. Unfortunately, his election did not signal many changes. Native people have had few Congressional representatives. In the recent past, two people in the House, enrolled members of tribes, were elected from Oklahoma, but one lost his seat in 2004. Senator Campbell, who retired at the end of 2005, was one of the few indigenous leaders who had been heard of by the general public.

On Capitol Hill, public policy professionals and Congressional committee staff in certain offices have some familiarity with Indian issues because more Native Americans come to lobby, but the picture is still distorted, as well as incomplete. It would be the rare citizen who knew that Native American issues are overseen by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Resources Committee. At the time of this writing, Senator McCain (AZ) and Representative Richard Pombo (CA) chair those committees. Issues are also unknown.

David Mullon (Cherokee), who is one of the highest ranking staff members dealing with Indian issues, says even positive legislation is unknown outside Native circles, simply because the bills are not headline grabbers. Useful legislation has passed and yet Senator Campbell lamented in one hearing, "As I just go over in my own mind all the bills that we've dealt with to try and help Indian people, I can't remember a single one, frankly, that the administration--anybody's administration over the last 12 years I've been here-- has put forth. Most of the good bills that have come up and gone through the committee have come from Indian people."

One example of the disconnect between the average Native and non-Native in regard to Native leaders was the reaction to the death of a man famous and revered in Indian Country: Vine Deloria Jr. People who are respected by their peers and communities may be just one of many names to those in the wider world. This can be true even when, in their field or arena of action, they are considered to be world renowned or influential Americans by eminent authorities and luminaries. Obituaries of Deloria appeared in a few national and western newspapers. MSNBC online reprinted a tribute from Indian Country Today; CBS online used an Associated Press story; ABC News and US World mentioned his death in roll calls of notables who died in 2005 (one sentence identifications). Thus, while his death was certainly acknowledged, the attention paid did not reflect his stature.

If mainstream journalists read tribal new sources, they would find a wealth of material about Indian heroes or heroines. It would be hard to miss or resist an editorial tribute that started: **"Burn tobacco today for the wonderful spirit of Vine Deloria Jr., who passed into the world of the ancestors Nov. 13."**

Over the course of four decades, Vine Deloria Jr. provided enormous perception, guidance, strategy and sheer analytical heft to the struggle for respect and justice for American Indians. Already a mature political mind at the genesis of the tumultuous American Indian activism that erupts in the late 1960s, the young lawyer-historian-theologian penned the early books that galvanized political thinking and discussion among the new wave of activism in Indian country.

Vine Deloria Jr. has been compared with Martin Luther King Jr. as a consciousness-raiser and social critic**,** and with the Pope as a cultural unifier. Recognized by "Time" magazine as one of the great spiritual thinkers, most non-Natives aware of him viewed him as an activist who changed their perceptions through his needling irony. Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) is widely considered the pre-eminent Native intellectual of the 20th century. He authored 25 books and hundreds of articles, served as director of the National Congress of American Indians and, as a college professor, challenged college students to meet high standards. Wilma Mankiller, former principal chief of Cherokee Nation, called Deloria's books the clearest articulation of "the unspoken emotions, dreams and lifeways of our people." Vine Deloria was persuasive, amusing and serious, viewing the purpose of tribes to be ensuring as beneficial a life as possible for their members or citizens. In recognition of his influence, he received Indian Country Today's American Indian Visionary Award in 2005. Part of the salute is in the box above. Deloria insisted in his acceptance speech that unsung hero Hank Adams, modest and humble, ought to have been honored instead. Deloria "walked on" nine months later.

After Vine Deloria's death, Hank Adams was given the 2006 award. He is credited as the person who negotiated peaceful ends to some of the most dangerous standoffs in modern Indian history **…** and yet is virtually unknown to non-Natives. The award ceremony lasted for two and a half hours because there were so many stories to be told about and by Adams. Some of these appear in the boxed story below that ran in Indian Country Today. Hank Adams had a lot of wisdom in his approach on controversial matters. When he joined struggles over fishing rights, the issue became "Why throw hundreds into jail for fishing while whites kill them (the fish) all of the time?" Hank Adams' principles include: "Do the right thing" and "Focus your own story. You can be the best spokesmen for yourselves."

Born on the Fort Peck reservation in Montana in 1943, Adams is Assiniboine-Sioux. But his mother married a Quinault man and moved to Washington state, where Adams grew up with the Northwest fishing tribes. Among his other feats of mediation, he later bridged the gap between the buffalo culture of the Plains and the salmon culture of the Northwest.

Famously self-effacing, Adams was a crucial behind-the-scenes figure in practically every scene of the militant Indian revival of the last four decades. He is best known in the history books for his negotiations with the White House to resolve the takeover of the BIA building in Washington in 1972 during the Trail of Broken Treaties protest and to wind down the 10-week siege of Wounded Knee in 1973. Both incidents could have caused untold casualties, but his ability to gain the confidence of both sides is credited with keeping bloodshed to a minimum.

He also helped retrieve boxes of documents taken from the BIA building, fearing that their loss would jeopardize Indian claims that later took shape in the Cobell v. Norton lawsuit.

Since those dramatic days, Adams might have been less visible but his influence has expanded, internationally as well as in Indian country. During the late 1980s, he spent time in Nicaragua, drawing attention to the precarious situation of its east coast Indian tribes in that country's struggle. He also helped negotiate the Canadian-U.S. treaty on Northwest fisheries.

Indian Country Today's first Visionary Award (2004) went to Billy Frank, Jr., chair of the North West Indian Fisheries Commission (see http://www.tribalgov.pdx.edu/bio_frank.php). Many current American Indian heroes could be of interest to other Americans, if only their stories were told to a wider audience than that of Native peoples.

Obstacles to appropriate representation and news coverage

- Native law is distinctly different. Not only do Native Americans have special programs, the origins of the unique set of treaties, court cases, laws, and regulations are not easy to explain. There is even a different committee in the U.S. Senate to deal with prospective legislation because it is particular to Native Nations. Tribes also have special problems and the solutions can be compelling, but confounding.

- Many concerns are not universal, or even nationwide; therefore few other groups have a stake in the outcome. A Capitol Hill example is the possible cut of funding for the Johnson-O'Malley program, which has helped local school budgets and served the cultural needs Native American students since 1934. While important to a small group, there will be no comprehension or sense of crisis from the public.

- Native stories often are complex, involving tribal histories, treaties, cultures, and controversies. Reporters and editors who value brevity are apt to be dissuaded from trying to do the work required to find, research, and edit stories that will capture the imagination of readers, listeners, and viewers.

- There are fewer daily newspapers and magazines that might have space for the length that some stories require… that is, those not intended for the Internet.

- Print and broadcast editors do not see the point of informing themselves about this small and submerged group, unless there are some compelling reasons, such as a conflict between

county and tribal governments. Owners and managers of many media outlets are of the opinion that ordinary news stories about Native Americans would not otherwise appeal to their readers.

- Native America is not homogenous. There is no King or Queen (nor, certainly, Indian Princesses). There is no unanimous set of situations, problems and solutions. Indeed, opinions will vary dramatically because there are 562 federally recognized tribes (227 in Alaska), plus state recognized tribes, in the United States. However, many tribal leaders increasingly come together, write policy resolutions, and establish priorities.

> Local or regional newspapers sometimes feature current events about tribes in their area such as the fact that Virginia tribes are formally recognized by Britain but are not federally recognized at home. Top television networks could have covered the following newsworthy, thought-provoking event in 2006, which had plenty of visuals.
>
> Eight of Virginia's tribal leaders and over 50 of their members were flown to Gravesend, England for a week-long tour in July to meet with members of Parliament, lecture at the University of Kent and participate in local festivals celebrating Native American customs and traditions.

- The American public as a whole is less informed than media representatives. For many, Native Americans are curiosities or even oddities. Limited aspects of the American Indian world-- certain graphic designs, turquoise jewelry, baskets, pottery, long hair--are familiar to the public, yet such awareness lacks a deeper understanding of Native cultures and worldviews.

- Ignorance by non-Natives can be so annoying that it hinders attempts at dialogue. Regrettably, indigenous people in the United States must interact with non-indigenous people who will ask questions that display total ignorance, or worse. Native Americans therefore have to be prepared to engage in a shallow exchange in order to reach deeper communication. Much time is taken up bringing people, including those in mass communications, "up to speed" by teaching "Indians 101" (the basic facts) or "*Indians 100*," as some laughingly say. Out of a combination of carelessness, ignorance, and sometimes enmity, errors and affronts will happen, and it takes enormous patience to persevere.

- Ambivalence. For a variety of reasons, not all tribes want their stories known outside their own tribal communities.

- Tribes who do want to express their concerns to a wider world often are understaffed, and unwilling or unable to take the time to write and send press releases, e-mails, and make phone calls. Furthermore, such outreach may not be reciprocated promptly, leading to discouragement, and an end to such efforts.

- The press latches onto problems. For commercial media outlets, good news is seldom considered news worthy. Old timers in the business know "if it bleeds, it leads." Thus, mainstream media did not hesitate covering the tragic story of the shootings on Minnesota's Red Lake Reservation – even if they knew virtually nothing about Red Lake.

- Although many happenings in Indian Country relate directly to events in the larger society, that angle rarely is covered. Two examples of solemnity surrounding the aftermath of 9-11 make the point. According to Indianz.com, in October 2001, the fourth annual NAMMY (think Grammy) show included the singing of the national anthem in Dineh (Navajo) and Amazing Grace in a Native language. Then, as part of the ongoing commemoration, in May 2002, the Cherokee National Youth Choir sang "America" in New York and the national anthem in Washington, DC, in Cherokee, expressing patriotism and love of all "God's children." Similarly, the efforts of various tribes to help tribal members in the south affected by Hurricane Katrina were virtually ignored in the non-Native media.

- Getting a large audience without major resources is a challenge. Original and educational stories, initiated by organizations such as Native American Public Telecommunications, are shown on public television or cable channels**,** but these reach a relatively small audience compared to Steven Spielberg's 12-hour series "Into the West" shown on Turner Network in primetime, which had a huge production and advertising budget.

Assumptions stop entertainment developments, in the view of Robert Redford, actor, director, and founder of the Sundance Institute: Even after the $2 million *Smoke Signals* made $6.8 million in 1998, few distributors took notice. "For years, nobody would support Native American filmmakers," says Redford. "Distributors said, 'There is no market, there is no interest.' But I would say: 'C'mon, you guys. Have you really given it a chance? What about the Latin American market you said didn't exist? Look at *Y Tu Mamá También.*' I believe Native Americans' stories will be able to succeed as well." (Reed Martin, USA Today, 2003)

- The mainstream media, especially in broadcasting, hires too few Native American journalists. Newspapers across the country have hired only 300 Native journalists, among many more that are highly qualified professionals, and available. With the shrinking of news departments, it is even harder to break in. When Native journalists are hired, it may take time to gain acceptance. Others may view their interpretations, editorial judgments, and renderings of stories about race or class as biased.

- Many Native-owned and operated publications are not as independent as some Native and non-Native journalism scholars and practitioners recommend. Of course, tribal publications can at times be mouthpieces for tribal councils and still play a valuable community role. But such publications can be pretty much unaccountable in situations where they are "house organs." Because tribes fund them, any unhelpful policy or political decisions by new tribal government leaders can cause newspaper managers to lose editorial control. The watchdog, oversight, and exposé role is diminishing in most fields of journalism; however, a number of Native journalists such as Bonnie Red Elk, Tom Arviso, and Paul DeMain are admired for

their decades of work and some tribes such as the Cherokees are quite committed to freedom of the press.

Ways to Overcome the Obstacles

What mainstream commercial press can do

- Unlike elected officials, journalists cannot be lobbied. Independence is crucial. Journalists want to identify stories rather than having potential news thrust insistently upon them. Editors protect the process for ultimate story selection and placement from public scrutiny that can turn antagonistic. However, such freedom of the press ideals and practices must be balanced. Encouraging those who are normally left out of the news is also part of journalistic integrity.

- News-gatherers who want to learn about Indian Country could find no better overall education and start than by attending the annual convention of the largest organization representing American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians, which is the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). Typical topics are: economic development, tribal self-determination, education, sacred sites, the environment, healthcare, taxation, telecommunications, jurisdiction, veterans, housing, elders, philanthropy, and voting rights. It is highly unusual for "Big Name" or even merely interested communicators from the commercial media or non-profit publications to attend the annual convention. Whoever does gets quite a jump-start on Native American news.

- The mainstream media could meet with the NCAI leadership and with heads of other national Native organizations. Journalists could reach out to Native journalists. They can discuss the major messages tribal leaders want to convey: there has been a lot of positive legislation over the last 15 years brought about by Indian advocacy and a lot of positive developments in Indian country. Why not explore the current policy agenda?

- Journalists can read the magazine from the National Museum of the American Indian, which offers extensive information on tribal “stars.” The summer 2006 issue featured Bolivian President Evo Morales (Aymara), Tanya Tago (Inuit) performing throat singing at Carnegie Hall, actor Adam Beach (Ojibwa), and "carriers of culture" at the Smithsonian Folk Festival.

- Brainstorm! Too few mainstream journalists brainstorm or discuss with Native representatives the type of stories they might run, including success stories, legislative actions, and timely topics. These are among the types of stories Native Americans would like for the general public and the Congress to hear. Need even more? Click on to Indianz.com and sign up for nativenewsonline @ yahoo.com.

- Featuring various activities of a single Indian Nation such as the Blackfeet could be intriguing. One of their leaders, former treasurer Elouise Cobell, initiated the biggest legal case ever brought against the federal government (see http://www.fcnl.org/nativeam/.) Because of its past successes, the tribe was asked to recruit 1,000 Native Americans to work as emergency personnel for the Federal Emergency Management Association. Blackfeet

leaders using eagle feathers, prayers, chants, and ceremonies honored firefighters who saved their land. The latest and largest Cherokee budget proposal reflects a new era of growth and prosperity that is being shared with lower income people. The Tribal Council voted to raise minimum wages paid at tribally owned businesses from the state and federal wage of $5.15 per hour to $8 per hour. It was a close vote because of the high costs. Every tribe has up-to-date stories to tell as well as distinct perspectives among its citizens.

- Do not overlook news that comes from activities of a Native college or university -- such as a tribal college, or Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma has the highest Indian student enrollment of any four-year university in the United States. (As another angle, Northeastern State is in the process of changing the name of its sports teams currently called the Redmen.)

- Featuring the pan-tribal activities and centers of a city would be educational. The histories of the Bay Area and the Chicago Indian communities have been written and could be updated through photo-shoots and videotaping. New York City has 59,000 Native Americans residents and Multnomah County in Oregon has 31,000 Native residents from 300 tribes. Genocide of the Mind by Marijo Moore, the Urban Indian Experience in America by Donald Fixico, and An Urban Indian's Quest for Justice by Lawney Reyes are three resources to provide context.

- Messages and information can be disseminated through church bulletins and various newsletters.

What Native people can do with the cooperation of the larger society

- Natives themselves need to be proactive about getting their stories out. This is important to enhance communications among Indian tribes as well as to provide positive stories to the larger culture. Where possible, tribal leaders can build community coalitions and alliances with non-Natives. The mainstream press has a broader reach than the Native press; stories could be co-authored. Tribal leaders and publicists can learn not only media "rules" and routines but also how to be evocative. They can regularly send stirring, intriguing, timely stories to journalists or provide them with "hooks" to tie their local angle to a national story. Native representatives can speak to editorial boards asking: "Will you help us pitch our story"? The real challenge for tribes is remaining open to reporters--reputable, trustworthy ones--when they come calling after a murder, a tragedy, or a leadership power struggle.

- **Story suggestions are important. Send regular updates to the media about award winners and other prominent people. There are Native American Music Awards, Harvard's Honoring Nations awards, the American Indian visionary awards, and many contests for young women. Nine Native Americans have won MacArthur genius awards to date. Editors could consider special features. Business and popular publications run stories about the "100 Influentials" who are Hispanic, African American, female, working on Capitol Hill, and so forth. Such positive articles focus on achievement or prestige or power. Similarly, featuring prominent Native Americans in all professions, spokespersons, and leading voices of those involved in politics and policy would make an interesting article**.

- Native journalists suggest tribal officials should call mainstream media and invite these people to visit to get ideas for stories. 'News of the day' is very different outside of the reservation and inside of the reservation. Thus, Native Americans must establish a working relationship and dialogue with local reporters. One tribal government hired a bus to treat local reporters to "a day on the reservation" to educate them, and found the effort paid off in a number of positive stories, and as importantly, a number of reliable contacts.

- Native media can be the instigators, or the helpers, in furthering Native stories. A number of excellent Indian institutions exist, such as the American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS). They can be contacted for suggestions or media clips. Grassroots organizations such as the Native Networking Policy Center and the Native Media and Technology Network can provide technical information, skills, and savvy about everything from connecting people for change to influencing the rewrite of the Communications Act in Congress.

- Native academics and others can provide those in mass communications with Internet and other resources; such materials could help soften the position or stance of journalists who assert they cannot pay attention because they do not have an "Indian beat."

- First person accounts are important sources for stories. Native journalists and leaders can track stories, review them, and hold focus group discussions to get a handle on how the public is seeing things. In coordination with other journalists and societal decision-makers, Native people can develop a toolkit with stories as learning tools and fit them to the options available from media outlets. With some news, time is of the essence. In other cases, a story can be "stored in the can" for a moment when filler is needed. Some publications will print fuller stories during "dead time."

- Take the time to educate people about what is objectionable or funny or serious to Native Americans. Many non-Natives are fearful of offending and being denounced. Others are unsure what they are expected to know. Educated non-Natives can feel ignorant when they are *unable to pronounce* the names of tribes and distinguished individuals when they want to be respectful. Mike Roberts, President of First Nations Development Institute, is of the Tlingit Nation: Gooch/Ch'aak' naa (Wolf/Eagle Tribe), Kóon Hít (Flicker House), Kooyu Kwáan (Kuiu Island People). His Tlingit name is T'eix Sháach Tsín. A documentary about Seneca Chief Ely Parker, who was born in 1828 and became a Cabinet-level government official, explains that his first tribal name was Hasanowanda and his second was Donehogawa. These names are hard for most viewers to learn and remember. Native journalists, educators, and others could assist by providing phonetic pronunciation in parentheses in situations where that is appropriate. Filmmakers and broadcasters could help by repeating names more often than one would with commonly used names. (This is the same challenge as helping the public learn to pronounce the last names of immigrants from places as diverse as Poland and Africa.) Radio hosts who cannot say a name correctly often resort to guffaws or elaborate apologies, thereby setting the guest apart as peculiar.

- <u>Those seeking media coverage frequently must tie their stories to current events</u>. Coverage could come from being viewed as part of a hot story -- such as the effects on various sectors of American society of border crossing, new walls, and increased numbers of guards. For

example, the Tohono O'odham tribe has been affected more drastically than other communities in the Southwest (and its land is as big as the state of Connecticut). The water rights of Native Americans could be included in a larger story on water struggle now and in the future. Coverage could come as part of a narrow story such as problems with No Child Left Behind or as part of a broad story about schools, although tribes would prefer to make their own educational agenda stand out as a separate story. Some dimensions of contemporary Indian life are quite parallel to activities enjoyed by the general public, but occur on a different timetable; for example, the public might be interested in the World Indigenous Nations Games. Fads are another hook. In the past, the Mohawk high ironworkers were a fascination. Today, the media may be interested in those tribes who provide and train fire fighters. The public also likes success stories. Students living in a Superfund site worked with their teacher Rebecca Jim to form the Cherokee Volunteer Society to bring national attention and help to the Tar Creek area of Oklahoma.

- A number of mainstream publications that have already published stories could be urged to run more. Other magazines such as Yes and Mother Jones have run articles, which suggests the potential for a broader reach. The challenge is to create an information clearinghouse to supply current and interesting materials to millions of Americans in creative ways.

- Strategically, it is best to be selective in what articles to respond to that are misleading or stereotyped, since only so many complaints will be heard; pick major news outlets to contact and educate. As NCAI President Joe Garcia advised about policy issues-- "We must pick our battles and focus on the well-being and livelihood of our people." It may be harder but more effective to promote articles about how "ordinary" Native Americans are faring--apart from gaming. This is similar to policy expert Paul Moorehead's observation that "Trying to advance positive legislation is harder than fending off attacks." Perhaps Native leaders can suggest an alternate positive story-- exploring a concept such as the rebirth of Native foods or the growing economic success of the Lakota Fund and the Oweesta Corporation connected with First Nations Development Institute. Or how the Native American Rights Fund is assisting the Pawnee Nation in the reburial of about 800 human remains in Nebraska, a process that involves transferring private land within the Pawnee homeland to the tribe for use as a burial and cultural site.

- An opportunity exists to expand the circle of support by interacting with those who are not knowledgeable and have little cultural sensitivity in this context but are willing to learn. Realistically, it is wise to ignore bigots and to concentrate on opinion leaders and influential people who can talk informally or formally with media owners and editors to put on pressure to assure fair and interesting coverage. People of tribal heritage living in urban areas have a particularly challenging task as they try to reach out to major media outlets in their city or county

- Technology and the information highway can be a powerful tool for Indian Country as Native journalists, tribal leaders, and performers reach a wider audience. New national and local radio stations provide access and important information. In the past, clipping services allowed researchers and policy makers to hone in on specific concerns within a larger body of content and now there are online news aggregators. A number of services such as Native

News (Yahoo) and websites such as Indianz.com collect stories that make it much easier to track particular issues and to gain general information about what is transpiring in Indian Country. There is also user, individual, and audience generated content. Forwarding materials from these sources to mainstream media organizations is one way to create interest. In addition, such organizations should want to recruit these younger Blackberry-using Native Americans with their highly developed technology skills.

Some Really Great Story Ideas

1. The significance of particular issues, such as health care being forwarded or stalled on Capitol Hill. These are the stories that will ultimately affect the well being of millions of Native Americans -- both urban and rural. What is behind the recent White House tactic of repeatedly stopping bills crucial to the health and well being of American Indians and Alaska Natives, bills that have proceeded through proper channels and committees, within 48 hours of passage?

2. Investigations that some Native Americans would like to see started now there is a change in congressional leadership. Ethics investigations have been conducted of Department of Interior staff; however, these have not been integrated with the trust fund scandal that led to the Cobell case. No one was ever fired for "losing" or mismanaging individual and tribal trust funds. Where did the missing billions go and who benefited from leaving a dysfunctional system in place? (Congressional investigations decrying the system were published as early as 1915.) The Clinton administration had an opportunity to settle the case quickly. Who objected and stopped progress?

3. The growing Native media infrastructure which informs millions of people and could be used to inform millions more if its stories were picked up by the mainstream media. These include articles about the need for enhanced public safety and many topics that will appeal equally to conservative and liberal readers, listeners, and viewers.

4. Discussion of this famous quote: "It is a pity that so many Americans today think of the Indian as a romantic or comic figure in American history without contemporary significance. In fact, the Indian plays much the same role in our society that the Jews played in Germany. Like the miner's canary, the Indian marks the shift from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, reflects the rise and fall in our democratic faith." (Felix Cohen, 1953)

5. Comparisons of the treatment of indigenous people in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia by national governments and landmark decisions by those countries' courts. In September 2006, a federal court granted Aborigines title to Perth, a major Australian city. The ruling would not take away private lands, but might open unallocated lands, forests, and parks and give new access to the Nyoongar people. The rights claims started after passage of the Native Title Act in 1995. The case has been appealed. Compare the Australian case with the class action Cobell case in the United States to obtain Indian land profits held by the Interior Department that started after passage of reform legislation in 1994.

6. America's own languages. Only 150 indigenous languages are left in this country. That number could drop to 20, a matter of grave concern to linguists and elders. Language is totally interconnected with meaning and culture. The Los Angeles Times and other papers have written articles on this subject, but there are many more angles to explore. How does language preservation and rejuvenation fit with the English only campaign? As its 2007 Oscar submission, Australia is touting a movie entirely filmed in an Indigenous language; how does this compare with Dancing with Wolves and other U.S. films that use some Indian dialogue with subtitles? The Indigenous Languages Institute has sponsored a project called "Storytelling with technology" that encourages tribal members to use special typewriters to write little books in their own language. Journalists could explore five of the top language revitalization programs in Indian Country. Such programs could be compared with those in Canada and New Zealand. One language preservation expert to contact is Harvard graduate Darrell Robes Kipp.

7. Embassy of Tribal Nations. Native Americans are raising money to buy property on Embassy Row in Washington, DC. Opening an embassy of their own is a reminder of the historic and unique political relationship of Native Nations in the U.S. Here is something to think about: this embassy would represent 99% of the nations in North America (if it weren't for First Nations in Canada). One leader to contact is Ron Allen, National Congress of American Indians.

8. First Americans Think Tank. American Indians have created their first research center, policy analysis center, and think tank, called the Policy Research Center. One project it has undertaken is visioning for a collective agenda to build a better world for the future, for the Seventh Generation of descendents. While the Policy Research Center is a modest beginning, previously resources were so scarce that such a center was an impossible dream. The article could point out that the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies focused on African-Americans was launched in 1970. One leader to contact is Sarah Hicks.

9. Ambassador program. The desire by indigenous people from around the globe for self-determination and their sense of urgency to be part of societal planning helped move the United Nations forward in creating new rights and recognition for those living in ancestral territories. They formed partnerships with many non-indigenous people in this lengthy struggle. Domestically, a network gradually is being formed between indigenous peoples throughout the world. Americans for Indian Opportunity has been linking young leaders here with those in New Zealand (Maori), South America, and elsewhere. When a group is overlooked at home, finding a common identity strengthens each group. One leader to contact is Laura Harris.

10. Appropriation, taking, and respect. A good number of people are captivated by the notion of "mystique." Some are what has been called "New Age" types with a sense of entitlement to use what they like in the culture. Others are spiritually sensitive people who value religious rituals such as sweat lodges and seek consultation with Native peoples about sharing ceremonies. The desire of outsiders to create their own forms of these practices can engender tension with tribes that want to give or deny permission to "borrow" or adapt rituals and traditions. (Imagine the reaction if a layperson decided to copy certain procedures and perform a Catholic mass.) Such a topic would be fodder for religion, ethics, and cultural sensitivity stories. A modern version of taking from Indians is intellectual property theft. Hundreds of products have been marketed using Indian names, pictures, symbols, ferocity, and fantasies and yet Indian people and tribes receive not one penny. A related story might be new opportunities for changing who controls images in, for instance, the Indian apparel industry (go to rezdogs.com). Two leaders to contact would be Chris Peters of the Seventh Generation Fund and Chad (Corntassle) Smith, Principal Chief of the Cherokees

11. Giving and Tribal philanthropy. Those at all familiar with Indian ways and lore are fascinated by the custom of gift giving, but many myths surround this practice. There are protocols that non-Natives have heard of but do not fully understand about gift giving and these could be explained. Traditions of appropriate gifts to honor, recognize and thank individuals could be discussed. Why quilts? Why Pendleton blankets? At the collective level, few non-Natives have heard how tribes help each other through monetary gifts and loans. An analysis of articles in Native newspapers and on Native websites about money could be revealing. For example, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux tribe awarded more than $15 million in 2005. Tribes have given a great deal of money to the Boys and Girls clubs so valued by tribes. National Indian organizations have also been on the receiving end of corporate giving from sponsors such as Nike. For the values of reciprocity and redistribution, contact leader LaDonna Harris.

12. Cultural icon. A backlog exists of requests for eagle bodies and eagle feathers used in traditional ceremonies; the federal government doles them out from a depository in Denver. Only enrolled members of federally recognized tribes are allowed to use feathers. There has been a clash between protection of endangered species and free exercise of religion. An accommodation has been reached where Native people can apply for a permit to possess eagle feathers and parts, although the wait can be three years or longer for body parts. Tribes, too, are also concerned with wildlife protection. This issue could be compared with past and present struggles over subsistence and rights issues around fishing. One celebrated and charismatic leader to interview regarding these latter struggles is Billy Frank, Jr. who has said, "I have spoken for the salmon for more than 50 years, and I will tell you this: If salmon go extinct, it will be due to lost and damaged habitat."

13. Increased participation in political process. In South Dakota in 2006, nine American Indian candidates ran for seats in the state legislature. Is there new Native political clout? Apparently, in earlier elections, two U.S. senators and one representative owed their victories to a Native block of votes. What role, if any, did the votes of tribal people play in the pivotal Montana senatorial election? Nationwide, how many new Native Americans came out to vote in 2006? In recent elections, "I'm Indian and I vote" was a popular button to wear. Which tribe increased its percentage of voting most and why? Are urban dwellers also voting more? Are Native Americans taken more seriously by national politicians as a group or only by politicians in states with numerous tribes? One national leader to contact is Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians.

14. Interaction with countries the current administration condemns. Some of the northeast tribes have received cheaper oil from Venezuela and expressed gratitude in formal meetings. Navajo Nation finalized a trade agreement to sell food products to Cuba and the tribe's U.S. representative Tom Udall was on the trip when this happened. The administration has hostile relations with these countries; tribes have had "foes" closer to home. Now tribes are seeking to establish better relationships with local and state governments and working with organizations like the National Conference of State Legislatures to do so.

15. Explaining that American Indians do pay taxes. The myths and facts about rights and requirements in the tax area are important to discuss. Few in the general public know that individual Native Americans pay federal income tax, FICA tax, and Social Security. The topic cannot be discussed without reference to sovereignty, lands, government-to-government relations, court cases, etc. so this story will require space and time.

16. Looking at a disease through Indian eyes. Tribes may have to deal with unusual diseases, such as Hantavirus, and common diseases such as diabetes, plus others faced earlier by the larger public. For instance, as AIDS has spread and bird flu has become a huge worry, isolated villages and reservations have had to come to grips with a contagious disease, which could decimate a tribal community. Kwigluk Island could be the focus of the bird flu aspect of the story. Have tribal people been able to separate the disease and its prevention from the HIV positive individual who requires community support and compassion? How would current fears relate to past experience with small pox, tuberculosis, and other epidemics? Are there traditional healing methods that can be used with regular illnesses and addictions? What public health resources do tribes have to deal with bioterrorism?

17. Advancing care that would improve health status. The U.S. medical system has been revolutionized while the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) system of health care has been unable to keep up. Patients among the general public spend less time in hospitals and more in their own communities and homes. Prevention has been prioritized to save misery and money. Comprehensive coordination of mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse services—called behavioral health--is now standard practice. Achieving these same improvements for Native patients is imperative and there are bills in Congress that could make this possible. One leader to contact is Rachel Joseph. Analyzing significance of cuts at the local level is another angle. For instance, Loneman School on the Pine Ridge reservation had its funds cut in half, meaning no summer program, transportation, school supplies and breakfast-lunch meals for students. One leader to contact is Principal Deborah Bordeaux.

18. Correcting a century old financial injustice. In *1887*, the federal government insisted on becoming the banker/custodian of Indian trust funds generated by land profit royalties and has managed assets for individuals ever since. At this point, approximately half-a-million Native Americans with trust lands have accounts *in their name*, e.g., Romina Eagle Bear; Tcilaqs Eagle Bear, Wayne Eagle Bear, Elmer Eagle Boy, Samantha Eagle Boy. However, their income and royalties are collected and held by the Department of Interior, which is the trustee.

Unfortunately for Native families, Congress and Interior failed to correct gross problems, obvious by 1915, such as lack of record keeping. One result was that generations were needlessly kept in poverty when they had resources. There are bills in Congress to repay the billions of dollars owed to these individuals. The leader to contact is Elouise Cobell. A related but a different angle involves tribes that also have suffered from mishandling of their property and trust funds. While the Department of Interior denies problems, Attorney General Albert Gonzalez stated in an appropriations hearing that he needed more staff to work on trusts issues because the potential liability is $200 billion dollars. A tribal trust fund accounting lawsuit was filed by tribes in December 2006.

19. Current examples of bias, hate, and organized opposition. Examples of bias and sarcasm appear in college publications such as the Cornell American and in mainstream publications such as the Wall Street Journal. Similar to other groups of color, a disproportionate number of Native Americans are incarcerated. Other concerns are mentioned in Native publications. Here are other examples of discrimination and animus. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found that a prosecutor singled out Native and Native-looking jurors, referring to Native jurors as "darker skinned" and described them as "resistive of the criminal justice system generally and somewhat suspicious of the system." In contrast, a District Attorney in Farmington, New Mexico is prosecuting three young men who beat a Navajo man and used racial slurs as a hate crime. Many groups operate within the law but their purpose could use more explanation. Are organized groups such as the Upstate Citizens for Equality that oppose federal policy regarding indigenous rights and sovereignty known to local and state mainstream journalists?

20. Current examples of ally activities. A community organization, Suquamish Olalla Neighbors (SON), started in 2001 to respond to an incident in which Chief Seattle's grave was desecrated. Since then, the organization has worked to improve understanding and tolerance in an area where prejudices and divisions between the tribal and non-tribal communities flare into ugly confrontations in schools, community meetings, and election campaigns. By 2006, supporters had mobilized the community into other directions, such as helping feed 3,000 people from tribes throughout the Northwest maritime region who went through Suquamish on their annual canoe journey. A national ally of Native peoples, the American Friends Service Committee, has used intertribal journeys as a model for movement building.

21. Gaming and games. Tribes have a good deal of self-governance, but the courts, Congress, and the administration retain many controls. What legal criteria divide permissible from impermissible games for tribes to control on their own? What is social gaming? The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act allows individual tribes to regulate games played traditionally such as "handgame" or stickgame-- a Native American guessing game where teams sit opposite each other. Which games are used during ceremonies or celebrations? Can gaming tied to rodeos be allowed in Class One legal Indian gaming? The history and current forms or rules of this game and other types of Native American gambling activities would be of interest. Have different forms of gaming existed in tribes for a thousand years? Moving away from betting, when did lacrosse start in Indian Country and how did it become a national sport?

22. "Buy Indian." People of color often rely on businesses owned by others. Beyond small business start-up funds, are there other federal programs that Native Americans can tap? What efforts have there been by tribes operating with their own funds to create spin-off corporations from the gaming industry? Is inter-tribal commerce happening? One contact person is Harold Monteau.

23. Interview people in mass communications. Seek to find out why network television producers include so few Native Americans in news and entertainment. For example, one producer said when he joined CBS some years ago, he was told a list of stories not to suggest covering. One was Indians. Why? "Because you have to get so many permissions and because they talk so slowly." This could be an investigative article or an exchange about customs. Even if responses must be anonymous, discuss how decisions or non-decisions about this group are made. Turn the conversation toward the positive. Were they aware of the 31st Annual Indian Film Festival in San Francicso or the 13th annual Native American Film and Video Festival-- that received 550 submissions in 2006?

Surely the above suggestions could fill more than a few column inches, television minutes, web blogs and conversations.

7. Lightening Up to Create a New Conversation

"Native journalists have the ability to tell it from the heart and to tell it from the head…We are great storytellers…Mainstream reporters don't know how to talk to Indians, they don't know anyone on a reservation. You are in a unique position because you understand the culture." (George Benge, Gannett)

Let us return to laughter. In general, all of us resist tragedy. Many stories from Indian Country in the past 50 years have been about desolation and misery on reservations and awful problems resulting from alcohol… creating a weariness for some. This focus may cause journalists and the public to run from the narrative. So much is serious about indigenous history, about current communication challenges, about critically important bills in Congress**,** that dialogues between indigenous and non-indigenous people can grow grave. Sharing humor can help create understanding, openness to change, and real bonds. And humor is a genuine facet of Indian life.

The risks are enormous when generalizing about people from hundreds of tribes, from different regions of the country and language groups, and from widely varying families. However, "outsiders" – including writers, photographers, philosophers, and anthropologists-- frequently generalize, as they explore the spiritual dimension of Native Americans. Less frequently have they paid attention to the playful dimension of the culture. An ironical stance and wryness appear to be the norm rather than guffawing or thigh-slapping jokes. Of course, as in any group, a good number are quiet but others are quick to hug and laugh and tease. Depictions by "outsiders" omit the light-heartedness, fun, and desire to connect that is a staple of family and tribal life.

The imperturbable, stern American Indian personality thought of by the public may be true of some people, however young Native Americans seek to express themselves in unexpected, sometimes amusing ways. Here are excerpts from three personal profiles (http://www.nativeyouthmagazine.com).

My hobby is MySpace.com. My most favorite thing to do is put on my pajamas and drink a warm glass of milk. My goal for the future is to be the best in all that I do. Personal message to the youth; you only live once

My hobbies are playing ball, and listening to Marangay (Latin music). My most favorite thing to do is smile!

The town I live in is small with a population of about 3,000. My hobbies are dancing, school, and like every girl - boys.

Native Americans must deal with imitators, hangers-on, and those interested in romance or fads. Many non-Natives have been mimics, such as New Age people-- entranced by myths, popular histories, and entertainers--who floated around the fringes of Indian life. In response, Native people buy sweatshirts that say "*I was NDN before NDN was cool."* These slogans are most popular with young people, some observers suggest, who enjoy taunting oldsters who cannot figure out what NDN stands for**…** until they say it out loud.

Native people share jokes, including political jokes, between themselves and also with non-Natives who are viewed as part of the extended community. Sometimes a joke is used as a

way of keeping going a chat or conversation that seems to have ended. The director of a Native business association whispers "illegals." He continues, more loudly, "Illegals, illegals, illegals…. Everyone is always talking about illegal immigrants. Well, the only people in the country who aren't illegals are Native Americans." He smiles broadly and taps his chest.

Sherman Alexie, famous author and filmmaker, told Bill Moyers in a television interview: "I was walking in downtown Seattle when this pick-up truck pulls up in front of me. Guy leans out the window and yells, `Go back to your own country,'" and I was laughing so hard because it wasn't so much a hate crime as a crime of irony. "

Native leaders employ their individual brand of humor.

*At a luncheon speech to a receptive group of elders, the tribal chief who spoke wove in clever, wicked jokes about religious representatives who sought to convert the Indians of old.

*Oren Lyons, revered elder and Faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation, was speaking to tribes being honored and had been reflecting on Indian people giving voice in a way that helps human beings and the earth. "Speaking of the people who admire American Indians in countries throughout the world," he said, "There are people in the world `who just love American Indians.'" He added, "But I don't know about downtown Tulsa," which brought laughter from the audience."

*As with any group, many leaders with responsible jobs and positions are effortlessly witty or enjoy playing to the crowd. Louis Gray, former editor of the "Native Times," had the entire room laughing when he appeared on a panel at a Native American Journalists Association conference, but the humor was contextual and no "jokes" can be pulled out of his presentation.

Louis LaRose was featured in an article entitled "Reinventing Tradition."

> [Louis LaRose had a story to tell and he knew how to tell it well.]
>
> "Gotta get you guys organized. So grab a chair and form a circle," LaRose said to his audience, themselves aspiring storytellers.
>
> LaRose continued to break down the barriers of unfamiliarity between himself and the group of students.
>
> "Tell me who you are and what tribe you are, so I know how to tease you," he said.

Such self-introductions are an opportunity for humor. The late James Schlender, whose Indian name was Zaagajiwe, headed the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission for two decades. This job required a lot of interaction. Zaagajiwe would use his own language to introduce himself and his heritage: "*Boozhoo. Zaagajiwe indizhinikaaz. Odaawaa-zaaga'iganing indoonjibaa. Bizhiw indoodem.*" Then, he would inevitably smile and add in English, "And, you know, we of the Bizhiw Clan are the most handsome of all."

At conventions and other gatherings, Native Americans frequently wear tee shirts with jocular self-mocking slogans such as "Will work for frybread" and "Life's short. Pow-wow hard." By far the most popular slogan is *"Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism Since 1492."*

That's right...funny Indians.

You got a problem with that?

Charlie Hill and Club Red web page

It is worth noting that most so-called Indian jokes in books, on the Internet, and elsewhere are jokes about Indian people, even when disguised to look as if they are authentically the work of Native Americans. They do not originate from the grassroots or from Indian comedians such as Charlie Hill, Don Burnstick, Drew LaCapa, Wallace Coffey, Mark Yafee, J. R. Redwater, or Jim Ruel. Hill is a television writer as well as a performer and heads "Club Red," a comedy show that raises consciousness by using such devices as airing fake advertisements, e.g., a car commercial for the "sporty new Filipino."

Native Comedian Vaughn Eaglebear uses this line: "*The Cleveland Indians are going to change their name. They don't want to be known as a team that perpetuates racial stereotypes. From now on they're just going to be called the Indians."*

Such Indian-originated humor is a far cry from the early children's television program "Howdy Doody" featuring characters named Princess Summerfall Winterspring of the Tinka Tonka Tribe and Chief Thunderthud of the Ooragnak tribe who said "kawabonga." Comic books from Disney, comic strips such as Little Abner which featured Kickapoo Joy Juice, and other forms of popular culture presented tribal people in grossly insensitive ways meant to be funny.

Depictions of Indians in western movies are notorious because of their rigidity, skewed history, and artificiality. The stereotypes involve brutal violence and primitivism (How many real Indians ever raised a palm and said “How”?) Until about 20 years ago, white actors played most of the Indian roles. Natalie Wood and Katherine Ross are among the many actresses; actors included Charles Bronson, Howard Keel, Burt Lancaster, Anthony Quinn, William Shatner, and Sam Waterson. Many Native children have been confused and hurt by being the bad guys, although a number of children of color (and others) identified with the Indians.

Looking back on earlier eras, some delight in mocking such movies. A few directors made western films such as Cheyenne Autumn intended to be sympathetic to the First Americans. However, today adult Indians may laugh at the sympathetic films too because (a) white actors played most of the Indian roles and (b) trickster tactics are used by some of the Indian actors actually hired. Tribal members watching the film today hoot when Cheyenne leaders speak in *Navajo* supposedly discussing treaties and tribal needs. "What the Navajo actors in the film really said in solemn tones generally concerned the size of the colonel's penis or some similarly humorous, disrespectful, and earthy reference," writes media analyst Michael Real discussing a scene in Tony Hillerman's novel Sacred Clowns.

The popular movie Smoke Signals has a scene of dialogue between two young Native men that evolves into a chant.

> Thomas: The cowboys *always* win. Look at Tom Mix. And what about John Wayne? Man, he was about the toughest cowboy of them all, enit?
>
> Victor: You know, in all those movies, you never saw John Wayne's teeth. Not once. I think there's something wrong when you don't see a guy's teeth.
>
> (*breaks into song while pounding a rhythm*)
>
> Oh, John Wayne's teeth, John Wayne's teeth, hey, hey, hey, hey, ye! Oh, John Wayne's teeth, John Wayne's teeth, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, ye! Are they false, are they real? Are they plastic, are they steel? Hey, hey, hey, hey, yeeeee!
>
> Script and lyrics by Sherman Alexie

In conclusion, on the matter of Native humor, we offer to anyone who has not yet seen it, the following list. Its author and origin are unknown, but that does not matter. Widely circulated, it resonates with Native people and can be a consciousness-raiser for non-Natives.

Top 10 Things You Can Say To A White Person Upon First Meeting:

10. How much white are you?

9. I'm part white myself, you know.

8. I learned all your people's ways in the Boy Scouts

7. My great-great-grandmother was a full-blooded white-Canadian princess.

6. Funny, you don't look white.

5. Where's your powdered wig and knickers?

4. Do you live in a covered wagon?

3. What's the meaning behind the square dance?

2. What's your feeling about river-boat casinos? Do they really help your people, or are they just a short-term fix?

1. Oh wow, I really love your hair! Can I touch it?

INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY
The Nations' Leading American Indian News Source

Powers: Media symposium: Joining together for change

When Native peoples are discussed by others, it is rarely in human terms and the one-dimensional portrait is hurtful. The viewpoints of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians are nearly always missing in media.

We at Friends Committee on National Legislation believe it is time for concerned citizens to take stock, examine the various elements of the mass communication system, bring together a cross-section of influential people (not just allies) and figure out ways for Native and non-Native leaders to jointly monitor and influence media, public opinion and elected officials.

Working under the guidance of Native leaders, allies must put time and effort into meeting with media decision-makers to insist on changes. One goal is to encourage public education and another is to increase the visibility of ordinary and extraordinary American Indians. As a lobbying organization, we believe the ultimate goal is to create a broader and stronger Native caucus on Capitol Hill that has support from the electorate.

In his analysis, "In Punditland, a Little Imagination Could Yield Needed Diversity," journalist Terry Neal criticized the limited roster of players used on programs such as "Meet the Press" and on editorial pages. Bookers, editors and producers claim they "can't find women and minorities who are qualified to offer their opinions on news of the day." We at FCNL believe viewers and readers benefit when commentators from many backgrounds analyze issues and happenings.

Moreover, as Neal says, these exclusions curtail leadership development because Sunday talk shows confer "power and authority upon those chosen" as speakers, national experts, and repeat guests (www.washingtonpost.com, April 4, 2005). Native experts rarely are utilized on network and cable news shows. Celebrities of Native origin seldom appear on daytime and late-night talk shows or in prime-time entertainment. Native issues are missing in news coverage and legislative progress reports. Non-Natives also are harmed by this neglect and by misinformation.

In many cases, the mainstream media ignore the principles (and legal tangle) of tribal sovereignty, depicts diverse language and cultural groups as homogeneous, overlooks families living in cities and embraces subtle stereotypes. Here is its latest caricature, which is being heightened by the daily coverage of the Abramoff scandal: Most tribes are rolling in dough. This caricature is destructive and untrue, yet the average person does not have the knowledge to challenge it and the media does not provide such information or any legal or historical context.

Too little news about the everyday issues of Native families gets reported. The "Reading Red Report" analyzed mainstream news coverage by nine newspapers with large circulations. The researcher found more articles about American Indians than expected: from a low of 43 in The Wall Street Journal to a high of 519 in The New York Times during a three-year period (1999 - 2002). However, many of the articles were about the same subjects - tribal casinos (145) and mascots (116). Although coverage of reservations (225 articles) is appropriate, the report noted: "So many stories were datelined Pine Ridge that a reader might not have realized that New York City's 87,241 Native American residents make up the largest urban Indian community in the nation."

Much needs to be aired. Much needs to be heard. We invite Native opinion leaders to attend "Who

Wants to Hear Our Story," a symposium to be held March 2 - 3, at the Wyndham Hotel in Washington, D.C. Communication experts in messaging and influencing will lead participants in a constructive, realistic examination of public versus indigenous perceptions and basic facts. (See www.fcnl.org/nativeam/media_symp.htm.)

The new American Indian Policy and Media Initiative at Buffalo State College is coordinating closely with us. Other key planners include staff from the Native American Journalists Association, National Indian Child Welfare Association and the National Congress of American Indians, as well as individuals experienced in indigenous rights and programs.

To date, 19 national organizations are co-sponsoring; some are issue-oriented (National Indian Council on Aging and National Indian Health Board). Native-directed organizational sponsors include large, established organizations (NCAI, Native American Rights Fund and First Nations Development Fund) and comparatively small, newer organizations (National Native American Families Together and National Urban Indian Family Coalition). Ally groups (HONOR [Honor Our Neighbors, Origins and Rights], American Friends Service Committee and FCNL) already in partnership with Indian country are co-sponsoring, and faith-based organizations (Call to Renewal and Interfaith Alliance) are supporting, this educational endeavor. The National American Indian Housing Council and the National Council of Churches, which has a huge reach, are committed to publicizing it. Among many others, organizations such as Americans for Indian Opportunity and the Institute for Tribal Government are providing speakers and moderators.

Members of the public and media can register for the media symposium on the morning of each day of its presentation. An invitation-only session on follow-up action will take place the afternoon of March 3; at that time, monitoring and intervention activities will be organized. These may include high-level meetings with mainstream media owners, managers, booking agents and others in the communications field.

Patricia R. Powers is a lobbyist for Friends Committee on National Legislation and director of the Native American Advocacy Program.

INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY
The Nations' Leading American Indian News Source

Media impact on American Indian public policy

Proper and realistic representation in media is crucial for the protection of American Indian peoples' inherent and treaty rights. The way situations and issues are covered - how the media comes to interpret Indian realities - increasingly drives the making of public policy. Issues that can help or wreak havoc on American Indian tribal life are decided not only by reason and precedence, but too often by the clamor of negative public attention.

There is the strongest case to be made that a more empowered and more concentrated effort is necessary by a circle of American Indian opinion-makers, national organizations and tribal nations to organize serious and far-reaching campaigns that generate in the American public, in particular professionals in American media, a more comprehensive understanding of how to report on Indian country.

We are of the mind that for such a campaign to work it must encompass a coalition of Native and non-Native individuals and organizations. It should lead to a lot of discussion and dialogue within Native circles about the fundamentals of the media onslaught and how to assimilate the lessons of successful delivery of Indian ideas and factual patterns to media. Tribe by tribe, regionally and nationally, it should upgrade this understanding and training of media strategic thinking as well as the skills of the craft.

Seeking to expand the emergence of Indian voices and Indian self-representation, a number of important Indian and non-Indian organizations have enthusiastically joined a symposium called for by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, a group with a long history of involvement with Indian causes. The event, to be held March 2 and 3, in Washington, D.C., is titled, "Who Wants to Hear Our Story? Communications and Contemporary Native Americans." It is intended as an educational symposium aimed at engaging a wide circle of Indian opinion-makers to dialogue with journalists, legislators, scholars, religious organizations and others with issues affecting American Indian peoples.

We congratulate the FCNL gesture to facilitate such a gathering. We also salute the emergence of the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative at Buffalo State College, a co-sponsor. We encourage all tribal peoples and their allies and friends to focus on media relations as part and parcel of existence and activity in the contemporary world.

Among the smallest and most distinct groups in the United States, American Indian peoples and organizations must reach out to all possible avenues of education among ethnic and professional bases. There is already some good news. Nationally, a solid core of researchers, writers and columnists are coming to the fore with the capability to empower such a work. An ongoing discussion about American Indian policy and media issues, to help analyze, strategize and coordinate a much fuller and cohesive capability of response and self-expression is completely required in these times.

Tribal leaders and opinion leaders in Indian country often complain about the depiction of their peoples and issues in the media. Often this refers to the lack of depiction: one of the major problems is the invisibility of Indian faces in media. Even to this day there is hardly an identifiable American Indian expert on Indian contemporary issues, culture and history to whom the media turns, much less a good range of Indian experts on various topics and themes. Thus, in a predictable pattern, even at those times when a Native case breaks through the surface, skimpy understanding is available and misperception ensues.

Beyond invisibility, tribal leaders also point to the outright hostility of some of the media, often skillfully driven by groups specifically negative to Indian interests. This has happened for a long time but it is happening today at greater risk to tribal nations. The organized, anti-Indian groups have become a voice and a force to counteract. Largely, these interest groups wrap themselves in the American flag and intone the mantra of "one nation under God" to presume that the tribal American Indian nations of this land should not, or can not, any longer exist. These groups, which often outnumber Indian people in their localities, are serious about pressuring politicians through the media. Cases in New York, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Montana, etc., give evidence of their organizing.

The pro-termination arguments of the anti-Indian groups are in line with at least one wing of punditry on the right, have the support of pandering politicians on the left, and get excellent argumentative backup in nationally established columns. Any involvement by any Indian entity in scandalous or questionable cases and incidents can gain control of the national image of Indians generally.

Nationally, to cite just one important case, the dishonesties of Jack Abramoff continue to surface. Just with that particular media-frenzied case, the image of Indians can transform from that of long-standing tribes progressively seeking justice in America, to one of newly-rich victims of Washington corruption or greedy manipulators attempting to buy favors from those with political power. The point here is not that these perceptions are not at least incidentally grounded - for some among the half-dozen seriously duped tribes - but that the way the media are, the perception of these isolated incidents can easily become the common silhouette of all 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, whose own distinct versions of tribal reality will go ignored.

Always distinct and not so small anymore (if we go by the 4.4 million U.S. Census figure), the complex amalgam of Indian country can be dangerously reduced in American public life. If the Abramoff case (among other such situations) goes on long enough, the incidental involvement of some Indians in it can seriously diminish the positive, and more realistic, perception of American Indian life. This is aggravated by the media's "herd mentality" and their need to present quick, superficial profiles of complicated issues.

Sometimes Indian people feel alone in noticing the absences, the omissions, the lack of balanced representation, the omission of facts and the hurtful stereotypes. It is good to reaffirm and realign with organizations such as HONOR [Honor Our Neighbors, Origins and Rights], the American Friends Service Committee, FCNL and many others that have advocated for and with tribes for decades over the centuries. Allied groups have become increasingly concerned, as have we, about the unusual combination of invisibility and negative stereotypes that is making things difficult for those who care about improving conditions in Indian country and about describing the strengths and successes of indigenous peoples.

There is much to be said in the proposed discussion. In light of substantial economic growth, triggering huge prosperity for some tribes, moderate support for many others and sizable headaches for yet others, distinctions among American Indian situations must be understood. The explosive financial nature of the gaming path is hardly an option for over two-thirds of Indian tribes, while destitution and poverty are still quite prevalent. Nevertheless, the controversy, hostilities and stereotypes generated against this sector of Indian country affects all of Indian country.

We urge all people interested in the above and other Indian policy and media issues to make contact and/or attend.

To learn more about "Who Wants to Hear Our Story? Communications and Contemporary Native Americans," contact Patricia Powers at pat@fcnl.org or visit the FCNL Web site at www.fcnl.org and click on "Native American" and then on the "Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" symposium link.

PART TWO:

SYMPOSIUM TOPICS, CONTENT AND SPEAKERS

Here is a favorite story of mine.

My wife is Navajo. We were married in Blue Canyon in a traditional ceremony. Yellow cornmeal and white cornmeal were mixed together and made into a mush. We ate the mush and then we were married.

It was a cold day and we were in a cold hogan. My friend Jefferson Begay was kneeling in the front and his wife was behind him. He cleared his throat to say something and his wife pressed her knee into his back so he didn't say anything. Later he wanted to say something again, and again there was the knee in his back, very forcefully this time. Once again he didn't say anything.

After the ceremony his wife asked him why he didn't say anything. She said, "I kept kneeing you in the back to say something."

Jefferson Begay was going to tell me about
the importance of communication in marriage.

Journalists often think they are telling the story while really
they are only kneeing people in the back.

Mark Trahant

Hear Our Story:
Communications and Contemporary Native Americans
Washington Wyndham Hotel
Washington, D.C.

The goals of the symposium were to vigorously challenge the growing anti-sovereignty movement by showing that many in the larger society want justice for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; to encourage non-Natives to hear the story and disseminate it to their networks in order to expand the base of support; and to recruit print and electronic media to attend to hear the Native perspective on current events.

"Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" was geared to those who (1) do not have the privilege of participating in national issue-oriented Native conferences and tribal events, (2) do not spend time with indigenous leaders and professionals, and (3) are not part of active alliances with Native Nations. It was geared to non-Natives who want to learn so they can be effective individual allies and organizational partners. The many religious, civic, and civil rights groups that participated fulfilled our hope for inclusiveness. Those in attendance were grateful to the renowned Native leaders and journalists who made this educational and outreach effort possible.

As participants came into the room, they watched a video of a Senate budget hearing held several years before. The hearing was chaired by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO). Extended remarks about needs in Indian Country were given by Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND). Among others, Tex Hall of the National Congress of American Indians and Cindy LaMarr of the National Indian Education Association gave testimony. At this hearing, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) recommended influencing the media in hopes of influencing the public. He stated that, in turn, constituents had to communicate their concern about Native Americans to their legislators for anything to change on Capitol Hill.

Juana Majel Dixon, the Secretary of the National Congress of American Indians, opened the symposium program with a traditional prayer. She prefaced it by saying to the participants:

> Each of you go in your own way and in your own language.
>
> [prays aloud in her language]

> Creator, I ask you to come here and be with the people from the North and the West and the East and the South. I thank you for giving us this day. I also thank you for giving us breath for the words we must speak. And we must remember that when we give breath to these words, they no longer belong to us. They belong to the people.

Summary of General Sessions

Thursday Morning March 2nd Opening Plenary Panel

Theme: The Challenges, The Stories

The first plenary provided an overview of contemporary American Indian life with the myriad stories that capture, describe, and explain the unique culture and political status. The panel, moderated by Laura Harris, featured three Native American speakers and two allies. The plenary was structured to move from general concerns to particular successes. The emphasis was on Native Americans as a people and unified community, on interacting with the larger society, and on tribal governments—their strengths, assets, and model programs. Moving to current situations and to individual Native leaders, the emphasis shifted to how the public, especially young people, and people employed by the media can learn. As the speakers had been asked to be specific, one discussed the use of oral history interviews that could be circulated on video and could form the basis for new school curriculum. A non-Native in the communications field detailed how she used personal communications to influence magazine publishers to publish more stories and photographs that would be acceptable and meaningful to Indian people.

Harris explained that the game plan for the day and a half was to move past simply complaining about invisibility, misperceptions and untruths. The intent of the symposium was larger than bemoaning the ways the media brush over the complexities of Native American history. Protestations from Indian Country were absolutely valid and, of course, speakers would discuss and document these patterns and stereotypes that diminish Native Americans as a people. How to change or transcend harmful perceptions, rather than an emphasis on victimhood, was one impetus for the conference. The focus of the symposium would be on how various elements can be brought together to make a significant change. "The *burden* of informing non-Natives lies on Indians," she said. However, others in attendance can listen and plan how to assist with the activities needed to bring about reform. As Representative Tom Cole said later in the event, "When one is trying to project a message beyond a well-known place, it takes a lot of work."

Laura Harris **(Panel Moderator)**
Executive Director, Americans for Indian Opportunity

[Brief greeting in her language and then names co-sponsors]

I want to point out that the speakers are volunteering their time and most of them have paid their own way to be here because this topic is so important.

We are not here to just whine about the fact that Indian issues are not covered in the mainstream media or to talk about how we're victims. With President Clinton's initiative on race issues, the conclusion was that the biggest problem that most Indians face is the perception of who we are. We are the most invisible minority. Most people are ignorant of the fact that we are not like other minorities since we're citizens of sovereign nations.

In this country, "history" begins only with Europeans coming to this land. Typical textbooks don't reflect our history

Some would say that Europeans came to a wilderness and made it into a civilization. My mother would say that Europeans came to a civilization and turned it into wilderness. My sister says that Pocahontas discovered Europe. I, growing up in the American Indian Movement days, say that Pocahontas was the first sellout.

We get tired of educating the next class of Congress. It becomes a burden to always be educating others, but the burden lies on Indians. We have a long way to go in doing this educating work. A person could have three PhD's and not really understand. There is a lack of research and major data about Native Americans to work with. We're still presented as "the vanishing race." We're left out of major studies and we're only included as part of "the other."

We must avoid preaching to the choir. We must learn how to shape our message. We must learn how to create sound bites, as that's how modern Americans get and understand information. These are the things that we must do.

Joe Garcia **(topic: The Challenge-- Social and Political Climate)**

President, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

[Extended greeting in his language]

I will begin by respectfully asking permission for the opportunity to speak a few words, as this is the custom found in my Native tradition.

I come from The Place of Strong People, a place that is known to many others by its Spanish name of San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico. Our pueblo decided to restore the traditional name because of the sovereignty issue and because our citizens could relate better to our traditional name. We polled our people about changing our name back and we agreed so now it is official. Sovereignty means that we can do what we must do to restore our people. A reporter asked when the name would be official--when the federal or state government approved it. A lesson was learned from the beginning and I commend the reporter for saying so in her article.

Where does our mis-education start? It starts in the education system in this country. All of our children have gone through this system. Whether we want to believe it or not, we are taught the history of the American Southwest from a particular perspective. When I was in school, I never did hear about how the history and cultural things of Indian people were part of that. Have you ever heard of Popé who instigated the Pueblo revolt of 1680 against Mexico? Each state can submit two statues to the famous Statuary Hall in the Capitol and New Mexico just gave a statue honoring Popé. I know now that there are many stories that we have never heard of.

We must share stories Indian to Indian. We need to hear the stories to understand that we have diversity. Diversity is not a bad thing, but is rather something that brings strength. We must not let other people out there tell our story. They don't perceive it. They don't understand it. For all of the ailments we have, the solutions lie within our communities. We cannot turn it over to

some other person who knows nothing about what exists in our local area. When we do think of new solutions, people don't want to change. This is a problem.

Everything we do in this country is made up of some kind of process and within some kind of system. We must understand processes and systems or we will attack in the wrong place. The more we know about a system, the more we can battle it and shape the message that comes from the struggle. We must recognize and implement solutions. In the past, we too often thought BIA or HIS would solve problems.

Media is a process; media is a system. If we try to battle and debate every article that's written on the negative side about Indian Country, we're wasting our time because we have more important things to do--focus on the well-being and livelihood of our people. But the media can be helpful to us if we understand it.

One thing I know about journalism, [speaks in deep voice, slowly, in magisterial style]
"It is about: Making News… What is Interesting to the General Public."

And the "bad" is usually more interesting. Ninety five percent of mainstream news stories are about something bad that has happened. Let's talk more about the positive things. We forget about the good things - the real things - in our country.

There are influential people here who can get the message out. The overwhelming response to this conference shows the interest is there.

We have two challenges: First, attorneys ought to be required to know Indian law; it should be part of the bar exam. Two states (New Mexico and Washington) now have this requirement but the rest do not. Secondly, Congressional people who we elect to their posts should meet a requirement that they take and understand an "Indian 101" course. If they don't pass a test about the basics – knowledge about treaties and policies for example – then they would be sent back home. Newcomers are a special challenge. How can they help us if they don't understand? Then Indians can work with them and the administration. If we only give them information time after time, they can choose to read it or not. If they don't read it, it gets laid aside and nothing happens.

Let's work with Congress to find solutions. [Thanks to FCNL for symposium. Farewell in his language]

Ron Allen **(topic: The Mission-- Creating Deeper, Wider Circles of Knowledge)**
Treasurer, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

.
[Thanks to FCNL for fabulous symposium]

I was listening to President Garcia open up in the traditional way … asking for permission to speak. Who could deny him? I'm not going down that road. Somebody might yell out "denied" and that would be the end of my speech. [laughter]

How do we mobilize? It is our mission to educate and enlighten our society. We must educate about tribal governments, our sovereign rights, and our treaty rights. We must advance the interests of our communities, including those who live in urban centers. That is our mission but how can we do that? Forums and vehicles such as this can be used but people have to know us not just a culture but as governmental systems.

We have spent a lot of time in this town (Washington, DC), or at least I certainly have. I came in the early 1980s and asked who I should talk to and what I should say. Then I turned to doing the same thing in state capitals. Policy and legislation affect us and we must know how to work these venues. We must learn how to mobilize. We have to figure out ways to generate more friends – friends outside of Indian County, people who already empathize with our interests. We know our story because we grew up learning about the injustices that tribes experience. But does America know about it? No. No, because of our education system. The challenge continues today in the 21st Century. The world is moving fast and we have to keep pace with it. We have to get on the freeway of the political system and keep on getting closer to the fast lane. Frankly, there is no off ramp here for us.

To widen out our circles, we need alliances and partnerships, a wide range of groups with similar agendas and interests. Issue agendas include political, social, education, legal, public service, youth, international, natural resources, economic, nonviolence, and human rights. We can make cause with others who understand why we need revenues, so they will weave in our problems as they talk on the Hill about poverty and other shared problems. Already the National Congress of American Indians works collaboratively with the following organizations:

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of La Raza, Nation Council of State Legislators, Friends Committee on National Legislation, National Governors Association, Western Governors Association, Heritage Foundation, Brookings Institute and other think tanks, Children's Defense Fund, American Civil Liberties Union, Center on Budget and Policy, National Education Association, Lawyer's Committee on Civil Rights, National Trust and Historical Preservation, World Wildlife Foundation, National Association of Fire Chiefs, National Association of Chiefs of Police, Red Cross, Organization of American States, Boys and Girls Club, Fannie Mae, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, National Council of Economic Education, National Endowment for Financial Education, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, Amnesty International, National Center for Victims of Crime.

Policy makers, when they put together policy, consider Indian governments and communities as an afterthought. Americans, in general, need to know who we are. This is true on both the national and local level. We are here today about getting positive stories out there through media but we should also remember personal communications. There are other ways to enlighten and educate, including such groups as the Chamber of Commerce.

We must be assertive and proactive. We need to broaden our circles beyond our own tribal and intertribal organizations. We must broaden our outreach to non-Indian circles and this takes energy. Some people don't like us and we must go talk to them too. We need to go into the lion's den, meet with anti-Indian organizations and challenge them – look them in the eye and make them look us in the eye.

I love these dialogues like today where we can share perspectives, techniques, and approaches to deal with our complex issues. The bottom line is that we have to make things happen, push the envelope. And take the time to reach out to those friends who say they want to work with us.

Jackie Old Coyote **(Topic: The Facts-- Success Stories from Native Nations)**
Harvard, Manager for Honoring Nations Program

I am a Crow Nation citizen. I grew up listening to our stories. Crows don't have bedtime stories but we generally tell stories in the wintertime and it is a community story time. I heard the stories time and time again. Sometimes they were from a slightly different perspective in order to make a new lesson about life. The stories are imbedded in me and, therefore, I can also change them to make a point. I can make a toolkit with the stories as learning tools.

Once the words of stories are spoken, they belong to the people. They are sacred breath.

Now I work with the Honoring Nations Program at Harvard University. It is a program with 30 years of research, honoring the contributions of the governments of Indian Nations. Tribal programs singled out represent grass roots successes.

Harvard awards go to outstanding tribal government programs. To illustrate the types of programs being honored, the 2005 winners are listed below.

High Honors
1. Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (Fairbanks, AL)
2. Oneida Nation Farms (Seymour, WI)
3. Flandreau Police Department (Flandreau, SD)
4. Professional Empowerment Program (Sisseton, SD)
5. Tribal Monitors Program (Fort Yates, ND)
6. Siyeh Corporation (Browning, MT)
7. Akwesasne Freedom School (Rooseveltown, NY)

Honors
1. The Cherokee Native Language Revitalization Project (Tahlequah, OK)
2. Choctaw Tribal Court System (Choctaw, MI)
3. The Hopi Land Team (Kykotsmovi, AZ)
4. Miccoukee Tribe Section 404 Permitting Program (Miami, FL)
5. Migizi Business Camp (Mainstee, MI)
6. Navajo Nation Sales Tax (Window Rock, AZ)
7. ONABEN's Innovative Models for Enterprise Development (Tigard, OR)

We ask, "How do we get the best stories out of this?" I am there as a Crow woman, doing the oral tradition, just in a different version. We have a team of writers. We write on the same piece and then come to a consensus about what it means. Within our findings, there are three main themes: sovereignty matters, capable institutions matter, and culture matters. These are the three key ingredients. Our process is what makes the Honoring Nations Program unique. The tribes tell stories the way they want them told and teams of experts figure out the facts. However, the

Native Nations always have the final say about any text that we put out. They present a story in the way they want it to be told.

We have a private 5,000-person database of selected tribal leaders, policymakers, and friends who get into the database only after a rigorous series of evaluations. We have a board of governors who come from many different sectors of life. Each year we select 16 exemplary stories that we celebrate and reward monetarily. We now have 12,000 reports with short profiles and numerous case histories that go into more depth. All are grassroots stories. These are sent to every place thinkable and are used in Harvard and the University of Arizona classes. Everything is free and on our website.

All of the submitted stories must tell lessons and have a replicable nature. We share the lessons and learning, so it is not only Native Nations looking at them, but local governments also.

Elizabeth Furse **(Topic: Stories from Tribal Leaders-- Pride, Heritage, Resilience)**
Former U.S. Congresswoman and Director of the Institute for Tribal Governments

My own kids went through the American education system and learned nothing about Indian people. Now, as then, it is vital that we educate our American public. A child in school today may become a county commissioner, a mayor, or a Congressman. They need to know that tribal governments are sovereign. The US government has plenary power over Indian tribes, yet very few people who come into Congress understand about Indians.

The Board of Directors of the Institute for Tribal Governments decided that we needed to capture the stories of our great leaders. I collected stories from 35 interviews for this project and we called it "Great Tribal Leaders of Modern Times Interview Project." The interviews are from the 1950s onward.

I've turned all of this into a curriculum and teach it in two colleges in Oregon with plans to expand it into other states with Indian populations. The curriculum is now going into high schools. Students get the words directly from the Indians themselves. The students are changed - they become different people. Up until now, children have been cheated and the students understand that. They need to learn American history from the people who made it.

Tribal leaders have influenced history from time immemorial. It is my hope that Indian youth everywhere will recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by these great leaders.

ITG is a 111-member caucus of tribal governments. Members (and their staff) turn over all the time and each time the new leaders need to learn. We provide trainings to meet the leadership needs of elected tribal government officials for both individual tribal councils and for inter-tribal governing or policy bodies. The Institute also has the capacity to provide training and education to county, state, and federal agencies that are seeking a better understanding about the unique status of tribes and tribal governments and a better relationship with tribal governments. We need everyone to understand the trust responsibility and other Indian issues.

[shows CD of a section of interviews with tribal leaders]

Gwendolen Cates **(Topic: Getting Positive Stories into the Mainstream Media)**
Filmmaker, Photographer, Writer

I am not a tribal member but Indian Country is an important part of my life. While I was growing up, my family lived on the Navajo reservation and my father learned Navajo there.

As I became a professional photographer, I didn't want to exploit that very personal part of my life. However, I was talked into doing photos for two articles about Indians, one a Parade magazine cover story. At first I was very uncomfortable taking those pictures for public consumption. They were successful and positive though, the response was positive, and people learned from them. I insisted that a Native person write the text – editors need to hear that sort of thing. One of the feature stories became the seed of my book "Indian Country" and people in the media reacted in a positive way once again.

Then I was asked to do an article about casinos on reservations. I thought at first that I just couldn't, and then I changed my mind. I was very fortunate to have a young writer who was very open-minded. He not only listened, but also really heard what people were saying. We used casinos as an excuse to tell other stories about sovereignty, termination and reinstatement, and the use of off-reservation casinos to preserve language and culture. In other words, we turned a negative situation into something positive. From there we went on to pitch stories to a wide variety of other magazines.

Many people are frightened of Indians. They don't know any, haven't interacted with any, and so they rely on the known and familiar stereotypes. Editors try to turn stories into stereotypical stories about things like chiefs on the plains.

Native people need to infiltrate the media. Dialogue will influence people. Native Americans need a presence at publishers' conferences. Indians might meet and have lunch with some significant editors. The more familiar the editors are with the issues, the more open they will be. Generally editors are very uncomfortable with Indian Country. It is the same with TV and film.

When cultures collide in media moments – with producers or reporters showing a lack of sensitivity or respect – it's because they're nervous. I've witnessed this. The media has burned Indian Country time and time again, and Natives are quick to respond negatively. We need to work on mending bridges in order to have positive interactions to get the stories out there that everyone wants.

Closing remarks by Laura Harris:

We have heard about developing our friendships, educating editors and the public, taking Indians 101 on the road to decision and opinion makers. I believe there is now real opportunity with the election of Evo Morales [the first indigenous president of Bolivia] and with Latin American presidents aligning themselves with indigenous communities and talking about their own indigenous roots. There is a real opportunity in the U.S. to educate people and bring out our stories. We can bring people along. Our future is promising. Although we suffer at the bottom of most socio-economic indicators, there's been an explosion of cultural and economic growth.

We have to take advantage of telecommunications so we're not the road-kill on the information highway.

We get a lot of crazy questions because many people are still ill informed. Yet, with some effort we can bring them along and educate them through stories such as those being told here today. We have stories of sorrow but also stories of great happiness and success to share.

We have a bond with the US. People ask, "Why are Indians so patriotic?" Uhhh, because it's our country?!

Thursday Luncheon Address

Brian Schweitzer (Improving State-Tribal Relationships through Communications)
Governor of Montana

[The Governor was invited after a number of articles appeared in the press about efforts he was making to involve talented Native Americans in his administration. He also had opposed gambling without targeting tribes for political advantage as had happened in California where the Governor came close to scapegoating tribes. A number of media representatives attended this session because of the Governor's stature. The focus was on government-to-government communication not mass media.]

I consider myself to be a friend and ally of Montana tribes. I participate in their ceremonies, have an open door policy in my office at the state capital, bring their customs into our own ceremonies, and work for state programs to benefit Natives. I would like to be a model for all governors and I'd like to export "The Montana Model" of government-to-government consultation to other states in the US.

The day I was inaugurated will be a special day in the minds and the hearts of people in Montana for generations. Because in the past the "powers-that-be" had said that if we bring Indian drummers into the rotunda and they played, it might break the windows. So I brought those Indian drummers with the full expectation that we WOULD break the windows in the capitol and let the air in to that capitol for the first time in a hundred years. But as I spoke [begins beating a rhythm on the podium] and as those drums played, I said to the people of Montana that my heart would beat to the sound of those drums for as long as I am their governor and it has.

We said to the people of Montana that we will respect everyone but first we will respect those Montanans who have been here for 12,000 years. We said that we would bring all of Montana into this administration and we did.

I have more tribal people working in my administration than in all 22 administrations before me, combined. Ten percent of my appointments are Native Americans. My first act as governor was to establish an American Indian Council to coordinate affairs between the state and tribes. I believe in integration and not segregation. We are partners and flags from all of Montana's Native Nations fly at the capital building.

When you come to my office in Helena, there are just a few things. There is a lot of Native art, some sweet grass, some sage, and some cedar. When we meet with folks from Indian Country we start with a prayer and we start with a smudge. When you burn sweet grass, you break down some walls, some animosities, and bring positive energy into your soul. You can share your ideas without the walls getting in the way. I would suggest, actually, that they start every meeting in Congress with a smudge.

We don't just have our meetings in the capital city. I've been to every tribal council chamber, not once, but many times. They keep a chair for me, because I'm a regular visitor. We don't go there to talk, we go there to listen. This is the first time in years this has happened.

Being at a Blackfeet tribal council meeting is one of the most remarkable experiences one will ever have. You walk into a round chamber and sit at a round table. Everything is round because that's how communication is built – not by sharp edges, but in the round with people working together. It's informal – it's elected but it's informal. It's important to have a good sense of humor, to crack a joke and laugh at a joke. The members who are elected are around the table, but everyone is invited to come. There are no backroom deals, no secrets here.

After my inauguration, I invited the press into my office. I walked over to my desk and picked up the only thing that was on it – a key. I said, "We won't need this any more" and I threw it in the garbage. "You (the people) are invited to every meeting we hold here. Whether you are a single mother or the president of the largest energy company in the world, you are the ears of the people of Montana." That's how we conduct business in Indian Country and that's how we conduct business in the state of Montana.

We are changing our teaching model in the public schools to reflect more about the people who have been here for 12,000 years before white people came. Now we have the Indian Education For All Program going into the schools. It will begin in kindergarten. We want our children to know about the rich cultural history of our tribes and about the great leaders among them. There is some bilingual work to teach/incorporate Native words into English. The goal is to change the hearts of the young people so that they all can know each other's cultures and what the strong and weak parts are of both. We will be able to touch more than just ears, but also hearts.

Imagine a picture of snows in the mountains and then the flowing rivers coming out of them. Our ideas can start in Montana and flow outward as the rivers do from the snowy mountains. Montana's ideas can maybe, just maybe, change the world.

Thursday Post-Luncheon Panel

***Theme*: A Conversation with Journalists**
Native Journalists Share Their Own Stories

Kim Baca (Moderator)
Native American Journalists Association

My name is Kim Baca and I am with the Native American Journalists Association out of Vermillion, South Dakota. I'm the interim director. We're a 22 year old nonprofit organization; our website is www.naja.com. If there are any questions, feel free to give me a call and my information is on the website. I'm a reporter as well as the NAJA director, a former reporter for the Associated Press.

We heard the panelists in the morning talk about some of the problems with the media. We also want to keep in mind that it takes the tribes to be responsive, for tribal council members to speak with the media. Keep that in mind as we have a discussion today. There are problems and we are working to address them. Tribes must learn how to provide cultural understanding as well as being responsive. Indian editors as well as people being interviewed need to be more responsive. For example, even when there are positive stories, tribal leaders don't always call me back although they know I am Native American. There is either fear or just a misunderstanding. (For some tribes there is suspicion from earlier days when what appeared was wrong or negative.)

The Native American Journalist Association's mission is to diversity the newsroom. NAJA has 556 members. Half are students and they go into both tribal and mainstream media. Members learn how to address the media and understand it.

As Pat and I were talking about the concept for this symposium, I thought it was really important to have Native American journalists talk about themselves-- talk a bit about the work we do as well as some of the challenges we have as journalists-- to tell our own stories as well as the stories of other Native people. So I asked Pat to invite several journalists including a former broadcast reporter who had worked in one of the top media markets in the nation. Mary Kim Titla has worked at an NBC television affiliate. Mark Trahant has worked in both mainstream and tribal media. He is now the editorial page editor for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Until recently Tim Johnson edited the newspaper Indian Country Today and now he is with the National Museum of the American Indian.

Mark Trahant

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Today is an unusual day for me. I received a call that my book proposal has been accepted (applause). Then for part of the morning, I sat outside in the lounge and wrote a column on the Visionary Award given out last night to Hank Adams. Hank Adams and I share family ties, ties to my grandfather, and I am glad that he just received this meaningful award (chokes up). And here I am a "hardened" journalist… I told you it was an unusual day.

I've worked for both tribal and mainstream press. I didn't go to college, so I learned about journalism at the community level.

The system is complicated and many times people don't take the time to learn it. Editorial policy is shaped and stories are tightly scheduled and that's important to know.

The fast pacing is what makes things not work right now. The frenetic pace drives the decision-making. Things don't get done right. This is not out of ill will or because of lack of resources, but because journalists don't have the time to do the story right.

Media in general is now making a fundamental shift and I'm not sure that it's going to be good for our democracy. There is more pressure on journalists to do more without more resources and time to support the work.

Tim Johnson

National Museum of the American Indian, Associate Director of Public Programs

Hank Adams is an American Indian visionary. It's important to take the time to honor those who came before us. As a former editor of Indian Country Today, I really appreciate his work.

I would agree with Mark completely about the tenuous situation of media today. The constraints and pressures of deadline are really warping things. There is an economic component to that too. Information is packaged for the public today and there is a division along partisan lines.

With respect to time or lack of time that journalists have today to actually do reporting on stories … this is especially critical for reporting on Indian stories. There is also a lack of experience and knowledge to be able to report with proper perspective and adequate balance. One needs to know your own tribe's history for starters. It's important to have a thorough understanding of tribal history because that's critical in understanding the foundational basis of tribal sovereignty.

I work with the Buffalo State College's American Indian Policy and Media Initiative. The Policy and Media Initiative began in 2005 and has strong links with Indian tribes and Native Nations across North America.

This project watches and tracks the kind of content being produced by the media. We look very critically at the kinds of content produced about American Indians. Information is presented and mainstream papers pick it up but then the information becomes incorrect. The misperceptions then take on a life of their own and move into public discourse and politics. We've seen very specific ideas come out of that discourse. The perceptions then move into further areas like legislative issues and into cases being tried clear up to the Supreme Court.

As part of its work, the project makes critical analysis of content in stories and tracks how ideas get passed from one paper to the next. Then we run focus groups to see how the public perceives the issues. The focus group members's ideas can sometimes be dramatically different than ideas outside of them in print.

The project began in order to examine whether or not it is important to pursue the idea of media content. An early roundtable pulled together a nice group of tribal leaders and the general consensus was that yes, this was important to pursue. According to Ben Nighthorse Campbell, "Many news stories offer very little in the way of actual news, substituting instead a variety of opinions from various sources." They also issued a warning: "Tribal Nations in America face important challenges to their national interests. The media arena is a major area of contention."

Mary Kim Titla
Native Youth Online Magazine

I first started mainstream TV work in Arizona 20 years ago and I left TV news two months ago. I worked as a reporter, producer, field producer and as an editor. I talked to Native American youth and encouraged them to pursue a career in mainstream media.

Concerning news coming out of Indian Country, I have been an Indian voice at the table for separating what is appropriate and not appropriate to publish. As a TV reporter in Phoenix, I had to make decisions about the appropriateness of stories, as I was often the specially designated person covering Indian Country news bites. The voice for Indians must be their own and many times I had to go to bat for that with my employers.

I left the world of mainstream media and started an on-line electronic magazine together with my three sons. It is "Native Youth Magazine" and is by, about and for Indian youth. Contributors include Indian youth, Indian parents, and white teachers. The input from Native youth comes from those who are 10 – 25 years old.

Our focus at nativeyouth.com is on positive stories that are not being told in mainstream media. It covers all types of topics – kind of a one stop shopping place for Native youth. As of now it is only web based, but it will eventually also go to a print format.

Native Youth Magazine (on-line) is still a work in progress. However, everyone is hungry for this – young people, parents, teachers, and tribal leaders. We are the pulse of the Native youth community. I am the gatekeeper and nothing goes in or out without my approval.

Interaction amongst Panelists and Q & A

Question: What about the Abramoff scandal? [powerful lobbyist and fundraiser who pled guilty to defrauding tribal clients and bribing government officials; afterwards, tribal contributions were closely examined on Capitol Hill]

Answer: The Abramoff scandal will play out with time. There have always been scandals. For example, look at Indian Agents' actions of times past, say in the 19th Century.

Question: How is it possible to submit stories to Native Youth Magazine?

Answer: Go to the Web site and use the "Contact Us" button. NYM accepts stories from adults too, about what Indian youth are doing in their communities.

Question: How do you mentor youth?

Answer: None of the NYM kids are planning on following journalism as a career. They just want to tell their own stories. They say, "The only truth I know is my own story." Truth telling is powerful and important. NYM is a forum for the youth – we're trying to help them sort

through and process their thoughts. Everything comes from their own hands if they are writing something for us.

Question: How and where do we tell our stories?

Answer: Indians should call mainstream media and invite them to visit to get ideas for stories. News of the day is different in Phoenix (for instance) than news on the reservation. Establish a working relationship and dialogue with local reporters.

Question: Objectivity is so prized in journalism. Cultural sensitivity and personal connection is seen as the opposite of objectivity. Many people in mainstream media feel that the objective point of view would be better for them to use than one coming from people who have some kind of perspective. How do we handle this?

Answer: I don't believe in objectivity. The best you can do is to be fair, which means adding a perspective that is fair. Objectivity varies in the media and it's impossible in pure form. It has a short history – most press history is very "sided." Objectivity has only been around since newspapers decided that they could make more money by being that way.

Question: *How do we get more meaningful stories out on the beauty and desperation of our struggles – the sacred nature of water, biological diversity, and well being, for instance? Where do you go for the more meaningful stories? Do we go to the Internet or do we still go to mainstream media?*

Answer: Channel 12 in Phoenix decided that they wanted to have dialogue with Native communities and then decided to do so by having visits to the reservations. They took a bus tour and came back having heard first hand from tribal leaders. They also got a lot of story leads. Then people came in to Channel 12 to talk about what was happening in their communities.

I would contact people in your area and built rapport with the reporters. People used to call me constantly. When we did one of their stories they felt like they were somehow involved in participating in our process of deciding the news of the day. I welcomed all calls and put in my email message, "Desperately looking for resources."

Answer: We must encourage tribal leaders to talk to the press. We can communicate through email and Web sites.

Answer: There is an expectation that press about gaming tribes is all that is needed. We must go beyond that.

Statement from participant, long-time American Indian leader and activist, Robert Free Galvan:

I am proposing another angle on "Hear the Stories." Since the 1970s we have been watching the evolution of specialized markets, new organizations, more about Indian thoughts on everything from the environment to the media, whatever. But at one point there wasn't any of that. One of the things that allowed all these things to grow was the struggle that went on. I hear very little of

that in the media, in our history books, in education. Yes, media stories are more inclusive today, but we hear little of the struggles of those who have given us our self-determination.

These leaders, our leaders, are missing from our textbooks. We need to find our leaders who struggled on our behalf. In addition there were spiritual guides, elders who brought along youth energy to produce native sovereignty. They are dying off and before they go, there are more stories. The media has spotlighted a few things that everybody assumes were the whole of the Indian struggle. There are many more stories than the media spotlight showed – many more that haven't been heard yet or gotten the respect that they deserve. We must seek out these missing warriors from our struggle because they are now dying off or are in prison. The warriors who made those sacrifices are now by the wayside – our advances have come at their own personal price - and kids are growing up without any knowledge of these sacrifices. When will we hear these stories?

I encourage all of you in the media to bring those stories out and to seek out those missing warriors, men and women, who have hidden out of the spotlight. All the progress, all the things you heard about, the brave acts came at a price and that story hasn't been told. I have pictures. They are of hundreds of police attacking us in the BIA building, in land occupations, at Alcatraz. These warriors who did that sacrificed for us all along the wayside. Now some of our kids are growing up in casino rich tribes. (Others are not.) They are living without any knowledge of how that came to be. And so when Indian kids want to tell their stories, with self-education and Native media education, they would tell a stronger story when they know more. Thank you.

Thursday Afternoon Plenary Panel Presentation

Theme: Indian Images in Broader Society
Distorted and Literal Representation, Effects on Public Opinion

The opening plenary provided an overview of Indian Country today. This plenary spotlighted ongoing conflicts and societal ills, communication and journalism challenges, as well as what experts as wide ranging as content analyzers and copy editors can tell us about mass communications. Having looked at needs and challenges in a fairly positive light in the morning, a session was needed to show why the symposium was needed and to see how various methods of analysis can provide insight and ideas for reform.

One point demonstrated here is the immense pride people in Indian Country have in their leaders and their pleasure in honoring them. Such pride is ignored by the national media but spontaneously spills forth at times during the plenary sessions. Although, it was not part of the official media symposium agenda, several speakers reflected on an *unconnected* but quite relevant event that had happened the night before our "Hear Our Story" started. It was hosted and attended by several of our speakers.

José Barreiro (Moderator and Speaker)
Editor, Indian Country Today

Good afternoon, I'm a senior editor at Indian Country Today newspaper and also a member of the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative out of Buffalo State College. As Mark Trahant mentioned this morning… last night at the National Press Club we had a wonderful, wonderful event as we honored the long career in Indian activism of Mr. Hank Adams. In recalling some of the wisdom of our honoree last night, I'm reminded of an anecdote that Billy Frank, Jr. tells about Hank when he first joined Billy and others during the early fishing rights struggles in the Northwest.

These treaty struggles were the precursor to the renaissance and movement among Native peoples. Billy Frank said that when Hank Adams first came in the winter of 1964, the fishermen had been publicly branded as renegades. So the subsistence rights group was cautious in dealing with the mainstream press. A newsman asked a prominent leader whether the Indians had the right to destroy the last fish and she answered "yes, because we were here first." Adams interjected himself at that moment and declared that "no one has the right -- the first right is with the salmon resource. The issue is not the last fish but the state allowing non Indians to catch 13 million salmon the year before while throwing Indians into jail for catching any and preventing tribes from catching any salmon at all." The fishermen's confidence shifted immediately toward Adams. The group asked Adams to be their spokesman and he agreed but said, "You can be your best spokesmen yourselves." In that short anecdote, there are three major lessons, maybe more, on *how to deal with the public and the media.*

Lesson one: Take the high road - do the right thing.

Lesson two: Focus your own story. Don't let someone else focus it for you. This is crucial to define your own public identity, to take possession of the dominant media metaphor around your issue. Make sure your message is true and clear.

Lesson three: You can be the best spokesman for yourself. Self-representation is possible and it is achievable. There's training and there's growth in it, in self-representation. In today's equation, this might teach that you don't need to hire lobbyists and publicists… be your own best lobbyist, your own best spokesperson.

The type of person chosen to receive the award speaks to Robert Free Galvan's earlier comment on the need to honor the people who struggled mightily over the last years. The award went to Hank because of his longstanding modesty, his humility, his unwillingness to be in the spotlight even though he is credited for helping to bring major crises to a successful conclusion.

We're at a moment that we have not seen in the last 25 or 30 years. People went through difficult times worse than what we're facing right now, but in the contemporary moment, there is a lot going on against Indian Country and against Indian identity. The obfuscation and confusion of these issues requires us to think more seriously about how to respond and about the need to continue to respond.

I'd like to see us work creatively together to engage young people in tribal colleges, college and university program throughout the country and dozens of organizations. How do we stimulate young people to get involved? I remember in the 1970s, the "teach in" or "teach out" on Indian

subjects and how much that helped to educate the contemporary generation… creating interest, understanding of issues and support. Such young leaders then end up becoming part of the many institutions in the country: the businesses, the government agencies. It seems to me that without the young people, our cause is lost.

This whole idea of always responding and not letting the media get away with it is so important. We must start getting our opinion writers, our researchers to always give responses at the national, regional, and local level. I'm a reporter myself. We write for an audience of about 60,000 readers. If I get two letters about something I have written, it stops my day. You know you hate to be criticized for your work. You hate to be called out. Educating reporters, editors and mentioning them by name means they will not make the same mistake again.

Anywhere in the country, you can organize two or three or five students -- a committee to watch the media and to be willing to say that the media has to be accurate and have the right tone. The committee can analyze the content, analyze who the reporter spoke with, who was their first source, who was their second source, their third source. Where are the voices of the community?

The problem is evident in a New York Times story about drugs being smuggled across the border from Canada focused on the Mohawks. Although the tribe has been fighting drug smuggling, meth, and addiction, the writer of the article made the whole community (the reservation as pipeline) the villain-- not the individuals involved. "In upstate New York and across the Canadian border, the 11,000 Indians living here now have long dipped their hands into the rewarding till of smuggling, moving goods as varied as diapers and tobacco across this lightly patrolled frontier…" The policies and activities, the concern about making the community a great place to raise a family… ignored. The journalist spent time and did numerous interviews but ended up smearing the entire community.

INDIAN TIME NEWSPAPER

INDIAN TIME

A VOICE FROM THE EASTERN DOOR

Established: July of 1983

NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE
STILL ANGERS COMMUNITY

BY: SHANNON BURNS

The effects of last month's NEW YORK TIMES article (Drug Traffickers Find Haven in Shadows of Indian Country) linger on. Last week, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne released their own statement criticizing the article and expressing their disappointment with both the NEW YORK TIMES and the WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES, which reran a version of the article and also printed an editorial on the issue. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe had already done the same.

"The editorial and article insinuates that all of the 11,000 residents of Akwesasne 'have a long tradition of dipping into the rewarding till of smuggling' and that Akwesasne is one of the centers of this Indian drug trafficking problem," MCA said. "The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne objects emphatically to any insinuation or allegation that the Mohawk as community are involved in this activity or are enabling such drug trafficking to take place within our territory. Community members are appalled that a reputable paper such as the NEW YORK TIMES would depict their entire community as lawless."

MCA, expressing their disappointment with the WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES editorial, invited the newspaper's editors and reporters to "come to Akwesasne to meet with the people and see for themselves what our community is really like."

Community members and local governments have grown tired of the stereotypes and hurtful generalizations often used by outside newspapers in their depictions of Akwesasne.
"It is totally irresponsible to defame the character of Akwesasne when there is a lot of smuggling that goes on all along the undefended border between Canada and the United States of America., not just in our tiny stretch of territory," said MCA Grand Chief Angie Barnes.

MCA defended their efforts to combat smuggling. "Our police take part in initiatives like the Joint Investigative Team and International Border Enforcement Team, approaches being used to deal with smuggling, drugs and criminal networks in Akwesasne and this region of the country," said MCA District Chief William Phillips.
MCA District Chief Mike Mitchell commented that "The main problem in Akwesasne is the overlay of the International border on our territory and the resulting jurisdictional jigsaw puzzle of Federal, State and Provincial laws and regulation that apply."

The NEW YORK TIMES front-page article, which ran on Feb. 19, has been the topic of countless discussions throughout Indian country. In the article, Akwesasne is said to be known as "the black hole" amongst drug dealers and the author accuses all 11,000 of Mohawks living in the territory of taking part in smuggling.

"The reality is that the majority of Mohawks are law abiding industrious people who support the law enforcement agencies in trying to deal with this problem," MCA stated. "However, the press is relentless in trying to paint all Mohawks as being involved in illegal activities. Along with the Canadian and U.S. people, Akwesasne is totally supportive and dedicated to keeping our communities safe and secure from crime."

Supporting the claim that Akwesasne authorities work diligently to prevent or stop smuggling, MCA said, "In response to community demand, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne has taken steps to deal with this drug problem within our territory by organizing and implementing drug prevention programs and services that are holistic and culturally based. In addition, the Mohawk Council has enacted its own drug law that would see drug traffickers and dealers banished from our community as well as being dealt with under the criminal laws and courts. The problem in achieving a quick solution to eliminating the drug dealers is of course the stringent demands of the court and judicial systems to get convictions. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is working on dealing with the drug issues in our community. The Council and the organizational arm of MCA have been working to establish alternative approaches that would deter such activity and would provide viable alternatives for careers and legitimate economic opportunities.

Grand Chief Barnes stated, "Our real challenge is to engage the governments to become partners in this work so that we can achieve some real impacts."

José Barreiro: We have a panel this afternoon that will be dealing with images in the media, responding to negative images, and creating positive images. We'll hear the stories-- the stories that must be heard. The experts on this panel honor us with their presence. For decades, Suzan Harjo has been acclaimed for her work with sacred sites, the museum, and mascots. She has been in court for many years seeking to change the name of the Washington football team.

Suzan Shown Harjo (Topic: Old and New Stereotypes)

Morningstar Institute

Indian stereotypes remain the same, old or new. Early colonists used the term "redskins" and in this case it referred to actual skins. Colonists paid bounties for Indian skins, on a sliding scale, for men, women, and children. White experts dispute this because this is "only" oral history. Just a note on this: the Ninth Circuit Court showed lots of deference to oral histories when working with fishing questions. This tendency is now changing, for example in the fight over the Kennewick Man's remains [who would be deferred to in handling the skeleton of a 9,300 year old ancestor--Native Americans wanting to bury the remains or scientists wanting to study him?]. Deference to the wishes of indigenous people is a key issue in many areas.

When using the written word, Americans use words that are mostly bad about Indians. We shouldn't diminish the idea of word use but we should work to change words that give diminished meaning. Indians have stories, not a history. "Indian giver" original meaning is just the opposite of today's common-use meaning. Tribal "members" is not as strong as tribal "citizens." These words and images about us are directly tied to our future.

This language forms Native's own thoughts about themselves. We buy into the lies that are spread about us and then come to believe in our own victimization. There is a direct tie between these words and images and how we give permission to people about how to treat us. We need to tell the American media that they don't get to tell these bad stories about us any more because we are not the bad people that they write about. We have to do this over and over and over again until we get it right.

It used to be subtler. Now the press will elevate non-Indians pretending to be Indians into a hero role. A recent example of this is Ward Churchill [controversial college professor and prolific author whose tribal affiliation was widely disputed and who got in major skirmishes for a controversial remark about 9-11.]

This ties into the old set up of "good Indians' and "bad Indians." We can pander to the most well known stereotypes about us. There is the "*good* Indian" leading his people down the trail of defeat – *the end of the trail where the Indian is slumped over his horse* [the famous statue by James Fraser]. Then there is the "bad Indian" who is the drunk in the gutter, for example. They think Indians have to be one stereotype or the other, but the truth could be in the middle. There is really no such thing as a good stereotype anyway. We must work to avoid caving in to stereotypes. It takes more than just calling out publications; we need to look at the *sources* for the information behind the stories. We must pay attention to what hostiles say. We must work on and with the reporters and editors directly involved.

Dr. Robert Lichter (Topic: Framing, Messaging, Content Analysis)

President, Center for Media and Public Affairs

The Center did a study on news coverage about minorities. For two months they followed stories in more than a dozen media outlets. We did a study of the treatment in the news of minority groups – in employment, health care, and justice - in relation to a number of major news beats. In 550 stories there was only one about health care and Native Americans. There was a noticeable lack of lots of, or even any, consistent background information.

For journalists, Native Americans aren't newsworthy in their own right. The Native community as a whole isn't newsworthy in its own right as it hasn't achieved the status of a newsworthy group. What is done to them, not by them, is what makes the news. Indian Country is not a beat, but rather a place that is at the mercy of events. Because the coverage is about what is happening upon them, the coverage will be pretty negative because mainstream news tends to be negative overall.

At the major media outlets, journalists will jump on any stories about the abuse of money and power. The Abramoff scandal flared up in a dark sky of no other consistent background information coverage. These kinds of stories aren't balanced by everyday coverage that lets people see that this is the exception rather than the rule.

As far as how stories are framed, the overall poverty in Indian country is expressed – the group is being treated as a victim and is composed of people who lead substandard lives. At this point, you shouldn't worry about framing - the point is to get into the frame in the first place.

TV entertainment is possibly more important than news. If we go to journalists and ask them to cover us differently, they say that they're just covering the news. Producers and directors are making up the stories – they tell whatever story they want to tell. It's a constructed portrayal.

In the 1990s, the Center looked at TV shows and found the same pattern as in the news. One in every 200 speaking parts was identified as Native American. Theme episodes about Native Americans occurred on TV but were not varied according to individual tribe. The themes were:

(1) Navajos were code talkers in WWII so are distinct.
(2) The focus was on Indians' supernatural animistic nature and not on people dealing with contemporary worldly problems.
(3) Portrayals ranged from bloodthirsty savages to spiritual savages holding sage wisdom with nature-based insight instead of people with a uniquely valued perspective.
(4) Indians are a vanquished proud people and the "good" guys are fighting off schemes to take something from these "noble people fallen from grace."

In Tony Hillerman's novels, Chee lives in personal conflict between old and new ways. Leaphorn has come back from the big city and is ambivalent about everything. Hillerman's stories are good in that they aim for the reader to see the characters as individuals who, while living and acting through their cultures, are part of a common human group.

Lori Buckner (Topic: Unknown, Unseen Influences on Final News Product)
News Editor, US News

I am a copy editor. I make articles make sense and I work on the product just before the reader gets it. I write headlines and edit for content, tone, and style. Therefore, I feel like I am an unseen influence on the stories I work with. I can be one of the most important allies in making an undistorted representation of Indian Country.

You cannot define what offends another person. My most valued principle is to know when I don't know something. I often have to ask questions of someone else. I hope to be humble enough to know enough to ask intelligent questions. I think it's important to go to actual humans for advice and they don't need to be a guru of any sort. I don't pretend to speak for all the nonwhite people in my newsroom when someone asks me a question.

We need to have the awkward conversations with one another. When someone says something outrageous to me, it's a not-again-moment. If I want to improve the world, I need to hear you out and then take the time to respond. We need to continue to be open and laugh and share with each other. Ridiculous things happen every day and not everyone who says something stupid to you might have meant it to be stupid or bad. If you go home angry at each other, you will stay angry at each other.

My message to you is to talk – talk to each other. As parents, professionals, and citizens, we must talk to each other and share with each other the good and the bad. Perhaps when you were talking about the New York Times article, if a copyeditor had read that story – read that 11 thousand Mohawks benefited from smuggling – bells would have gone off in his/her head. He/she would have thought that there was a wrong context for something somewhere.

I am editing the rough draft of history. History should be recorded properly.

Interaction amongst Panelists and Q & A

Comment from José Barreiro. There is a shifting of metaphor now toward well thought out political corruption and ideas of greed based around gaming. This is replacing outright racism. If metaphor shifts, watch out, that's when policy begins to shift. Never forget that most of Indian policy can be changed with a stroke of a pen.

Reference the New York Times article: There was a tribal response through Indian Country Today. They are calling for a meeting with the editorial board. The reporter was up there for several weeks and they opened up to her because they realized the scale of the problem. They felt, and were, completely betrayed by the tone and focus of the article. Was the fault for this with the reporter or the editor? The liberal media will prove a little bit of their conservative credentials by beating up on Indians. They seem to balance themselves by taking on a minority.

Comment from audience member: "Minority." I find that word offensive. I challenge groups to find other words to describe ethnic groups. The first connotation of minority isn't measuring numbers. It means "less than" and it carries a sense that "minorities" are less important than the rest of the people. I challenge us to eliminate the word from our vocabularies.

Question: In the content analysis by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, was the shooting at Red Lake (Minnesota, Red Lake Indian Reservation high school) compared to the shooting at Columbine (Colorado, white middle class suburban Denver high school)?

Answer: No, because it wasn't within the study timeframe.

Question: Do you bring journalists of color into your organization?

Answer: There is no formal program but my philosophy is to find an opportunity to bring them in when it's feasible. Tell media managers about anyone who would be appropriate.

Comment: I've done research on articles about Native Americans and I dispute the idea that there's no drip drip coverage. Yes, I agree that it's limited and mostly in regional papers. But I see stories consistently in the Western US – little features or daily stories about urban Indians. As for the news, it is just news. Is it accurate and fair or is it not? We can get caught in terms of positive or negative but it's better to use the concepts of accurate and sensitive.

Comment: There are no "rich Indians' mansions." Even with gaming, we are still the poorest in the land. These are disproportional images.

Question: How do we change naming sports teams to get away from Indian-related names?

Answer: On a positive note, there is now tremendous maturation in American nomenclature. Mascot names are down from 3,000 to 900 which means that 2/3 have been eliminated. This is a great success.

Friday Morning Address

***Theme*: Political Clout**

Tom Cole (Topic: Needs and Assets as Handled in Congress)
US Representative, 4th District, Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation

When invited, I was given a series of questions to answer. [Editor's note: In contrast to many conventional politicians, he answered each question and quite candidly.] I was asked to talk with you about some challenges of communication from a Native American standpoint in the House. I am going to make this very particular and relate my experience.

Look at me. Do I look like an Indian out of central casting? No, I don't. If you saw my brother, he does. I don't look like an Indian in a stereotypical way. I am easily accepted in the House. Appearance becomes a challenge and an asset. In the House setting, my presence sends a message that perhaps "Indians are a little bit different than I thought." This becomes an opportunity to open up story that leads into presenting relevant issues.

I sat down with a reporter once and right away she asked: "How much Indian are you?" [laughter from audience]. I replied, "I bet you don't have any earthly idea how offensive that question is. You would not ask an African American that question." I am a full citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. Different tribes define their membership in different ways and not in blood quantum. Our family can trace our ancestry back to the 1720s when a Scottish trapper had three Chickasaw wives and we descended from one of them. The Dawes Act affected my grandfather when tribes were looted out of their lands in the late 1880s. My mother was elected to the state legislature in Oklahoma. My aunt was a proud Indian woman and a trained Shakespearean actress. I was raised to hate Andrew Jackson. We've got our bona fides."

When I came to the US House, there were only two other Native American Representatives and that lack of numerical strength makes it hard to even talk about important Indian Country issues.

It is important to understand that there are differences between individual tribes, so one cannot generalize about *all* problems and situations when talking to other House members. Indian Country in general is not a very well known place. When one is trying to project a message beyond a well-known place, it takes a lot of work. Oklahoma has few large media markets.

I showcase my Chickasaw background in a number of ways. I put my Indian heritage in my biography. Using art and artifacts in my office makes a powerful statement about Natives. I look for opening of opportunities to talk. For example, there was a chosen group of sympathetic listeners at the inaugural ceremony of the NMAI (National Museum of American Indians) in Washington. A follow-up breakfast at the White House the next morning offered an impromptu opportunity for some political comments – handled with subtle humor in the form of war whoops to ease the discomfort of President Bush and the Secret Service. I take advantage of opportunities to talk in front of both Native and non-Native groups to explain important issues.

Many federal monies are directed to state or municipal governments and everyone forgets about tribal governments. My staff and I insert “tribal governments” into draft legislation and into written and/or spoken information. Every time we present such a proposal, we have to explain the “why” behind them, so the educational opportunities are continually broadened. I can discuss the Indian historical perspective and the classic issues of funding for Native American programs. There are a lot of accidental threats to these issues that are created through general ignorance.

My task is usually educational, rather than critical. However, I challenge people who misspeak or don't understand the law such as a colleague who talked about working with Governors. [I remonstrated] You don't say "states rights" and tribal governments in the same sentence. It shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the relationship between tribal governments and the federal government. You don't go to the NAACP and talk about states rights and should not with Native Americans either.

In Indian Country, it is ineffective to talk only to Republicans or Democrats because each tribe needs *both* in their political camp. Tribal politicians should unite among themselves and across party lines and work together to seek bipartisan cooperation. Neither national party should have a monopoly on the Indian vote. Natives should learn to operate like any other interest group inside the overall political process. We've got so much diversity, potential, promise.

I make a point to be a resource for my colleagues in the House by offering a Native perspective but staying out of disputes between tribes in other Representatives' territories. I give broad background information. In the Cobell Case, for example, people want to just legislate a solution. However, this important issue needs to be negotiated or litigated instead. I offer background information on the Indian trust system to others so they can rethink the issue.

Advice as Republican on how to deal with conservative politicians

I am conservative in many ways, which gives me some insights. Addressing concerns in their language can be effective. Schools on reservations are "under-capitalized." All politicians, including my colleagues, think politically, so one should make candidates aware of Indians' voting and financial powers in particular states. Conservatives are often hostile to tribal sovereignty, so in a swing constituency where votes can go either way, the Indian vote is critical.

I help conservatives understand how much tribal sovereignty is actually a conservative idea. Encourage them to go back to the Constitution. Go with what's there. Tribes were recognized at the beginning as independent and as sovereign units so that needs to be honored. Conservatives generally support business and people looking out for each other as opposed to relying on government support. Help them recognize that we as Native people want to be self-sufficient and independent. Tribes that profit from businesses (a good thing to conservatives) including gaming invest it right back into their own people. This allows tribal people to have the ability to become self-sufficient. This should not, however, let the Federal government off the hook for treaty responsibilities to tribal governments. It's two different issues.

Two hundred years of history indicate that the US government won't come through on promises, so we Indians must make a goal of having self-sufficiency for tribes. We can't waste time fighting lost battles from the past.

Current big challenges and issues are:

(1) Gaming. There are only a couple of states without some form of state-sanctioned gaming – lottery, bingo, or horseracing. One cannot fairly say that Indians, therefore, can be denied gaming. The opposition often comes from groups that are jealous of Indians' success, tribal rivalry, and/or off-reservation business.

(2) The Abramoff scandal. This is not an Indian scandal but rather is a lobbying scandal with no Indians or tribes having violated standards. Abramoff manipulated known rivalries – tribal in this case – as he played everyone off one against another as a matter of course. Indians should not become scapegoats for the Abramoff scandal. This is not a new theme, but is a repeat of, "If something goes wrong, blame it on the Indians."

We are in the middle of an Indian Renaissance. Opportunity is now moving toward us rather than away from us. Historically, every time tribes have done well or opportunity has come, danger and jealousy have come with it. Some people like to feel bad about Indians "way back then" because then they don't have to think about Indian situations today. Tribes need to have the ability to participate in the overall political process and to integrate it without losing Native

identity. This ability to participate is critical and needs to be used. It's important to remember, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

I don't want to be the only elected Native American in the US Congress. We have so much diversity and promise – we have to get our people into politics. We must get them into both the Republican and Democrat parties and at the federal, state, and local levels. Indians have to be in the political process – that's where you educate people about sovereignty and what tribes are and what an integral part of America they are.

Questions and comments from the audience

Comment from Audience: Most of what you said is dead on about when the new Indian museum opened. However, about the invitation given to the chiefs to go to the White House the next morning … none of the Virginia chiefs were invited, because we are only state and not federally recognized.

Answer from Representative Cole: I agree with you that this was a problem but I didn't have anything to do with the invitation list. I don't get involved with individual tribe's issues. However, some tribes have been waiting for 50 years for federal recognition from the Department of the Interior and nobody should have to wait that long. The process should be transparent and orderly.

[to group as he leaves] I appreciate what you do more than you know.

Friday Morning Plenary Panel Presentation

Having discussed problems and some solutions, this panel begins to pin down experiments tried, ideas and methods that worked, and coalitions that can be formed. Speakers discussed not only the application of ways to work with the mainstream but also ways to avoid dependence on it by working around it. Old fashioned communication strategies such as networking with others who have similar agendas and new fangled electronic communication can both be considered. The symposium has looked at communications more broadly than just "the press" and "broadcasters."

***Theme*: Getting Indian Issues Front and Center;**
How to Engage Senators, Representatives and Media in Hearing Story

Juana Majel-Dixon (Topic: Problem of Low Numbers--How to Overcome & Successes)
Secretary, National Congress of American Indians, Violence Against Women Project

The Violence Against Women Act needed first of all to be understood by all women, including non-Native women. Our committee held meetings across the country with 300 plus national groups in order to give the information out across the country. The national meetings were also an opportunity to talk to people about "Our Native Story."

The Department of Justice did a study showing in Indian Country, 75% of perpetrators in sexual assaults and crimes of violence were non-Native (white or African-American). However, fines for these offensives were so low that they weren't an effective punishment. The DOJ was slow to react to the information it had collected. We waited under both the George Bush and Bill Clinton administrations for some action but nothing happened.

We decided to address the problems among leadership in Indian Country. One problem is that tribal leadership has only a small amount of authority over non-Indians. Stats show that now six out of ten women will be assaulted and one out of three will be sexually assaulted. We formed a 22-member Native women's organizations coalition consisting of 75 Native women to work together to address these issues.

Our taskforce had to educate people. We had to deal with the story of how violence came to Indian Country. We decided to do educational public service announcements by radio, cable and webcasting and to do that we had to bring the 75 of us up to date with high tech. We wanted to teach the importance of showing respect and honor to our women and that violence is neither normal nor sacred. We used posters, coffee mugs, lapel pins to educate tribal leadership.

Historically, Native people respected their women but something happened along the way to make us mindless about violence against women. There is so much domestic violence. We need to restore the integrity of our nations so that we can one day say that zero in three, not one in three, women will be raped or violated in our lifetime.

[Editor's note: Since the symposium, the "Task Force on Violence Against Women" won one of Harvard's prestigious awards for successes.]

Robert Holden (The Problem of Low Numbers: How to Overcome & Successes)

National Congress of American Indians, Hurricane Katrina Relief

Native Americans need not be dependent upon mainstream media as they have other communication options. Robert Holden was asked to tell his success story in using interpersonal communications: telephoning, emailing, and traveling to deal with a crisis situation. He used his networking skills and organizational connections to communicate during a major emergency. The mainstream media gave no attention to tribes affected by hurricane Katrina. (For example, the storm scattered 8,000 members of the Houma tribe and did great damage in the area.) However, tribal communications allowed this long time NCAI staffer to "go around" the media to create assistance. He set up a fund on the NCAI website. During the crisis tribes contributed $5 million dollars. Many other funds were collected for tribal members hurt by the hurricane.

I had been trained for other potential emergencies, for example with nuclear power plants. A group of Native Americans were given technical training. There was a "tribal cadre" that could be dispatched to help in a catastrophic situation. In years past, we put together tribal emergency preparedness response plans. These were designed to engage the totality of Native experience. This is something that now we as Native peoples have not done for various reasons. The reasons are varied – cultural, financial, focusing on other priorities – in terms of slacking off with this

planning. In the past, FEMA had an active Native link and tribal involvement in its work. This meant that there was help during a disaster. However, now it is not that way.

If something catastrophic could have possibly happened, it just did with the hurricanes in the U.S South last fall. Yet, somehow the tribes experience was left out. We may be viewed differently. The underlying feeling is something like Indian people and their property are just part of what's 'out there.'" Indians, after all, originally were "bought" in the Louisiana Purchase along with land and animals and plants.

NCAI wanted to reach out to its own, but it was a worry that we would get in the way and there was a real health risk. However, Adam McMullin [communications director] and I got our sleeping bags and some beef jerky and hit the road. We learned what Native people can do to meet needs created by disasters. Even with poor households, Indians have always taken care of one another.

We looked at Native communities specifically to figure out how to help. We met with the different communities and these meetings enabled us to put together a disaster relief fund for them. The help offered from outside was generous and it came from all walks of life. Some people came down who had training from the tsunami crisis. Wal-Mart sent down several trucks. People contributed financial donations pulled from everything in between people's fixed incomes and bake sales. <u>The generosity of Indians was so touching. This was a story not heard.</u>

Thank you. We appreciate your efforts.

Mark Trahant (Topic: Problem of Low Visibility and How to Overcome It)
Editorial page editor, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

In regard to visibility, the Internet has changed everything so remarkably. Things have the capacity to generate over and over in ways they haven't before. For example two summers ago, at a large conference, I asked President Bush a question about tribal sovereignty in the future. It became known as "the question" because in his answer he said, "I mean, you're a -- you've been given sovereignty." If you google my name, President Bush, and sovereignty, you will find it. At this point on VHS1 it is number 16 for Internet hits [laughter]. The Colbert report on the comedy channel used it last week.

Low numbers of Native Americans can be considered in ways that could generate new stories. In the broad national context the US is going through an unparalleled demographic change. A dramatic demographic shift is happening. Sometimes we need to pull back and look. As the country as a whole gets older, Indian Country gets younger. With massive numbers of retirees, there will not be enough workers. Native Nations will be a source of workers as older Americans retire. As a French philosopher once said, "Demographics is destiny."

Those of us who are Native journalists working for mainstream media can bring our values into the newsroom. I was working in Salt Lake when the Hantavirus crisis struck on the Navajo reservation. As the executive news editor, I had some clout and decided our policy should be that we would not cover funerals. I researched other health crises such as Legionnaires disease and the news never covered the funerals of victims. Everyone on the staff agreed.

To change the media, we must measure and contrast in specific ways. I collect and use publication data daily to follow my mission of doing this. I measure bylines and columns everyday and identify who is writing them. By line count, currently males are the writers 63% of the time and my goal is to even things up between genders. I drive my colleagues crazy with this, but it's the only way to see where to start to make change.

Wade Henderson (Topic: Using coalitions and voting to overcome powerlessness)

Executive Director, Leadership Conference for Civil Rights

Moderator Patricia Zell, former Senate staff member: "There are few people in Washington who don't know the next speaker's name for his outstanding and sustained advocacy for the civil rights of America's people. His distinguished service and his sensitivity to the challenges confronting Native America have made him a valued friend of Indian Country. It is my honor to introduce Wade Henderson.

Wade Henderson: Good morning. Good morning. That was a very generous introduction. Not really deserved but I'll take it. This is a very very important conference, a very important symposium. I see Joe Volk back there. Friends Committee on National Legislation is part of our coalition.

Coalitions are important. My organization is a broad based one of 189 organizations working with issues of intertwined civil and human rights. We work to advance the agendas for all of these. We must measure advances in civil and human rights by a single yardstick. If circumstances apply to one group, they should apply to all others.

Our membership includes NCAI, Native American Rights Fund, and the Alaska Intertribal Council. We also work with Hawaiian Natives on sovereignty issues.

The strategic use of communications is an essential corollary and element of political power. If you're really talking about power in Indian Country, you've got to look at how you use communication. You have to use communications as an adjunct of policy in order to move forward. To know where you are going, you have to know where you are. It is important to look at the reality of how Indian Country is portrayed.

In response to Representative Cole this morning, there are three things to remember: (1) Voting is the language of American democracy. If you don't vote, you don't count. If you don't participate, your ability to affect policy is zero. (2) Money is the mother's milk of politics. Until and if a system of public financing can be implemented, you need this political resource in order to invest in the system. (3) Demographics shape policies. If population numbers are limited, one must figure out a way to compensate.

The current imagine of Native Americans is either the romantic view from the 19th Century or that of "The Casino Indian." Neither accurately reflects circumstances in the 21st Century. In both of these cases, Indians are portrayed as symbols only, not real individuals. There is an absence of serious conversations about the challenges facing the citizens of Indian Country today. Without serious conversations, Americans can't (and don't) in general understand the sovereignty issue. We need to deconstruct the definition and history around it.

We must change policies that shape our lives. In terms of voting obstacles for people of color, South Dakota is rapidly becoming the Mississippi of today's time – just look at reservations around our country and you will know my observation is accurate. We must also review the terms we use for identifying and naming people. The terms now used are analogous to what was used against African Americans until we changed our political context for them.

The current big issues in Indian Country are the federal budget and trust fund accounting. These stories are so far beneath the radar screen for most people that no one other than those in Indian Country knows that they are even issues. The important question is, "How do we use these issues to organize within our own communities? How do we frame the issues? How do we work with others to make a strategic plan?"

It all can be defined by the weakest elements. Organizing is a great challenge. It is important to advance the causes we share both domestically and internationally. We need to present human and civil rights to a broader segment of our civilization.

Wanda Resto Torres (Topic: Tiny groups with a unique political status can get attention)
Fellowship of Reconciliation

We in Vieques, Puerto Rico are working for the recovery and restoration of a US military bombing range on our island. We are a *colony* of the U.S. and we have suffered for 60 years with the bombing range disaster. The Navy pulled out in 2003 but left behind a wasteland of toxic waste and unexploded ammunition. Within the former bombing range, 2/3 of the land has now been transferred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is called a wildlife refuge. We want the land returned to the people, cleaned up and decontaminated. We also want compensation for the health problems we have had to come to live with. Environmental justice is an issue for many peoples of color. You can see some parallels with Indian lands.
The tactics that have worked for us are:

1. We break down tasks so that some people work with local officials, some with state people, and some with Washington, DC people on the national level

2. We work with the four million Puerto Ricans who live in the US who can/do vote. We get them to go to local people in their areas to ask them to support the project.

3. We suggest staffers in the government who local people can go to see.

4. We use networking via phone trees for contacting others if there is no Web access.

5. We practice nonviolent civil disobedience.

6. We've learned to use "their" language.

7. We earmark monies to work on smaller sections of the problem.

8. We used donated money to get a study about the problem going.

9. We have built alliances with the faith community and environmental groups.

10. We tried to get EPA superfund status and money to clean it up.

11. We learned the importance of getting as many different types of people and groups as we could find to become engaged with our project and us. These became our tools.

12. We keep thinking about how to best use our people and keep staff members engaged.

We used our website (new technology) to ask for letters to the Environmental Protection Agency requesting the inclusion of Vieques on the Superfund List. We made copies of the letters and took them to EPA. Their jaws dropped as they had never seen so many hard copy letters about an invisible problem. This made a big impact on the administrative level of EPA. We then turned this into an article for our newsletter.

Interaction Amongst Panelists and Q & A

Question: In regard to coalition building, will NAACP open its doors to others? In Wyoming, the state NAACP opened itself up to the rez; is this something that will happen nationally?

Answer: Yes. NAACP has a long record of being a multiracial organization, open to all who share its values. In some parts of the south, there was intermarriage between African Americans and Native Americans – this is also happening today.

Question: Is it time for a third party - made up of people of color – to organize in a way to affect more change?

Answer: Maybe, because it shouldn't and can't be up to one party to make changes. What is being sought is full inclusion into the body politic. As Shirley Chisholm said, "There are no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, only permanent interests."

Question: Are there freedom of press issues affecting Indian Country as there are in Iraq?

Answer: The suppression of freedom of the press plus funding of an opposing press has a history. It's been around for a while. During the early 1970s, the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) funded a newsletter advancing particular agendas. The DOD is now doing the same thing in Iraq. It is not just an issue of press freedom, but also one of dispensing false information.

Question: For us as Indian people, we see the problems and we see media as the key to finding solutions. Mainstream media use a kind of litmus test for news - is it timely and of interest to a broad audience? Is that still true in mainstream media and can we open up that dialogue?

Answer: The mainstream press is appealing to a broader constituency of readers. We must pay attention to the greater landscape and jump onto all opportunities.

Friday Afternoon Concluding Plenary

Many practical ideas had been presented and many avenues for change had been explored in the day and a half before this third plenary. The symposium had generated a multiplicity of stories and brought out dozens of ways to tell and hear them. It had focused on many forms of communication, especially on how the media hears and/or doesn't hear from contemporary Native Americans and how things could be improved. Much of the discussion had centered on stories told by and about Native Americans and on direct and indirect interaction, or lack thereof, between Natives and non-Natives.

As a conclusion, participants listened to a *message story about and for indigenous people* by one of Indian Country's highly regarded contemporary scholars on traditional, national and international subjects. Dr. John Mohawk is a frequently requested speaker and guest columnist about Native affairs. He champions self-sufficiency of indigenous people globally.

Among the themes of his talk are:

* listening to and learning from the stories of ancestors
* building new communal and economic narratives
* considering a new self-reliance
* reconnecting to land as the real riches

John Mohawk

State University of New York (SUNY)

When the tsunami occurred in Southeast Asia in 2004, there were two examples of island indigenous people who escaped loss of human life in the big waves. One happened when a man remembered the advice of his ancestors: When the ocean waters recede much further off, beyond from where they usually come from, then it's time to get away from the shore. The islanders listened, ran like crazy up the hill, and survived. They listened to the voices of ancestors. On another island, people noticed the elephants running noisily away up the hill in a panic. The people thought it wise to react to the unusual elephant behavior and did the same thing. They were listening to the voices of the elephants' ancestors. In both cases, no one died.

In 1929, the world economic system collapsed and the Great Depression began. Of all of the great events of the 20th Century, this one impacts us the most today. Ecological events at that time (the dust bowl in the American Southwest and drought in the Midwest) didn't help. There are very few people alive today who were adults in 1929 and their memories are fading. The world economic system collapsed in ways that we would find unimaginable today because we think we're impervious to that. In 1929 they didn't think it could happen either. Humans must have some kind of genes that makes them recover from disasters and then fail to remember them.

Indian Country was isolated from the Great Depression because Indians weren't in the cash economy. Plus, as Indians say, "we've always lived in a depression." But these were tough times. Urban Indians returned to the reservations in the countryside. (This same pattern happened for whites. Many left rural America for urban areas following World War I and then

returned to rural areas during the Great Depression in order to survive.) In rural areas, even if you don't have money you can grow food and chop wood to keep yourself fed and warm.

Why am I talking about the Depression? Young people today have a false optimism about today and about the future. However, economists worldwide say we need an adjustment for the dollar and this will be problematic. The first people to get the first economic punch are the poor, many of whom are Indian. The people who haven't built a lot of wealth will feel that first punch.

After the Great Depression, people figured out that their city jobs were no more, so they just stayed put on their reservations. Reservations have a culture of helping one another, that's the way it is in general in rural areas. People started rebuilding their homes and they did as they had been doing before – raised chickens and hogs. By the time World War II came along, my reservation was fairly prosperous – there was not much of a cash economy but people had plenty to eat and they were warm.

Could we do this same thing today? Probably not, because the young people of today did not grow up with those rural survival skills and can't come back to them so easily. In times of stress, our lands, our skills and our culture have helped us to survive. Living on the land and raising food is not simple. It takes generations to establish. Every piece of land has a good way of using it and it takes a long time to learn how to do it right. If it's not practiced for several generations, it's lost. The basic land-based survival skills we had were lost in two or three generations.

In the 1930s, in my part of the country people used to talk a lot about the Great Depression and World War II. These were the stories of my childhood. Young people today are not hearing these same stories.

Beginning with Jamestown, we Indian people were told that we were "deficient" in many ways. The top deficiency was not being Christians. Indian people changed to survive. Then more and more changes kept happening along with the development of factions and new requirements on "how to be." We can forgive all of those people from long ago because there was no survival strategy that worked. That was then and this is now and we are faced with different things. For now, it's important to recognize that cultures nurture people and when you don't nurture people you don't have culture. Without nurturing, cultures won't survive, people won't survive.

During the Great Depression, social safety nets were created via the New Deal programs. These created social safety nets for people so that capitalism would not be overwhelmed. Now that the memory of why these programs were created has faded, these programs are thought of as entitlement programs and assumed to be only for lazy people. There is an intellectual movement now that believes we should eradicate *all* social programs, not just the New Deal based ones, because they are abused. Therefore, everything supporting Indian Country is on the block. Destroying the social network is "expensive" for legislators because once you start chopping, people start complaining, and then they start voting.

Creating monetary wealth is a concept for rich upper middle class mainstream people but it does not exist in Indian Country as such. We have always had social wealth and we pay attention to

old people and our children. There has been attention to building infrastructure and jobs but we now need to also shift our attention to other areas.

Indian Country needs to create monetary wealth within Indian Country itself and go beyond the physical and cultural subsistence levels that exist today. We need internal investments. We need to decide about what kind of economic development is appropriate. We need to answer the fundamental question of, "Given our contemporary circumstances, what's really available?" Given the diversity within Indian Country, this question will have different answers but we need to be consciously realistic about all of them. Any entertainment based development isn't good – we need something real. We need to reorient people's thinking toward how we can do the appropriate things to enable us to become truly self-sufficient - do that which generates dollars and people who reproduce ourselves in positive social ways.

I have two messages. The first is that I think we are going to see hard economic times ahead. The second is that these can be opportunity times for Indians. We need to build a new wealth, the kind of wealth that will sustain our people in hard times. Maybe we won't have a depression but it makes sense to plan for one. I make my living, it is part of my profession, to contact people whose job it is to try to understand how the world is working. I have contacts with people who are quite famous, so I can make this statement to you that some of the world's best economists think we are approaching a crisis. They're not thinking about Indian Country. I am.

[chuckles] So with these uplifting words, I'm going to end my moment on the podium and thank you very much for inviting me. I've enjoyed my stay here enormously. Thank you.

Patricia Powers (Farewell)

Native American Advocacy Program
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Thank you to all who came to tell stories. Thank you to all who came to tell histories. Thanks to those of you who wanted to hear those histories and stories. I am happy that we came together.

I believe there are a lot of us who can help with media issues and contacts. We could have teams of non-Native people go with Native leaders to the media and to Capitol Hill. I will not say precisely how to move forward; as a non-Native that would be inappropriate even if I am the coordinator of this conference. Native leaders will lead the way in improving communications and we stand ready to assist.

Section on Workshops

Note to reader. Participants were offered choices of workshops. Only a few of the workshops are summarized below due to space considerations. The event coordinators received positive feedback on all of them. For a complete list of workshops, see the symposium program at the end of this paper. The workshops were not videotaped.

The entertainment panel entitled "Broadening Entertainment" provides an example of the caliber of speakers, the variety of knowledge presented, and the distances traveled to be part of the symposium. Dawn Jackson, Jackie Old Coyote, Harlan McKosato, and Joe Fab were members of the panel and served as resources to those who selected their workshop.

Dawn Jackson came from California to be the moderator of the workshop and to share her experience of negotiating and coordinating with both Hollywood and Network decision-makers to increase the number of Native people in the industry. She had touched base earlier with the National Congress of American Indians since she was aware that one sector of Indian Country may not yet be linked with another sector. In the past Dawn produced a film Naturally Native, worked for Disney, and helped found First Americans in the Arts and the Native American Communications Council. Dawn and Jackie Old Coyote, now at Harvard in Massachusetts, had known each other in the past since they both have acting experience. Jackie has been featured on the cover of Indian Cinema Entertainment. She shared her personal experiences as an actress, model, screenwriter, and author. Harlan McKosato came from New Mexico to discuss his preparations to start a Native cable network. Harlan is the former host of Native America Calling. A popular speaker, he filled a lecture hall when he spoke with journalism students at Oklahoma University about increasing Indian representation in media, how mainstream media can change mindsets, and about sovereignty and economic independence. He is working to launch First Americans Cable Entertainment television.

To facilitate a broader discussion of communication experiences and options, each workshop included a non-Native engaged in similar projects. Joe Fab, an independent filmmaker, wrote and produced the documentary "Paper Clips" about a grade school in rural Tennessee where the children spent years learning about the Holocaust. The movie discusses two types of tolerance as the filmmakers deal with their prejudice against "rednecks." Joe also produces the elaborate tree lighting pageant each year at the White House. These four practitioners exchanged ideas and brought hope for the future. The workshop speakers/facilitators engaged with the groups. Rather than treating participants as an "audience," it became a group of peers discussing films and other topics. Very appropriate since the remarkable people who attended could well have been presenters themselves.

As some experts have pointed out, "…non-Whites in the United States have three options: (a) they may develop and maintain their own alternative communications media; (b) they may seek access into mainstream media through employment; and (3) they may apply pressure techniques of various forms to effect changes in mainstream media content as it relates to them" (Race, Multiculturalism, and the Media). **Professionals who have followed each of those paths came together at this event. In addition those who work on specific issues and community people joined in.**

Several mainstream journalists came to the conference as participants and others appeared either on plenary or workshops panels. We were particularly pleased that Chris Statullo, the editorial page editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer, joined us. He shared the media story from another point of view, as a working journalist with major responsibilities. He discussed the inner workings of a newspaper and the choices that must be made. In his view, Native American stories are important and complex. Long features are seldom possible; however, little articles appear and his hope is that over the years a mosaic will be created so the public has somewhat more of a complete picture.

While Native leaders may say poetically about brotherhood and the environment, "We all live on the same mountain," newspaper editors and managers usually focus on the interests of local people and community events, along with national news, which narrows their view and their philosophy.

Legislative Overview of Problems

Paul Moorehead (Moderator/Speaker)
Gardner, Carton, and Douglas law firm

What makes it all so difficult right now?

1. The Jack Abramoff scandal: Because a large amount of Indian dollars were involved, the Justice Department held a parallel investigation. The publicity exacerbated the picture that gaming resulted in lots of wealth for Indians. This erodes the perceived need for federal help and brings up the whole question of, "Why is there a federal government regime?" People do not understand Indian law, treaties and trust responsibility.

2. The public has a fundamental problem with the idea of tribalism. People wonder, "Why are there tribes in the US in the first place?" This can threaten program continuation as well as sovereignty.

3. There is a perception that tribes bully local communities.

4. A lot happens behind closed doors – conversations for example, and covert actions.

There are current proposals to

1. Tax all reservation general revenues
2. Waive tribal immunity.

Trying to advance positive legislation is harder than fending off attacks. This is especially true in a hostile environment like the one that exists now.

Amber Ebarb
Budget expert and lobbyist, National Congress of American Indians

The top priorities for Indian Country are:

- Appropriations for tribes
- The honoring of the federal trust responsibility
- Adequate support for tribal based self-responsibility

The National Congress of American Indians puts out a budget document each year that provides numbers for program continuation and expansion. NCAI released its FY 2007 budget request before the Bush administration released theirs. NCAI regularly calls on the federal government to "invest" in Indian Country by providing adequate funds for housing, health care, public safety and other key programs. NCAI's President also gives an annual address that lays out overall priorities and the emphasis for the following year.

Aaron Mercer

Legislative Assistant for Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS)

There have been many broken treaties and unresolved issues. There is a need for healing beyond band-aids and recognition that there is something wrong.

Senator Brownback has introduced an apology bill. There is also a need to have an approach based on tribe-to-tribe, via state-to-state relationships. [The following is a portion of the apology resolution, which has not been passed.]

JOINT RESOLUTION
To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the United States Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States. .

SECTION 1. ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND APOLOGY.
The United States, acting through Congress--
(1) recognizes the special legal and political relationship the Indian tribes have with the United States and the solemn covenant with the land we share;
(2) commends and honors the Native Peoples for the thousands of years that they have stewarded and protected this land;
(3) acknowledges years of official depredations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the United States Government regarding Indian tribes;
(4) apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States;
(5) expresses its regret for the ramifications of former offenses and its commitment to build on the positive relationships of the past and present to move toward a brighter future where all the people of this land live reconciled as brothers and sisters, and harmoniously steward and protect this land together;
(6) urges the President to acknowledge the offenses of the United States against Indian tribes in the history of the United States in order to bring healing to this land by providing a proper foundation for reconciliation between the United States and Indian tribes; and
(7) commends the State governments that have begun reconciliation efforts with recognized Indian tribes located in their boundaries and encourages all State governments similarly to work toward reconciling relationships with Indian tribes within their boundaries.

David Mullon
General Counsel and Policy Director for the majority
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Get the idea out to the public that there are more than problems in Indian Country. There has been a lot of positive legislation over the last 15 years, but these things are not headline grabbers. For example, the108th Congress accomplished an Arizona water settlement (concerning streams) and a Snake River water rights settlement that included the Nez Perce in Idaho. The American Indian Probate Act (which was part of a larger initiative dealing with Indian land tenure) was enacted. It deals with a wide range of Indian problems.

"Routine" legislation that Congress has dealt with includes: transportation, an energy business bill (which had been initiated before), and the Violence Against Women Act (which had a strong Indian component). We are now looking at reauthorization of the Indian Health Improvement Act, further Land Trust reform (upcoming hearings in 2-3 months), prevention of meth use and distribution, economic development, housing, and education. As for the Committee's hearing on budgets, Senators McCain and Dorgan have opposed all budget cuts. There is little party partisanship on this committee.

The Cobell case has rippling effects or impacts on legislative processes and they are not generally positive. All policy on a non-trust matter is scrutinized through a "Cobell Lens" whether it has to do with Cobell or not.

[Elouise Cobell, then treasurer of the Blackfeet Tribe, brought a class action suit in 1996 to compel the Department of Interior to account for billions of dollars in the Individual Indian Money (IIM) system. Federal courts held that Interior was in breach of its fiduciary duties as land manager and banker, a role it seized in 1887. As trustee of the money for 500,000 individual Native Americans of multiple tribes, the federal government is responsible for repayment because of its lack of records. Interior can account for $13 billion in revenues from Indian lands it collected on behalf of the IIM trust account holders but cannot show how much money it put in their accounts. Federal courts demanded changes in the trust system that cost multi-millions and Interior spent many millions more defending itself in court, money that some say hurt Indian programs. Finally Congress stepped in to legislate trust reforms for the future and to consider a settlement of perhaps $8 billion. The amount is high because of interest on the missing money. The Indian Trust Reform Act was under consideration in both houses of Congress in 2006 and then the administration decided to completely rewrite the bill to lower its liability and losses.]

<u>General Discussion</u>

There is a general theme that issues/solutions are acceptable on a local level but there is hostility on the national stage.

Budget discussions can be teachable moments.

Every agency is 1/2 - 1/3 under-funded compared to white rural counterparts. Basic needs are just not being met.

Do nothing Congress period.

The Indian Health Care Improvement Act came close to reauthorization last Congress but it is getting harder than before to reauthorize the act. There is concern over liability issues from this administration: don't do any new program because someone might sue us. There have been

changes since 1994. Now many tribes are operating their own health systems and there is a desire to involve traditional healers. This is producing skittishness on the part of the administration.

The apology resolution issue gets at some of the roots of lots of issues. There is an implication that one has done something wrong. There is debate over the language. Does it go too far or not far enough?

"Indian Issues Fatigue" and Abramoff scandal let legislators "off the hook" for now. Legislators think about the problems in a circular way and only want to deal with it every few years. However, the need is constant.

The big issue is liability. If errors of the past are recognized, does this raise new liability for the feds? The big issue is no longer recognition of the nation-to-nation (government-to-government) obligations and process. The federal agencies' self-protective stance is a shift of liability to relieve feds of accountability and various obligations. Financial liabilities, usually faced by others in society, could now affect the federal government and it wants to avoid that possibility. If we need to go beyond the current reach of Indian self-governance/tribal decision-making roles, the feds will want to protect themselves as they let go of their own power. The disclaimers of responsibility used in past aren't strong enough now.

Energy Indian bills are one big example of the liability issue. They called for relief of Federal liability and some energy tribes didn't want the shift of liability onto themselves.

The liability shift issue is expanding to all political dispositions, even in stuff where the tribe is not assuming leadership.

Comments and Q & A From the Audience

Question: Thinking of the Abramoff scandal, if some legislators are taking bribes (which everyone might be doing), does this become an excuse for not moving on Indian issues?

Answer: This probably will be a temporary situation. Core friends of Indian Country on The Hill have reasons outside of campaign checks for working on these issues.

Question: Congress is ready to fund land buy-back for fractional interests on reservations – at the cost of $35 million instead of $59 million. Has the land consolidation money shrunk to compensate for the Cobell settlement?

Question: There is a proposal to zero out health care for urban Indians. How do we interpret this to Indians through the media?

Answer: Chance this won't happen with enough advocacy and media coverage.

Question: Where are the blocks to getting things passed? Are there technical/arcane measures involved in these kinds of legislation?

Answer: Yes, to a certain extent. Example: the Violence Against Women Act provision doesn't provide for tribal jurisdiction over non-Indian abusers. That opens up the important issue of tribal jurisdiction on reservations and that is a very big issue.

Question: How does war spending affect Indian money availability?

Answer: It does but we have a clear budget documenting what Indian Country needs and where the priorities are that we continue to push.

Question: What are the key things to do?

Answer:

1. Groups outside of Indian Country should contact the appropriate Congressional committees with their concerns.

2. Build new allies for/with tribes. How to find them? Faith communities? Senators and Representatives not on Indian committees but who have other reasons to care.

3. The IIM (Individual Indian Money) accounts scandal must be addressed. The federal government is responsible as a trustee for the royalties it collected from Indian land that went missing and will have to pay many, many billions of dollars because it waited a century to fix well documented problems with the trust system.

Addressing Lack of Indigenous People in Mainstream News

Patty Talahongva **(Moderator and speaker)**
Host, Native America Calling

Beyond gaming and the entertainment industry, there are other forms of economic development, but those stories are not coming out. There are more tribes without gaming than there are ones with gaming. Other non-gaming tribes should speak up.

One caution about getting indigenous people in the news: We need to ask, "Who are the experts?" "Does one person speak for all Indians?" But getting acknowledged at all is a feat.

Patty Talahongva frequently represents Indian Country when journalists of color come together such as the UNITY conferences. In 2004, Patty was interviewed by Amy Goodman of Democracy Now and made this striking observation:

"At the Democratic National Convention, when Barack Obama was talking about all of the people of color, he left out Native Americans. And it just boggles my mind that we're always, always forgotten. When it comes to reporting stories, zero are on our people, and yet we have a huge impact on our country because of treaties with the U.S. Government which makes our

people sovereign nations,. There's just all of this room for misinformation. One of the biggest stories not being covered right now is the Individual Indian Money trust fund accounts story. That's bigger than Enron and these Fortune 500 problems that we're having now in the financial world that we see on a daily basis. Interior's IIM scandal should be on headline news every day."

Working as a reporter and news manager: Sources and some in media are often so young.

Some people in newsrooms having no clue about certain events, questions about their education, "Am I getting the whole story?" Practice "back checking."

Be proactive with letters to the editor.

Observation from participant

Patty has style: chic red suit, confident demeanor. It was in part a light-hearted and jokey session, Patty offering prizes to people in audience who could guess, for example, how many years Native America Calling had been on the air. Answer: 10.

Winners got a promotional doorknob tag:

Do Not Disturb!
I have nothing on but Native America Calling

Every weekday at 1pm ET
1-800-99Native

Mark Trahant
Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Often train young Native Americans seeking a career in journalism who may want to work for community, tribal or mainstream newspapers and also give talks to established non-Native journalists who want quick guide to Indian issues. [editor's note: As a prominent journalist, Mark has been involved in many programs such as the American Indian Journalism Institute]

News managers, owners, others can work to help readers (and themselves) cross barriers

File a letter with FCC if a station is not covering stories about Native Americans

Jim Adams
Indian Country Today

Indian Country Today advertised for four weeks for stringers and got no response. How do you recruit Indian reporters? Indian Country Today is now based in New York State and there are

fewer Native staff members than desirable. There is reluctance at the top to encourage potential rivals in Indian Country. This needs to be addressed.

Here are some things to think about.

(1) Do you need a person who has grown up on the rez to do the story right?
(2) Does one have to be Native to cover Native stories?
(3) Can a reporter be too young to have the expertise needed for many stories?

There seems to be mutual avoidance between Natives and the mainstream press. Natives are shy because of abuse in the past. Mainstream press feels a lot of guilt. Many on both sides, therefore, go to one of the available databases for information.

Comment from woman from South Dakota: There is the 2+2+2 program (high school, tribal college, college) but it is difficult to get students involved. [The Hopi 2 +2 +2 college transition program won one of the Harvard Honoring Nations awards.]

Comment in response: You need younger kids - high school is too late.

Comments from the Audience

A good principle to follow is, "Each one reach one, each one teach one."

To find a variety of American Indian experts and sources, we need an Indian database. We could generate a Source List by asking one person to recommend another, etc. on down the chain. Most national groups have this system. These source books are specific to specific groups.

This is like creating a "Rainbow Rolodex" but remember that you will also get the same viewpoint.

There is a Web site titled "Index of Native American Media Resources" on the Internet.

Comments from other workshops regarding creating more of a Native media infrastructure

In California, Indians are getting ready to launch a TV network. They are working with the Aboriginal TV Network that is on cable in Canada.

Question: There is value for having Native Americans going into mainstream media but Natives are also needed at home. There is, for example, a real struggle to get Oneida to communicate with Oneida. So, what keeps people at home and/or drives people away from home?

Answer: There is more money available to sponsor people in other types of fields, which of course also have needs. Maybe a scholarship could be offered in exchange for two years of work back home. It could be equally attractive in either world but we should make it a way that will entice people to go home.

There is a University of Southern California website of student-produced newscasts which offers extended information on topics explored in the nightly newscasts.

Paddle journeys are good stories. (See Turtle Island Native Network Discussions or do other Web searches using the search name Paddle Journey.) These involve canoe journeys in old style dugouts. They take several weeks, with singing and dancing at each stop. For example, there is a Canoe Makah Project connected to breast cancer issues.

In addition to developing our own media, we need for people to connect in an historical context. Media shows Indian problems without any context of how they came about or roots of the history. We need to tell about privileges and spoils and how the results could have been done.

Organizations Lobbying on Behalf of Native Americans

Focus: Issues and Media Coverage

Aura Kanegis (Moderator/Speaker)

FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation)

A principle job for us is how to get people to hear/tell our stories. Before these were private, but there has been a transition over the last 20 years to broaden where one works. It's important to try to get beyond emergency responses. We should tell the micro stories that make up the macro stories as these can move all of us to act. We must know who we are, our mission, and our greatest challenges. We must speak to our vision.

I'd like to start by asking each of our panelists to introduce themselves and their organizational affiliation. Please give a quick overview on what you are doing and what your issues are. Then we can talk about what you have done to have your story heard.

Gary Gordon

National American Indian Housing Council

I am Mohawk. NAIHC represents 460 tribes and Alaska Native villages. We have been working 32 years. Our mission is to assist tribes in self-made efforts concerning housing on tribal lands because the need is very great. We are involved in training, technical assistance, research, communications, and advocacy.

NAIHC does educational work for Congressional members by taking them on tours. The biggest challenge is financial because all of the money comes from the Federal budget and that budget keeps shrinking. More is spent on health care for prisoners in the US than is spent for Indian housing. There is a need for 200,000 homes immediately and still we don't have funding.

NAIHC will work with Congress with a goal to increase funding. The strategies are to target members with large Indian constituencies and give information to new Congressional members. We also work to re-educate Congressional members who should already have knowledge about

the issues but who have sometimes forgotten a lot of things. We have credibility on the Hill now because of our accurate information, a bimonthly newsletter, and a "Quick Facts" sheet that we put out every two weeks. It is important to make things very personal and to be responsive with top quality information.

Traci McClellan

National Indian Council on Aging

As a 501c3 organization, we prepare educational materials to give to both people on the Hill and to groups advocating for and working on aging populations issues. We have been in existence for 30 years and are based in Albuquerque.

There is a need for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act even if this Act doesn't completely address Native needs. (Natives' tradition is to keep elders at home, but there is no infrastructure to do so.) NICA also deals with requested cuts to urban programs, has a focus on health and human services, and works for all tribes. We focus on a tiered aging system and work to paint a picture of health discrepancies. These discrepancies include accurate information on available resources and a belief system on the Hill that tribes now have money to work with the elderly.

NICA uses stories and pictures to make points. One of my questions to you is, "How can faith-based friends assist us in taking the message forward?"

People will have to stay in the work force longer. We are not looking at the issues as a whole country. There are nine million Baby Boomers who do not have a high school education and many are in Indian Country. The needs will only grow and we must do preventive work now.

There are only 15 nursing home facilities in all of Indian Country. Our infrastructure is so far behind that money from gaming is only beginning to fill the gap. The public doesn't know how few tribes have lucrative operations. What is considered by us to be a new dawn for Native Nations or a second change is generating more external scrutiny. And misperceptions can put in jeopardy such basics as services for elders, Indian health, protection of sacred sites and so on. The public doesn't know about and Congress doesn't seem to understand how reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act could help bring our medical care into the 21st century.

Joe Barton

Virginia council of Churches

The Virginia Council of Churches is non-Native but has concerns for and about Native issues. In 2002, we got involved because we feel that it is an issue of human rights. Historically, churches took a stand on Indian affairs and then had a 400-year long history of being silent. Originally, colonists couldn't see the image of God in the people who they met here. So they treated them as savages who needed to be taught to look and act more Christ-like so that they could become civilized/Christian. The VCC focus is: "To again greet these wonderful people with dignity and receive back blessings." This present time is viewed as a spiritual time.

Four hundred years ago, colonists brought disease and destruction. Now things are coming full circle and there is a chance to mend the broken circle and start a healing process. This can, literally, begin again in Jamestown.

VCC's work is focused on the long journey. Jamestown is a major step in this long process. All of the Virginia tribes are small and need all of the help we can give them.

Kenneth Adams

Chief, Upper Mattaponi Tribe

Our reservation is the oldest reservation in the country and we have had sustained contact with British and Americans since1607. Despite a small reservation size and small total population, we have maintained our culture and togetherness. Our biggest issue is the lack of Federal recognition as we are only recognized by the State of Virginia. With Federal acknowledgement, we hope to be able, among other things, to get back some human remains now housed at NMAI, which we believe to be ours. A request to repatriate unidentified human remains that is made by a non-Federally recognized tribe does not have to be honored by even the NMAI.

Lessons we have learned:

(1.) When working with the press: Invite the press for a meeting. Beforehand, decide which particular focus to use that time. Use a tactic such as, "Well, let me interject something…." to shift the conversation back to where you want it to be.
(2.) There is a big variance of tribes. For example, some tribes don't have land. (Alaska has half of the total of recognized tribes but no reservations.) Some tribes can control votes in states that have large reservation populations and small state populations. The idea of sovereignty means different things to different tribes.
(3.) Our tribe has built a strong relationship with state representatives. Our other organization and VITAL (Virginia Indians Tribal Alliance for Life) are 501 c 4 and this allows us to lobby. VITAL represents the six non-Federally recognized Indian tribes located in Virginia.

Jamestown affected every single Indian in this continent – it became the first reservation and faced the first near-total tribal wipe out. If one tribe can be first in negative ways, then it can be first in positive ways. The Mattaponi tribe wants to make a positive change that goes coast to coast and I feel that the process has begun. There is good communication now. The process of affecting change will be helpful to every American citizen. When we get closer to the top, everyone else just gets higher. There are problems that need to be fixed (drugs and unemployment) but these problems can only get fixed if we work together.

Moderator's Response and Q& A from the Audience

Aura Kanegis:

We have lots of resources available. Our different hats allow us to be an advocate for Native Nations in different ways. We know lots of bits and pieces of the bigger story. We can ask, "How can I help?" We can find our own voices even if we think it will be hard. Church and

community groups have a huge role in helping us to tell our story. We have to think about, "What is our charge in moving forward? What connections should be considered?"

Question: What role should we non-Indians play?

Answers: (1) Work for recognition for tribes. (2) Help us with discussions of religion so we can get beyond the present contaminated message.

Comment from a Navajo woman in the audience: Does moving toward recognition move us toward annihilation because it will force change? Win/loose systems are wrong. We have to reframe the four things that formed the basis of conquest: (1) imposed belief system (2) conversion (3) feelings of anger and no place to go to heal from them (4) the sense of victimization, especially with the youth. How do we make collaborative change?

Organizations Opposing Native Americans

Focus: Media and the Critics of Sovereignty

Details are provided for this workshop because symposium participants mentioned it often, saying the content was least known to them. Workshop speakers focused on the rhetoric and actions of critics of Indian sovereignty. Due to the controversial nature of the content of this workshop, excerpts from actual news stories are incorporated in several cases to provide confirmation or additional perspectives. Other speakers discussed the tension and conflict that also exists between tribes and states or communities during jurisdictional disputes. All speakers discussed how tribes are responding to the challenges of anti-sovereignty critics in the public sphere and, in some cases, actively fostering common ground to alleviate tensions between tribes and surrounding non-Native communities. Below are take-away points from each presentation.

Don Wedll

Office of Long-Term Planning, Mille Lac Band of Ojibwe

- The Mille Lacs experienced a concerted push to curtail the tribe's rights by anti-sovereignty groups when the tribe filed a lawsuit in the 1990s over treaty rights they wished to exercise based on their 1837 treaty. The anti-Indian groups formed under the guise of groups concerned about equality, fairness, and resource and environmental stewardship and constituted themselves under names such as:

    1. Save Mille Lacs Lake
    2. The Hunting and Angler Club (THACC)
    3. Proper Economic Resource Management (PERM)
    4. TEA Party (Treaty Equalization Association)
    5. Mille Lacs Lake Equal Rights Alliance

- These groups do not take into account the unique legal designation and rights Indian tribes hold in the U.S., the recognition of tribes' legal distinction in the Constitution and by the Supreme Court, and the sovereignty of tribes that pre-dated the founding of the U.S.

- The anti-sovereignty groups also use prominent spokespersons, such as a former Minnesota Vikings football coach, to bring attention to their movement.

- Many of the smaller anti-sovereignty groups are part of a larger national umbrella organization, the Citizen's Equal Rights Alliance (CERA). CERA also has ties to the WISE USE property rights movement, an anti-environmental group founded by James Watt with start up money given by the Coors family. CERA's 2006 annual conference is entitled "Constitutional Equality or Tribalism."

- The anti-sovereignty groups all have some concepts of saying they are not racists and not anti-Indian. They lead people with concepts like: they want us to all be equal, the rights of tribes are unequal, this is one nation, and tribes should not hold special rights. But what they are really saying is they want to define what is equal, what is fair, what is special, and they are the sole group to determine the answer to these issues. They label tribes as groups that have unfair advantages. They believe they are the ones who should correct this unequalness.

- Mille Lacs Band has countered these groups in a number of ways. The tribe is committed to using accurate and correct figures and statements when communicating with the press or local non-Native community. The Mille Lacs also get help for allied organizations such as Honor Our Neighbors' Rights and Origins (HONOR) and Voices of Unity. These two groups support the tribe by dispelling the myths created by the anti-sovereignty groups and by fostering better community relations.

  The tribe is also using the courts to define its rights and protecting itself from infringement on its rights. The tribe also works with local law enforcement officials to keep them abreast of situations that may require their help. Tribal governments will have to continually battle to maintain and assert their rights and there is no end in sight for this challenge.

Melanie Benjamin, chairwoman of the Mille Lacs Band, said…"racism is alive and well around Mille Lacs Lake. Our people have experienced it many times as individuals, but I'm somewhat appalled that people would show disrespect to veterans [during a parade]"…

Ojibwe leaders, while acknowledging that their relatively newfound casino wealth and legal assertiveness may be changing the balance of power in the region, say no amount of tension excuses what occurred in Isle.

Mary Sam, who was riding in the truck pulling the float full of veterans and their wives, said many [local people] people refused to stand as is customary, a group of older women jeered them with "thumbs down" and someone threw "something dark," striking the truck's windshield hard enough to make it crack the next day.

The float is a 30-foot trailer with banners that said, "American Indian Veterans and Ladies Auxiliary." It has the U.S. flag and flags honoring Minnesota, POWs and the band. A sound system plays an Ojibwe honor song.

Larry Oakes, Star Tribune, September 6, 2006

Beth Brownfield
Member of the Board of Directors
Honor Our Neighbors' Rights and Origins (HONOR)

- Anti-Indian focus often obscured by rhetoric focusing on "equal and civil rights," patriotic slogans, pseudo concern for the environment and natural resources.

  Federal Indian policy is often described by these groups as "racist" and "unconstitutional." "It is our mission to ensure the equal protection of the law as guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution of the United States of America" declares the Citizens Equal Rights Alliance.

- Protect Americans Rights and Resources (PARR) claims to dedicate their work towards "preserving natural resources and protecting the rights of all Americans' equally." This group believes Indian sovereignty causes "the erosion of the non-Indian's citizenship status in the areas of fishing, hunting, gambling, and sovereign rights."

- One Nation United (taken from pledge of allegiance) claims that federal Indian policy causes divisiveness between Indian tribes and neighboring communities. The group purports to desire "one nation-united." Yet this group is backed by Oklahoma based petroleum associations, petroleum marketers associations, water alliances, grocers associations, and United Property owners. All these groups have a financial interest in the erosion of Indian sovereignty.

- Anti-sovereignty "movement" may be the best financed and organized collection of racist organizations in the nation.

- The Central Issue for these groups is land and resources.

  This motive has been at the core of anti-Indian activity for over 500 years. Indian sovereignty and land rights are a barrier to the anti-Indian movement's desire to acquire reservation lands, natural resources, and subvert tribal government's ability to assert sovereign control over their native nation. Non-Indian property owners and realtors want to develop Indian lands for profit and associations want to rid tribes of sovereign decision-making in order to weaken them as business competition.

  Funding for the Anti-Indian "movement" comes from a collection of interests that would financially benefit if Indian sovereignty were rescinded. These include mining, timber, marketers, grocer, oil, real estate, convenience store, and other businesses groups and associations. Additionally local business near reservations such as fishing companies, ranchers, "property rights" groups that must share resources with tribal governments.

- The movement gets locals involved by preying on their fears about fishing, property, and hunting rights that could negatively affect them. They tell locals that tribal governments will take their land and tax them.

- Anti-Indian groups run candidates for all offices to provide a forum on Indian issues and connected legal groups file lawsuits on Indian issues of all types, which give them another public platform.

By Karen McCowan. The Register-Guard Published: Sunday, August 27, 2006

Who and what is One Nation United? That depends on whom you ask. At a recent Douglas County Commission meeting, ONU Executive Director Barb Lindsay described the group as a "nonprofit, nonpartisan public educational umbrella group" formed to "defend private property rights, free enterprise and the rule of law." It formed in late 2004 with the merger of two groups Oklahoma-based One Nation Inc. and Washington-based United Property Owners. Lindsay, of Redmond, Wash., also said the group is working to "reform federal Indian policy," saying that "the scales of justice have become unbalanced."

Opponents of the group, including Indian tribes in New York, Oklahoma and Oregon, say it is a racist front group for industries that compete with tribally owned businesses in those states, such as the Oklahoma Petroleum Marketers' Association… Every page of ONU's August 2006 newsletter contains stories about what it calls "misguided" federal Indian policy. One article, for example, says: "The tribes' 'separate-but-favored' status has protected individual tribal members from the predations to which they, historically, were victim. But the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act transformed that shield into a sword that has been thrust into established, non-tribal communities whose citizens are left defenseless." Lindsay said ONU has more than 300,000 members nationwide. Critics say it exaggerates its populist appeal by counting as individual members everyone who belongs to organizational members, such as the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

- Tribes have been responding to these groups on local level but more complete nationwide response from tribal allies has been slow. Most journalists know little about Indian history and many people believe "all Indians are rich" from tribally owned gambling operations.

  The natural allies of tribes (environmental, human rights, and faith communities) are small, under funded, and often times have other priorities.

- The existence of Indian tribes is at the whim of Congress, therefore tribes tribal allies must:
  Speak out with facts against the anti-sovereignty movement
  Create affirmative policy, statements, and actions affirming tribal sovereignty
  Form local human rights commissions
  Question elected officials about their positions on sovereignty
  Support Indian education initiatives
  Fund research of anti-Indian groups

Kristy Alberty

Executive Communications Manager
National Indian Child Welfare Association

- Jurisdictional tensions can run high between state and tribal governments in regards to child welfare and foster care or adoption for children removed from their parents.

- Indian and non-Indian norms for care of a child removed from the birth home are very different. Native families often rely on grandparents or extended family members to take care of the child, a practice called "kinship care" in Native communities. The alternative is to give children over to state agencies that are unfamiliar with Indian culture and traditions.

- The history of child welfare agencies' dealings with Native communities and children is marked by assimilationist policies towards native youths and the subsequent destruction of

Native families and culture. Government and faith sponsored agencies intentionally placed Native children with non-Indian families "reinforcing the mentality that the answer to Indian poverty was inter-racial adoption and easing the existing barriers to permanent adoption." In part due to mistrust built up by past policy and practice, but also due to current mainstream standards held by state agencies, tensions over displaced Indian children still exist.

- State agencies often ask that Indian family members providing "kinship care" become foster-care certified to receive state assistance to help care for the child. State agencies mandate a variety of requirements that many Indian families cannot meet. Standards imposed are from a "white, middle class" perspective that does not reflect the tribal community standards.

- Because many Native families cannot meet these standards the family must care for the child without any financial support from the state. Non-Native foster parents would receive state funding and child welfare funding is one of the largest revenue streams states receive from the federal government. Additionally, tribes are ineligible for basic federal child welfare funding, which hampers Native Nations' efforts to provide the most culturally appropriate and most comfortable environment for the child. If tribes and Native families were eligible for these basic sources of funding, then Native communities could implement the goals of the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which states that the social and cultural standards of Indian communities should be used when placing and caring for a displaced child.

- The states have shown mixed results implementing ICWA, which also gives tribes jurisdiction in child custody matters, and state-by-state guidelines for state case workers are often unclear leading to poor implementation. Too often state officials are either uninformed about the reach of the law or do not apply it. They resist and tensions grow between state workers and Native advocates or between social workers on each side of disputes.

Bridges can be built and groups that previously seemed to be anti-Indian or at least anti-Indian law can change. In 2001, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), one of the agencies involved in the Indian Adoption Project during the 1950s, apologized for its role in the adoption of Indian children and the impact this has had on generations of American Indian people. In addition, the CWLA made a commitment to further support tribal governments and Indian organizations in their efforts to improve services and funding for Indian children.

From Q and A with Audience

Audience member **Cynthia Abrams**, United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and Seneca Nation member who has testified before Congress against Indian gaming, told the workshop about her experience with anti-sovereignty activists' involvement with legitimate groups. Abrams belongs to an anti-gambling coalition that opposes all gambling in the U.S., but she is concerned that many individuals who are anti-sovereignty have shown up at meetings to use these narrowly focused community groups as cover for their efforts. However, from another point of view, Abrams wanted those at the symposium to understand that just because one or two participants in a coalition are seeking to erode tribal rights does not mean an entire anti-gambling group is "anti-Indian."

INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY
The Nations' Leading American Indian News Source

Communications conference calls for more Native voice in media

Jerry Reynolds

WASHINGTON - The leadoff speaker for the March 2 "Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" conference in Washington set the table with a simple tale from her childhood, when her non-Indian father would tease her Indian mother with the observation that Europeans came to America, found a wilderness and turned it into a civilization. Invariably her mother would reply that no, Europeans came to America, found a civilization and turned it into a wilderness.

Every bit as stark, but often without anything like family ties to help the good humor along, are the differences in perception between Indians and the dominant culture in America today, according to a succession of speakers at the conference. Hosted and coordinated by the Quaker lobbying organization Friends Committee on National Legislation, and funded by a spectrum of mostly Indian organizations, "Hear Our Story" dwelt on reversing the victimization of Native people in the modern media.

Between the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal and the glaring light it has thrown on governing structures and donating practices in Indian country, the Cobell v. Norton lawsuit over trust funds management and the frustration it has caused in Congress, ongoing local controversies over Indian gaming and the antagonism that has caused in Congress, a Supreme Court in which some of its justices have been known to refer to tribes as anomalous within an otherwise uniform system of federal law, and a presidential administration that some tribal leaders suspect of reconfiguring the federal trust obligation toward tribes, the stakes of accurate tribal portrayal in the media are high.

Jose Barreiro, Indian Country Today's senior editor, told an afternoon plenary session, "We're at a moment we have not seen in the last 25, 30 years." He added that when Indians relate their own experience so that people understand it, Indians win on the issues; but let others get momentum behind their version of the Indian experience, with all of their stereotypes and engrained perceptions intact, "and it's a loss every time." Barreiro advised critiquing reporters and publications when Indian situations are ineptly depicted.

The most oft-repeated message of the conference seemed to be that Indians must know their own experience and speak out about it.

Suzan Shown Harjo, president and executive director of the Morning Star Institute in Washington, said a precondition of speaking out is that Indians must know themselves to be worthy of speaking out.

"We are socialized to think less of ourselves, and that is why we abdicate our advocacy," Harjo said.

"We are people who believe in our own victim hood ... At some point, if you are being treated badly, you have to stand up, no matter what the cost, and say, 'You can't do that any more to my children.'"

She said victimization is learned behavior among Indians, who were historically divided by Indian agents (and, in fact, by the full apparatus of state) into "good Indians" and "bad Indians." The "good Indians" got to hang around the fort, or later the reservation trading post or the BIA agency, while the "bad Indians" abandoned those water holes to escape the wider desert and defend a higher principle; but as a matter of policy, this choice defined them as "hostiles," licensing non-Indians to shoot them on sight. So in practice, Indians of the early reservation era were channeled toward one of two choices: either stoic advancement on a path that led to "the end of the trail" stereotype, or the stereotype of gutter-dwelling

drunkenness.

But it's different today, Harjo emphasized. The "bad Indian" has every encouragement to realize that badness is an applied tool of colonization, a ruse of careerists and profiteers, to be thrown off and forgotten. "For the 'good Indian,' pay attention to what the hostiles say."

In addition, Harjo noted on the school mascot issue that enough speaking out has been done by Indians and others to have reduced the number of Indian-mascot schools from about 3,000 to about 900 in a decade. Of course, the favorite sports franchise in the nation's capital continues to be named the Washington Redskins, "redskins" being, as Harjo noted, a historical reference to the skinning or mutilation of Indian corpses as proof of a bounty kill.

Among the workshops that took place around the plenary session, a legislative review panel featured Paul Moorehead, former lead counsel to then-Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Moorehead is now an attorney with the firm of Gardner, Carton & Douglas, which has a thriving tribal practice and, accordingly, clients in Indian country.

Speaking more freely than he did as legislative staff on Capitol Hill, Moorehead said that in the aftermath of the Abramoff scandal the question has arisen in Congress of why are there Indian tribes in 2006 - in other words, apparently (and these are not Moorehead's words but a rhetorical paraphrase, just for clarity's sake), why do tribes still exist at this so-advanced stage of the American state?

Along with it have come sweeping suggestions for moratoria on everything from new casinos to political contributions, Moorehead said: "Trying to advance positive legislation in this environment is harder than playing defense."

Message to media: Hear the Indian voice

A good core of Native journalists and other professionals working in media and American Indian issues gathered for the "Hear Our Story: Communications and Contemporary Native Americans" symposium, held in Washington in early March. The Friends Committee on National Legislation coordinated the event, while the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative and many others networked organizations and individual presenters to request from American media that it "hear our story."

Some 60 speakers among nearly 200 participants offered ample evidence of the sharp intelligence, humor, poise and cultural distinctiveness among professionals and observers of the Native world - giving the lie to the claim of too many television producers and newspaper editors that such voices are hard to find and thus impossible to produce or publish.

Journalists, educators, tribal leaders - including Joe Garcia, the new president of the National Congress of American Indians - and the directors and staff of important outreach organizations, Native and non-Native, offered a substantial range of cogent information, analysis and perspective on the pressing issue of generating a better representation of American Indian tribal realities.

While different approaches, various strategies and tactics on "telling our story" were discussed, the general consensus called for a much greater engagement of the public arena. Joe Garcia emphasized the positive and far-reaching campaigns in Indian country, choosing to get past the latest media rave around the case of disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff. He focused particular attention on the NCAI's initiative on the dangers of the methamphetamine invasion of Indian communities in recent years. Garcia also properly pointed out the serious health and governance issues of tribal nations.

The theory here is to not let the media control the Indian message, but to hammer away at the

government's reluctance to own up to their trust responsibility to tribes.

Other speakers - just as cogently - called on Indian country opinion leaders and upon fair-minded journalists to always directly tackle all cases of negative focus on Indian people. The theory expressed here is to jump into the media current on all issues of impact and thus give pause to and educate media producers and editors not to disregard diligent research when profiling Native tribal peoples and their issues. Part and parcel of that due diligence by media must be to always consider and present significant American Indian perspectives on Indian issues.

However one perceives the tactical implications of either theory, the objective is an improved presentation and more vigorous self-representation of and by American Indian voices in media. This has strong support among the still-growing list of organizations that are responding to the problem, including Americans for Indian Opportunity, American Friends Service Committee, Call to Renewal, First Nations Development Institute, Honor Our Neighbors' Origins and Rights, Institute for Tribal Government, The Interfaith Alliance, National American Indian Housing Council, National Congress of American Indians, National Council of Churches, National Council on Urban Indian Health, National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Indian Council on Aging, National Indian Education Association, National Indian Health Board, National Native American Families Together, National Urban Indian Family Coalition, Native American Journalists Association, Native American Rights Fund, Navajo Nation Washington Office and the Union for Reform Judaism.

The enthusiastic response from these organizations and departments provides good evidence of a current of thinking - shared by a valuable core network - that can become an active information and educational movement focused on media and policy impacts.

We find this movement and the conference that launches it a significant occurrence. Indian country and its endeavors are taking a seriously bad rap. In Congress, as veteran U.S. Senate hand Paul Moorehead (and others) discussed, the language of termination, the expression of tribal existence itself as anachronistic, is heard in open conversation.

People in the know assert to us that it is more difficult to conduct business on behalf of Indian tribes these days. The new generation of congressional officials and staffers has little access to Native realities or sources. A bad rash of media coverage linking to specific Native enterprises and tribal governments can stampede thinking that can generate negative policy.

We believe it is lance-in-the-ground time for Native communicators from all directions; it is time to engage and respond. We urge tribal leaders and political and cultural organizations to commit the extra effort in presenting our best professionals, who are available and quite capable, to reach out to media. We urge support for the production and circulation of perspectives and positions of the Indian thinkers and artists of the current generations.

Young people in tribal colleges and in college programs across the country would do well to hone in their most productive communications skills to address Native issues in media.

Every region of the country - every situation surrounding a tribal nation - requires attention. Local and border-town newspapers are often hostile beyond the national media, which errs more in omission and distraction than in bigoted intent. Organizing conferences and teach-outs on core American Indian issues and perspectives that aim to educate media and college students would be useful to empowering Native communities. Good research, excellent communications skills and tools are needed to help create a bridge of understanding that can mitigate the onslaught of bigoted special-interest groups intent on eradicating tribal nations from American political life.

The common initiative to address American Indian policy and media discrepancies got a strong boost in Washington. An appreciation is due to FCNL for identifying the need to convene our shared concerns into an active current.

PART THREE:

WIDENING
THE COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

"We must be assertive and pro-active. The local level is very important. Some people don't like us. We must go talk to them too." (Ron Allen, National Congress of American Indians)

"Advocates get the word out by working with a wide range of media--much of it outside of mainstream press. They work with institutional publications (i.e. newsletters and bulletins) to garner hard news coverage. To facilitate placement, advocates often write and package camera-ready news stories for easy insertion into a publication. Faith publications are an important resource in this regard." (Makani Themba, Praxis Project)

The people who attended the symposium did so for various reasons. At our request, many let us know what some of those reasons were, as well as what they thought of various aspects of the talks and workshops.

The following excerpts – occasionally paraphrased -- were made spontaneously or within a few days of the gathering, although a few notes were sent in later.

Native participants had a variety of reactions.

"We are trying to stress unity in Indian Country. Although badly needed, this is challenging. It's important because there is now an increased onslaught on the progress that we've made in the last decade or so. The media confab was part of creating unity."

"I have been traveling for several months outside of Alaska, trying to find out how Native cultures work with the media. I've been discouraged, but understand now that a lot of good work is being done."

"The press can change by being more truly investigative. It should ask about the whys and hows of what happens with actions and not just report on the actions. The press should go to the people themselves for the stories and not go to the governments. The press should help Native groups to be able to communicate better among themselves in order to know what each is doing."

"The media symposium brought attention to the lack of coverage of Indian issues in the media, as well as the myths and stereotypes that are often pervasive in popular culture. I am sure the symposium was a learning experience for the media that were present. They had an opportunity to learn about Native issues and hear how the media can be used as a tool for positive change. In addition the Native American groups represented learned how to work with the media to get their message out."

"The event was very white person in feeling (physical space, schedule, no rituals, some traditions but not really enough). There were good ideas presented, but will there be follow-up? Day 2 energy was very diminished. Why did people leave? In all Native gatherings, people are always present at everything as the coming together is the reason for the event. It was not very spiritual, really, and that is where all the stories come from, where we come from."

"Thank you for your tireless efforts in creating a most needed forum for such critical issues."

"One of the best conferences I've ever attended. I still think about it."

"Thank you FCNL for the opportunities created by the Native Speak Symposium you sponsored this past March. Through that event, I met someone from another state with whom I became friends. She is Italian American and I am Oneida. Together, we created a new positive resource. Our website *ReconnectingTheCircle.com* is underway and we are sponsoring a national essay contest for high school students."

Conference note taker Sara Lee conducted a few short interviews during the event.

Holly Cedar is a Quaker theology student at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. She had this to say in a brief interview at the symposium: "I am struck by the use and power of words. We have to use language to communicate, but it's not always adequate. When our language becomes offensive (intentionally or not), it takes away from what we're trying to say. A story has power and its words are a way to communicate that power. It's important to be careful about what words we use to tell the story."

Ed Arnone is a journalism teacher at Miami University in Ohio and the Director of the Center for Media, Democracy and Civic Life, an interdisciplinary program. He likes to work with qualitative (versus quantitative) information and anecdotal materials. He studies the effects of media on people and problem solving. He also has an interest in story telling – how to disseminate stories through different mediums. Native Americans are a personal and professional interest for him. During a brief interview on March 2, 2006, he said, "I am interested in how media facilitates community building. What I found most useful today was that there are many people who see the tasks in front of us in a similar way. Here the subject is important to people. People *didn't* drift in and out during the presentations and workshops. I believe that the more you can make communication a conversation, the better it is. This is very different from doing someone a favor by, say, promoting an event. It is important to establish long term relationships."

Bob Hoch has taught for many years at a Quaker high school in Maryland. When interviewed during the symposium, he shared these thoughts: "The field of American Indian studies is a neglected area, but it is very rich and it produces a lot of fine role models. The study of American Indians is fascinating to non-Indians. This latent fascination needs to be tapped. My students get very angry about modern realities and why people don't know about these things. Friends School students are politically aware though, to begin with, but public schools could also be positive. Environmental studies are parallel as they stress the importance of living

in harmony - harmony versus control. We also have a Native American literature class that focuses on creation stories and circular thinking as is expressed in their stories."

Ruth Perot is from the Summit Health Institute for Research and Education and works with a multicultural coalition of groups that addresses the disparities in health care in this country. SHIRE builds linkages among stakeholders, in which communities of color play key roles in developing policies and promoting effective strategies for eliminating gaps. "Out of many come one" is the theme and American Indians are among their five defined groups. She came to the symposium to learn what issues face her Indian colleagues. She said, "I read the Washington Post and I think it generally treats Indian Country poorly. It handles issues disparagingly and without full credence to Native viewpoints. About the 'Redskins' team name…. if the team had been named the 'Washington Darkies,' it would no longer be called that. It is very important to attack stereotypes. We need to get policies changed and then go for hearts and minds for it all to work. Other communities of color and people of good will need to speak out in behalf of all American Indians. Partnering among communities of color is essential to change this country. By 2050, the majority of the population in the U.S. will be non-white. We all must resist 'their' effort to divide and conquer. It's in the collective self-interest of this country to move towards an inclusive culture."

Elizabeth Koopman is an active Quaker from Gwynedd Monthly Meeting who follows Native American issues closely, reads Natives newspapers, and advocates for Native prisoners. "I feel pleased and enriched by this symposium. There is great wisdom in bringing everyone to the table. This enables other people to speak through their stories. As Friends, we need to be more visible in positive ways-- perhaps by explaining 'Queries' and 'Testimonies.' The symposium model was an Anglo form with presenters and an audience. It would be better in the model of talking circles, but I don't know how to do it."

Michael Evans is a professor at Indiana University School of Journalism. He believes that his journalism interest blends nicely with his interest in indigenous people. He has lived and worked with an Eastern Canadian Artic Circle Village and will be spending months on the Navajo Nation reservation in the near future. He said he attended "Hear Our Story" because he thought it was so important. "I'm pleased to be part of the continuation of relationship and tradition that is held between Indians and Quakers. Communities these days are critically important. As a journalist, I work with indigenous media groups outside of the U.S. I find it comfortable to be part of this symposium as the ideas are practical compared to the theoretical ideas that academic gatherings focus on. Also, academic conferences are competitive and arrogant but here there is a sense of cooperative collaboration and this is mindful and prayerful. There is simplicity, things are directed toward action, and there is a sense of looking for what we can do well." He thinks people in general are not comfortable with the idea of change and that they are afraid of doing or saying something wrong, foolish or offensive.

Written reactions from Non-Native People

As reactions were solicited upon completion of the event and afterward, we focused on those who had not "heard it all before" and sought to be better partners with Native Americans and more effective advocates. The following reactions from non-Native participants illustrate what people can learn and realize

in a day and a half. They also illustrate the challenges that remain. We kept them anonymous to encourage candor.

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"Thank you for the personal, grassroots stories."

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"So many viewpoints articulated!"

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"I personally fell victim to spending time with or searching out more 'Anglicized' Indians, even though I know better and tried not to."

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"Attending a conference like this is a spiritual experience. The speakers and participants were laying out the concerns that come from all the aspects of life. There was a pent up need for expression. It was a mass of unity and variety that must sustain everyone present as they fan out into the world, a reversal of the sense of overwhelm that can come from being in a larger society."

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"I was impressed overall with the number and extent of Indians involved in the media or who could give some input to the subject. I was most impressed with an often-repeated statement or sense that Indians had to help themselves deal with media issues. They need to be/are in charge and move forward. There was a minimal amount of the "how white people have done us Indians in" kind of talk and I appreciated that a lot.

I think it would make an interesting study to see if certain regional media exposure was more effective (good) than other regional media exposure. I believe that people also have very different ideas of what effective media coverage is. In my western city, there is mostly coverage about cultural traditions and activities, the challenges in education for Natives, and Nez Perce water-related issues. There is an active Native American group associated with the university and they're pretty good about getting notices about cultural events into the main papers. I think in general, the coverage is very positive. It might not be the kind of investigative or persuasive coverage that we Indian-issues advocates would like to see, but it surely must attract people on the principle that 'you can catch more bees with honey than vinegar.' The complaint that I would have is that there isn't much of it. The Hispanic population here is quite significant and most of the non-white press space goes to it because of the sheer numbers.

I hope I can use the materials that will come out of the symposium to meet some Native people in my area. There are in theory 1,400 Native Americans living in my county and I have no idea where they are. Plus, of course, there are all of the Native Nations (I really like this term) in Idaho, the Pacific NW/Canada, and then down into the desert country south of here. "

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"1 in 10 American Indians will be victims of violent crime. This shows the law enforcement problems that Indian Country faces and the problem is compounded by discrepancies in jurisdiction and a lack of resources. Most American Indian law enforcement forces are funded at 1/2 to 1/3 the level of their counterparts in rural America."

  - This came from Amber with NCAI at the Legislative Overview workshop on Friday morning. I think what makes this statistic so interesting is that it demonstrates so clearly that Native Americans face problems exactly like the problems faced by many other communities and yet the issues are compounded by the intersection with "mainstream America"

- "One thing that puts a strain on Indian advocacy resources is that we have to reeducate congress every few years."

  - This struck me because it is so directly related to the role that organizations represented at this conference play as well as the role and influence of media in the public sphere. If Native American issues were more a part of our regular news consumption then maybe education would not be such a crippling limitation.

- "Liability is one of the walls being thrown up in the process of expanding self governance."

  - This was something that I had not really thought of in quite such stark terms before this conference - that one of the many hindrances to sovereignty is the responsibilities, obligations and vested interests of the, if you will, occupying power. I see parallels in the current situation in Iraq, Israel in the Palestinian Territories, and across the history of imperial powers.

- Related to the above point, Mark Trahant later pointed out Freedom of the Press issues in Indian Country - Funding of opposition press and the relative similarities between the Department of Defense planting articles in the press in Iraq and the Bureau of Indian Affairs planting articles and funding publications in Indian Country.

- From Robert Lichter, Indian Images in Broader Society - Native Americans aren't really considered a minority community, they aren't considered newsworthy in their own right. Coverage isn't balanced because there isn't more regular coverage to give context to the bad stuff. "At this point I would say I wouldn't worry about framing, you need to worry about getting in the frame in the first place"

  - An interesting perspective from someone outside the Native American sphere.
- Jim Adams "The cultural gap is there and is accentuated by a sort of mutual shyness."

  - The role of ignorance on both sides perpetuating the cycle of abuse.
- Wade Henderson - "South Dakota is symbolically becoming the Mississippi of our time"

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"There are certain paradoxes in the messages that Native Nations believe the public should hear. Native Americans say, 'We are human beings like you' or 'despite diversity, we are all relatives.' Native Americans also say, 'We are unique, a distinctive group, and unlike the rest of U.S. citizens.' Put another, perhaps more understandable, way, tribal members say, 'We have

the same needs as everyone else such as appropriate housing and adequate sewers, but we also have unique circumstances.' Tribes that seek to protect the spiritual and traditional dimensions of their culture are fully aware that they are more beguiling to the general public and non-Native leaders when they don ceremonial dress and perform dances at pow-wows or conduct rituals such as smudging. All this can be difficult to explain to the general public succinctly. But the delightful speaking styles and careful reasoning of these indigenous leaders made me wish everyone could hear directly from them. Which was the point of this symposium?"

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'The statistic that 1 in 3 Native American woman will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime is shocking. The panelist made many specific points, but offered a universal truth, 'Women are sacred.' She observed that something has happened to our society that has let us become mindless so that violence is turned on women and children.

In evaluating coverage of Native Americans, measure and contrast the story against other stories in the media. Such comparison can serve as justification for suggesting changes or making objections to certain stories.

Wade Henderson's talk had many great points, but the one that jolted me was that South Dakota was becoming another Mississippi. The attitudes towards Native Americans, the derogatory terms and treatment are analogous to the experience of Blacks in Mississippi where it took lawsuits and more to get to vote.

The panel emphasized the right to vote. Getting Native Americans to register to vote, getting out the vote will increase Native American's political clout on important issues in the West.

In advancing a legislative cause, one common sense piece of advice came through. Be nice to the politician's staff members and try to keep them engaged. They are key to getting on the politicians' radar screens.

One creative idea to find allies: look to publicly available donor lists of organizations supporting your cause to find the big donors, then have them intervene on your behalf with the legislators.

When asked whether it was time to form a third political party to advance the rights of minorities, the question caused the audience to think strategically. Civil and human rights transcend political parties as is evident in the history of change in this country. Also, any change in law or policy will need the support of both parties to pass. Shirley Chisholm was remembered as saying, 'We have no permanent friends, we have no permanent enemies, we only have permanent interests.'

A member of the Native American community questioned whether there is a way to open up dialogue with the mainstream media to get more coverage of Native American issues. To Native Americans, coverage is key, but they are frustrated by the mainstream media, which focuses on the timeliness of the story and whether it is 'of interest.' One panel member had an interesting point, advising Native American advocates to be creative in finding opportunities. As an example, he pointed out that a recent New York Times story profiled how its in-house diversity committee attacked the NYT management on its diversity policy. Here is an opportunity to jump in offering to help and provide the point of view of and issues important to Native Americans."

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"Legislative Overview Issues:

Cobell/land trust; tribal compacts; government liability; collision with Abramoff; what is trust responsibility? Budget challenges. What are implications of the lack of tribal authority over non-Indian spouses; Indian tribal criminal jurisdiction; Apology resolution; gaps: bills leave out tribal governments; land consolidation $ taking away from other programs; law enforcement and public safety; termination for lack of appropriations $, "Indian fatigue" and cycles in Congress, i.e. – 'we took care of this last year, why are you back this year? '

Congress needs an 'Indian 101' course to be sworn into office, e.g., in order to pass the bar in New Mexico, you're required to take course on Indian law.

Some in Congress are actually beginning to ask why there are still Indian tribes in 2006, seemingly wanting them to assimilate and not be separate.

There are localized opponents to Indian legislation but local initiatives may be easier to move simply because there are fewer complications than on the national level.

Broad national issues are meeting more resistance today, e.g., Indian Health Care Act concerns about liability.

Important to educate those on the Hill about Indian reality. "

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"Representative Cole was introduced as a person who will tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear. I braced myself in anticipation of his decrying the past and present mistreatment of Native Americans.

What surprised me about his remarks is that he did include references to past and present injustices, which somehow set the context for what he was saying, but the way that he included it did not feel threatening. He came across as an affable sympathetic person, who seemed to position himself as a consensus-builder. Several times he talked about bipartisanship and not taking positions that would divide Native Americans. His remarks were filled with asides and stories about his family, people he knew, and other colleagues in Washington. Accordingly, the main thrust of his remarks, to the extent it developed in a linear fashion, was diffused by all these other stories.

He never directly said that relationships are important and cultivating relationships is important, but his stories communicated this underlying message. Somehow, the combination of his manner, his story-telling and side comments, and the main points that he made in his remarks did come together to include as content those things that are hard to face as a conscientious citizen. So, he did tell us 'what we needed to hear', but it did not leave me feeling terrible. Perhaps it is because, he came across as an empowered and powerful person who conveyed optimism and hope in the face of the problems and setbacks experienced by Native Americans. "

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"Assumed was no coverage. After I signed up for the conference, I began noticing a number of articles from the Associated Press and others that clearly were built on stories originating in tribal

news. There are far more positive stories about American Indian happenings included in national and regional newspapers than I had realized. But found in back pages."

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The meeting was non-partisan. Noticed speakers and people who work in Congress that were Republicans and Democrats. Think Native Americans vote Democratic. Yet only NA in Congress is Republican. Wonder what a change in political composition of Congress in the fall would mean for health, languages, sacred sites-- all the issues? So many Indian disputes go to the Supreme Court and that will stay conservative I guess. Would have loved "talkin" politics with some of the experts who spoke. They didn't push aside political questions. We were all just asking about so many others matters.

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"You ran a great symposium! Speakers, workshops and topics were all excellent, and I'm speaking as a veteran of many, many conferences. An indication of its success was the terrific turnout."

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Talks told me about states. They desire control over any tribe in their state and they want more money from tribes with gaming operations but hide these motives. I bet sometimes they are frustrated-- can't control tribes, even small ones, like they can their cities and counties.

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"It was a terrific experience for me on so many levels. I know that everyone benefited so much, and you all did such an excellent job in bringing us all together. I think that a lot of positive action will result from your efforts. Everyone hopes this will become an annual event."

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"I hope everyone involved with the conference feels as pleased, and incensed, and activated, as I do, to hear about what is going on, and not going on, in terms of Native Americans. What a necessary conference."

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THOUGHTS FROM CAROLYN FINEGAR WHO HELPED ARRANGE THE PROGRAM

"Because I had communicated with many of the speakers and had read biographies for almost all of them, I was eager to meet and hear them, almost as if I were going to attend a party with important and familiar people whom I had never met. I realized the depth and array of wisdom and information that was represented by the presenters. I discovered that the attenders had their own wisdom and knowledge to share. The symposium had a charged atmosphere, with an unusually focused group of people. Native Americans seemed intent on teaching and imparting ideas. Non-natives were equally intent on receiving information and attempting to understand a way of life that they can comprehend intellectually but understand only slightly.

The evening before the symposium, some people gathered in the hotel lobby. Native people who had attended the NCAI conference passed by, making the hotel seem not to be in Washington DC but in Native Country. One tribal leader sat down with us, sharing observations and jokes. Although he was not staying for the symposium, he approved the topic. People from our group met who had heard of one another but never before seen one another. Stories, both sad and funny, swirled. Jackie Old Coyote and Gwendolen Cates shared experiences and news from people they knew.

On the first morning, people gathered bright and early and eager. The meeting room was filled to hear Joe Garcia welcome us. Experienced spokespersons spoke forcefully; other speakers had soft voices and quiet styles. Workshop organization was smoother than we could have hoped; people moved quickly and efficiently and all workshops were well and enthusiastically attended. Moderator Joe Volk was particularly effective in the Historical Overview Workshop, gathering and presenting all of the questions first so that answers and discussion were coordinated. He said afterwards that it would take a book to answer all the questions raised. In one session, Chief Adams of the VA tribes did a wonderful job of telling specifics about dealing with the media, especially emphasizing the need for interested parties to challenge a journalist who gets something wrong. He talked about engaging in calm and informative conversation, not accusing, but educating.

The plenary room held everyone who wanted to sit down to the delicious lunch. I sat with Indians from St. Louis who were thrilled to be here and to see some of the Native people they had read or heard about. Governor Brian Schweitzer knew his audience and played beautifully to the crowd. His speech generated the only ululating that I heard. The journalists' panel was a well-chosen after-lunch program. Different voices and different points of view kept even the overfed fairly alert. In the afternoon plenary, Dr. Lichter made a different sort of presentation from what we had been hearing. I was struck by his statement that he had looked up the news about NA's and found so little. I think his consciousness was raised by that discovery.

I attended the workshop, 'Sharing Stories to Give More Complete Picture.' Lawrence Hart talked about criminal justice in the Indian world. Although a lawbreaker is banished from the community, he is expected to return; true rehabilitation is the assumption. Kara Briggs talked about her almost accidental founding of a forum for NA women to talk about their breast cancer. Since many tribes traditionally do not talk about cancer, it is difficult to create a family history. She says that cancer cells are cells that have lost their purpose, lost their story. Mary Kim Titla talked about a youth suicide project her e-mag ran. Teens were asked to write on the subject, 'Why My Life Is Worth Living.' Of the 16 entries, 1/3 of the writers had attempted suicide and another 1/3 had considered it. Overall 1 out of 6 Native Americans attempt suicide. Stacy Bohlen talked about HIV AIDS among Native American youth.

I spent Thursday evening with two of the presenters and one attender, talking about NA issues, world issues, local issues, personal issues. It was a meeting of minds among people who had not known one another before but who had shared the intensity of the day and therefore felt a bond.

I went to bed that night feeling a little transported from my own world, having been introduced to people and to ideas that were foreign to me and yet strangely familiar, comforting. I was uplifted by the thought of these peoples who had so many cultures, languages, histories but who were held together by beliefs that transcended their differences, beliefs in the sacredness of the earth and the natural world. The Natives told of their awareness of how little their deeply held beliefs are respected by other Americans. Instead of self-pity, they expressed pride in achievement against terrible odds.

I feared that Friday would be a serious letdown. Surely people would be tired from Thursday's intensity and eager to spend time absorbing information and ideas. On the contrary, attenders were again punctual and energetic, ready for more. Representative Tom Cole as the leadoff speaker was interesting and engaging. He seemed to lose track of time and place, caught up in the interest of the crowd.

I was primarily in the workshop on 'Organizations Lobbying on Behalf of NA.' Again Chief Adams was impressive. Jon Barton talked about the problems of very dominant right wing Christian organizations in our government. A participant talked about arguments that are fear mongering, that suggest that US must be careful of NA's because tribes might do something in the future that the country wouldn't like. It's impossible to argue against possible future fears. There was discussion of a recent column in the WSJ suggesting that reservations should be disestablished because people are poor there. Finishing up the program, John Mohawk was mesmerizing.

What results will come from this symposium? How many times is it necessary to raise consciousness and educate the uninformed (like me)? I expect there is no answer to these questions but that each step leads to the next. Possibly the people who attended this symposium will read the next article in the Washington Post with new attitude and new eyes. Maybe attenders will realize the wide array of people, doing a wide array of different things, who are all lumped together in the name Indians. I hope that small groups will continue to communicate and to confront media inaccuracies and educate rather than just protest. Possibly we can see one another as individuals rather than Natives and non-Natives because we sat and ate and learned together."

Follow up Plans and Possibilities

Non-Native organizations and individuals indicated they plan to take the information gleaned at the conference back to their communities, news media, and constituencies. Some of the information was clearly shocking to them. Most attendees, for instance, said they had no idea that organized groups are opposing sovereignty. Learning of this increased the attendees' determination and commitment to be a countervailing force. To interpret some of their comments, the indication is that Native messages, histories, and stories reached many who heretofore thought they knew quite a bit about Native Americans but found their knowledge was superficial.

Although the number of representatives of mainstream, independent, and institution-based media was limited, a high number of those who did attend said what they learned was invaluable.

Many Native American organizations that co-sponsored or were involved in the symposium are designing follow-up activities of some type. Some organizations will work to increase skills through hands-on media training held at the local or tribal level. A few are considering whether to seek grants to support regional meetings. Others are planning more research, action strategies, and meetings with media owners and managers. Their agendas differ widely. Media and communications are the entire focus for some of Native American

organizations while individuals and agencies that attended want to be part of a larger reform movement.

Education vied with advocacy as the preferred route to take for change.

An ambitious program would involve creating a network of advocates who could meet regularly with the media or when something particularly offensive is printed or aired. Those in the task force could work in New York, Washington, Hollywood-- wherever decisions are made about inclusion of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians. Native and non-Native journalists would be involved to make sure there would be true communication with mainstream media representatives.

There is a constant need for educating and/or re-educating those in the dominant culture. This is especially true for "politicos" and for staff for members of Congress. Whether the members and the staff are new to Washington or not, or to their particular assignment or not, they still need updating and reminders about Indian Country issues. What is half-jokingly called "Indians 101" is a serious matter.

Briefing sessions for Congressional staff already take place about particular bills and issues. Such important briefings unfortunately are not enough given the lack of basic information. Sharing basic information and stimulating interest with anecdotes and reports on programs that are working is equally important. Religious organizations and other allies might coordinate with the Native American Caucus in the House of Representatives to look for ways to engage people on the Hill. Another goal for people who want to advocate for Indian issues is attracting more Representatives and Senators as champions--particularly those who do not have tribes in their states but might engage as a matter of concern and conscience.

Important annual awards are already given by the Native American Journalists Association for top work by Native people in various forms of media. Perhaps another forum could be created to recognize mainstream media outlets that make marked improvements of the type detailed in this paper. Famous news anchors and others could be recruited to make presentations to the heads of the media organizations that have listened and responded.

We at FCNL believe there must be dozens of ideas about how coalitions of Native and non-Native people can work together for real change– in, and out, of Washington, DC. The symposium was just a start. The ideas above are just a start.

We hope to hear from any of you with more strategies and successes.

We want our society to hear the stories.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Examples of Themes

1. Creation of Images and the Cumulative Effect of Repetition

From Part I Overview and Analysis: *"Although social consciousness is shaped by many factors, the mass media plays a distinctive role in the creation of images and realities.'"*

From the Symposium summary: "When using the written word, Americans use words that are mostly bad about Indians. These words and images about us are directly tied to our future. We should work to change words that give diminished meaning. For example, 'tribal members' is not as strong as 'tribal citizens'." (Suzan Shown Harjo, Director of Morning Star Institute)

2. Framing

Old and New Frames

From Part I: *"Framing can result in glorification, trivialization, normalization, or marginalization of a group."*

From the Symposium: "As far as how stories are framed, the overall poverty in Indian country is stressed – the group is being treated as a victim and is composed of people who lead substandard lives." (Robert Lichter, President of the Center for Media and Public Affairs)

Components of Framing

From Part I: *"Because of time and space limitations, journalists may skip many details or narratives that would fill out a sense of the "lived richness" of a groups' history and contemporary existence."*

From the Symposium: "Paddle journeys are good stories. These involve canoe journeys in old style dugouts. They take several weeks, with singing and dancing at each stop." Two examples, there is a Canoe Makah Project and there is a community support group that fed 3,000 from tribes throughout the NW maritime region on their way through Suquamish on their annual tribal canoe journey. (workshop comment from attendee and follow-up emails)

Reactions to Frames

From Part I*: "What has seldom been conveyed is a sense of their real concerns, problems, successes, their heterogeneity, their heroes, and their contributions to society,"*

From the Symposium: "Where does our mis-education start? It starts in the education system in this country. All of our children have gone through this system. Whether we want to believe it or not, we are taught the history of the American Southwest from a particular perspective. When I was in school, I never did hear about how the history and cultural things of Indian people were part of that." (Joe Garcia, President of the National Congress of American Indians, from New Mexico)

3. Stereotyping

First Impressions

From Part I: *"Stereotypes, whether disseminated informally through gossip or more systematically by opinion-makers, create widespread reputations. An original observation of a people may have a grain of truth, but the ultimate picture created is not true."*

From the Symposium: "The project watches and tracks the kind of content being produced by the media. We look very critically at the kinds of content produced about American Indians. Information is presented and mainstream papers pick it up but then the information becomes incorrect." (Tim Johnson, American Indian Policy and Media Initiative and the National Museum of the American Indian)

Changing Stereotypes

From Part I: *"Although a significant group of thinking people resist them, each era brings new stereotypes of tribes and First Nations."*

From the Symposium: "The current image of Native Americans is either the romantic view from the 19th Century or the [current] image of "The Casino Indian." Neither accurately reflects circumstances in the 21st Century. In both cases, Indians are portrayed as symbols only, not real individuals." (Wade Henderson, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights)

Political Consequences

From Part I: *"How people are described can have a significant impact on how legitimate their situation seems to be in the minds of readers."*

From the Symposium: "There is a shifting of metaphor now toward political corruption and ideas of greed based around gaming. This is replacing outright racism. If metaphors shift, watch out, that's when policy begins to shift. Never forget that most of Indian policy can be changed with a stroke of a pen." (José Barreiro, senior editor, Indian Country Today)

4. Ignoring

Invisibility

From Part I*: "No amount of diligence by reporters and broadcasters can compensate for what others fail to report. Surveys, studies, and other research findings presented in the media often lack reference to indigenous Americans. This adds to the 'out of sight, out of mind' situation of indigenous people in the U.S. 'I'm a part of the other category, say many Native Americans.'"*

From the Symposium: "With President Clinton's initiative on race issues, the conclusion was that the biggest problem that most Indians face is the perception of who we are. We are the most invisible minority. Most people are ignorant of the fact that we are not like other minorities since we're citizens of sovereign nations." (Laura Harris, Director of Americans for Indian Opportunity)

5. Use of the Media by Activists for Reframing

From Part I*: "American Indians, Native Alaska, and Native Hawaiian leaders are not naive about the organizational routines of the media. They understand the time and space constraints and the types of stories chosen."*

From the Symposium: "Media is a process; media is a system. The more we know about it, the more we can battle it and shape the message that comes from it." (Joe Garcia)

6. Obstacles to Change and Ways to Overcome Them

Exclusion

From Part I: *"It isn't helpful to just add to what's already available."*

From the Symposium: "It is important to try to get beyond emergency responses. We should tell micro stories that make up the macro stories as these can move all of us to act. We must know who we are, our mission, and our greatest challenges. We must speak to our vision." (Aura Kanegis, Friends Committee on National Legislation)

Individuals, Not Types

From Part I: *"People most revered and respected by their peers may be unknown to those in the wider world even when they are considered world renowned or influential Americans by eminent authorities."*

From the Symposium: "Hank Adams is an American Indian visionary. It is important to take the time to honor those who came before us." (Tim Johnson)

Obstacles to Appropriate Representation and Coverage in the News

From Part I*: "Brevity is valued by reporters and editors, but tangled tales are sometimes hard to shorten and often fail to capture the imagination of readers, listeners, and viewers."*

From the Symposium: "We must avoid preaching to the choir. We must learn how to shape our message. We must learn how to create sound bites as that's how modern Americans get and understand information. These are the things that we must do." ((Laura Harris)

Ideas for Grappling with These Obstacles

From Part I*: "Natives themselves need to be proactive about getting their stories out. It is important to enhance communications among Indian tribes as well as to provide positive stories to the larger culture."*

From the Symposium: "We must share stories Indian to Indian. We need to hear the stories to understand that we have diversity. Diversity is not a bad thing but is rather something that brings strength. Journalism is all about making news. Let's talk more about the positive things. We forget about the good things – the real things – in our country." (Joe Garcia)

7. The Joy, the Humor

From Part I: "*Self-introductions are another opportunity for humor."*

From the Symposium: "I was listening to President Garcia open up his talk in the traditional Indian way by asking for permission to speak. Who could deny him? I'm not going down that road…. Somebody might yell out 'denied' …and that would be the end of my speech." (Ron Allen, Treasurer of the National Congress of American Indians)

"Pochohantas, first sellout or first discoverer of Europe?"

Appendix B

Additional Communications Articles

NATIVE AMERICAN TIMES
NativeTimes.com
TODAY'S INDEPENDENT INDIAN NEWS

Tribes and the media
Convention looks at improving troubled relationship

TULSA OK
Sam Lewin 8/10/2006

The way the mainstream media perceives Native Americans and vice-versa took center stage during a series of discussions at the Native American Journalists Association's annual convention in Tulsa.

It's not a secret that many tribal members consider press coverage of Indian issues to be lacking, to say the least.

"I get tired of seeing stereotypes of Indian people," said Clarinda Underwood, the editor of the Washington State-based Quinault Indian Nation's tribal newspaper, the Nugguam. "They don't understand treaties, our history or tribal sovereignty. They put us down."

Underwood is far from alone in her assessment. The dearth of quality reporting about Indian-interest topics frustrated Christina Good Voice so much that she pursued journalism as a career. Good Voice, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Oklahoma native, is now a reporter for the Associated Press.

The media "is not doing a very good job. I hope to be one to turn it around," she says.

"A lot of people-particularly in the newsroom-don't recognize how little they know about Indian Country," said Dan Lewerenz, a member of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska and former president of the association.

Just a few months ago, the tension between the media and Oklahoma tribes simmered again during the controversy over tobacco compacts. Tribal members felt they were being portrayed unfairly, acknowledged the Tulsa World's SE Ruckman, one of the few Native journalists employed by Oklahoma's non-Indian media. Ruckman said tribal members frequently confronted her, asking, "What's up with [the reporter covering the tobacco issue]?"

She says she finally had to tell them: "It's not my story."

George Tiger, a ranking official in the Creek Nation, recalls meeting with the newspaper's editorial board to discuss the "negative reporting and half truths that were being written."

Tiger and Ruckman spoke while participating in a panel discussion examining the complexities of establishing a "Native American Beat." While both rank-and-file tribal members and tribal officials find fault with media coverage, blame goes both ways. Some Oklahoma tribal leaders are loath to speak to reporters, hoping that "if we ignore it, it will go away," according to the Osage Nation's Julia Lookout, another member of the panel discussion.

"Some of our elders really do have that mindset," she said.

Linda O' Leary, a member of the Cherokee Nation tribal council, agrees that some Indian Country leaders are too media-phobic, saying some of her fellow councilors will cease speaking during a council meeting if they notice a reporter in the room.

"That's not right," O'Leary said. "If they were going to say it in the first place, they should. The reporter's presence shouldn't deter them… I always thought that when I'm elected to that council seat they are going to have to shut me up."

"That's why she's a dream source," Ruckman said.

Solutions are available, the panelists said. Tiger believes that "educating our media about us as Indian people" is a tonic to improve relations between the two camps.

Lookout of the Osages was asked what her idea is of the perfect story.

"I believe every one of my people has a story to tell," she said.

You can reach Sam Lewin at sam@okit.com

DBSST Case History # 0738
From: **YES! A Journal of Positive Futures**, Winter 2003, Page 33

Digital Storytellers
by Desiree Evans

The rural, rocky landscape of Big Mountain, Arizona, is the site of a land battle between the Peabody Coal Mine Company and the Hopi and Dineh (Navajo) nations. In the midst of this struggle, 12-year-old Walees Crittedern, who is Dineh, has seen her brother arrested for trespassing on expropriated tribal lands and her home demolished as part of a forced relocation scheme by the mining company. And for a long time, no one heard her story.

But six months ago, Walees and 19 other youth from 20 different organizations nationwide were given a digital camera, a computer, and a chance to record their experiences. In late August, they gathered in Oakland, California, for a three-day workshop, where they learned how to turn their

footage into documentaries. On the following Saturday, 300 activists from around the country gathered to watch these digital stories.

The Digital Storytelling Youth Conference was co-sponsored by Third World Majority (TWM), a collective made up of women of color who provide training in new media and access to equipment.

"TWM started its work as a response to the exclusion of people of color in mainstream media and technological fields," said director Thenmozhi Soundararajan. The collective's goal is to get people to create their own digital stories from the found material in their lives - art, oral history, creative writing, photographs, music, news clippings - using digital video, the Web, graphic design, sound engineering, and animation. "People learn to communicate their own truths in their own voices," said Soundararajan. "This isn't just about telling stories. It's about reclaiming histories."

Communities of color, and poor or indigenous communities historically have had little control over how technology is used. Recording devices in these communities are more likely to be used for policing, war, colonial ethnography, and jails, than for telling the stories of the people, Soundararajan said. "It's no accident that the most common image young people have of themselves is through surveillance cameras and unhealthy MTV images."

To involve people who have a legacy of trauma with technology, TWM developed mobile training programs. They travel throughout the country armed with nine Macintosh laptops, cameras, recorders and other equipment providing digital storytelling training in homes, barns, churches, and community centers. "In all of this work, we are conscious of how our presence as young women of color, teaching and producing media and technology, models a positive vision for the communities we want," said Theeba Soundararajan, director of Web and Graphic Agitation for TWM.

For the youth at the Digital Storytelling conference, like most, this was their first time working on video production. But the workshop turned out to be more than technology training. The group shared their movies, laughing, crying, and embracing over issues such as immigrant rights, failing schools, homophobia, and street life. Young activists working on gentrification connected with activists working on police accountability, homelessness, and the criminalization of youth.

Once back in their own communities, many participants use their digital stories for teaching and outreach. Underground Railroad, a youth group that organizes hip-hop events in the Bay Area, will screen their digital story in community centers to educate the public on how music can effect social change. Walees Crittedern is using her film and skills as part of Indigenous Action Media's campaign to gain community support in the struggle against Peabody.

"This is the kind of response we're trying for," said Thenmozhi. "When people reclaim their stories and reconnect to what is important to them in their communities, that's where the real empowerment begins."

For more information, visit www.thirdworldmajority.org.

INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY
The Nations' Leading American Indian News Source

Scholarly conference highlights federal recognition, sovereignty

 emphasis added to article

Gale Cowey Toensing

PORTLAND, Maine - Federal recognition and tribal sovereignty moved into the academic arena as featured topics at the annual New England American Studies Association Conference this year.

The two-day event, called "Homeland In/Security: Race and Citizenship in the United States," was held at the University of Southern Maine in Portland over the Sept. 15 weekend. Around 100 people participated.

The conference's keynote panel was called "Native Sovereignty and the Politics of Sovereignty in New England," with tribal leaders from the Penobscot Indian Tribe, the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation and the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi.

The New England American Studies Association is a regional chapter of the American Studies Association, and fosters the study of the culture and history of New England through interdisciplinary scholarship, publication and teaching at all levels and types of educational institutions.

J. Kehaulani Kauanui, an assistant professor of anthropology and American studies based at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., organized the panel and introduced the speakers.

The state of Connecticut has become the locus of anti-sovereignty activity, which provided the impetus for the keynote topic, because it "is shaping the way administrative policy is being formed at the national level," Kauanui said.

Kauanui said Connecticut's new stance "marks a 180-degree turn from 20 years ago" when the state played a major role in pressuring Congress to federally recognize the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation "because the state was to benefit financially."

The state's compacts with the Mashantuckets and, a few years later, with the Mohegan Tribe provide the state with 25 percent of the gross profits from the tribes' slot machines - close to $450 million a year.

Kauanui, a Native Hawaiian from California, compared the Mashantuckets' situation to the movement for federal acknowledgement of Native Hawaiians.

"We can see something similar in the case of Hawaii, where the state is supporting a federally driven bill in support of Native Hawaiian federal recognition, a proposal initiated by U.S. Sens. Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye, in the service of settling Hawaiian land claims for U.S. military expansion - but Hawaiian activists oppose federal recognition in favor of full decolonization under international law," Kauanui said.

One of the key issues impacting tribal nations in the Northeast is the difference between historically state-recognized Eastern tribes and the "treaty tribes of the West," she noted. But more recently, the backlash against casino development, bolstered by "citizens' rights groups," has fueled opposition to federal recognition, Kauanui said.

"The conflation of federal recognition with the specter of Indian casinos indicates that most non-tribal residents in these states refuse to uncouple questions of tribal economic development - a question of a

nation's political economy - and the social justice issue of honoring the U.S. trust doctrine," Kauanui said.

The anti-Indian, anti-casino backlash has spread beyond Connecticut to the point where more than 20 state attorneys general have filed briefs to curtail tribal jurisdiction, arguing that portions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 are unconstitutional.

"This new legal movement against sovereignty is being lead by Larry Long, the attorney general of South Dakota, and Richard Blumenthal, the attorney general of Connecticut," Kauanui said.

Penobscot Indian Nation Chief James Sappier opened the panel discussion with a cleansing prayer, then related the story of how the Penobscots achieved federal acknowledgement.

It was the Penobscots who discovered the 1790 Indian Nonintercourse Act, a forgotten law still on the books, which said only the federal government - specifically, Congress - could sell or transfer Indian land. The discovery became the basis of federal acknowledgement bids through land claims throughout New England and beyond.

The tribe accidentally discovered a treaty "in a box under the bed," Sappier said, which prompted the preparation of a historical land claim to two-thirds of Maine based on the 1790 law.

The land claim was so huge "the Supreme Court would go ballistic if the tribe sued," Sappier said. After a complex multi-pronged strategy bundling its land claims with those other state tribes, obtaining resolutions of support from the United South and Eastern Tribes Inc. and the National Congress of American Indians, and lawsuits against the state and Interior Department, the Penobscots negotiated a settlement that included $85 million and land.

Sappier went on to participate in creating the seven criteria the BIA uses to acknowledge tribes.

That was in the 1980s. Although the STN filed a letter of intent to petition in 1981, by the time the tribe filed its petition with the BIA in the mid-1990s "everything had changed by then" because of the casinos, STN Chief Richard Velky said.

The Schaghticokes' bid for federal acknowledgement is still playing out in federal court, Velky said. Currently, the tribe is appealing the BIA's decision last October to rescind its prior decision of January 2004 granting the tribe federal recognition. The tribe filed another federal lawsuit alleging that a citizens' group and its powerful lobbyist unlawfully interfered in the tribe's federal recognition process.

Donna Roberts Moody, the repatriation and site protection coordinator for the Abenaki Nation, reviewed her tribe's long struggle with state authorities in its efforts to achieve federal status. Last November, the BIA denied recognition in a proposed finding. The tribe is continuing its quest.

"The Indian wars aren't over," Roberts Moody said.

Kauanui said the conference was so successful she hopes to organize a conference on federal recognition in Connecticut in the future.

APPENDIX C Engagement with Media

Media Attendees List (Partial)

Andrea Acosta	El Pregonero Newspaper
Susanne Aikman	alterNative Voices
Acee Agoyo	Indianz.com
Shyanne Beatty	Koahnic Broadcast Corporation
Francene Blythe	National Geographic
Barbara Bonitez	Al Jazeera
Ken Chaneg	Alpine Broadcasting
Raymond Cook	Indian Country Today
Teddy Davis	ABC News Political Unit
Randy Flood	NATV
Robert Free	Tribal Connection
Jo Freeman	Senior Women Web
Penny Gamble-Williams	Talkingfeather Radio Show
Terry Gene	National Geographic
Sharon Grimberg	American Experience (PBS)
Nelson Harvey	American Prospect
Adrienne Kitchen	KTUQ
Tanya Lee	Independent Reporter, formerly Managing Editor, Navajo-Hopi Observer
Tiger Moory	www.tribeforone.com
Cynthia Nevels	About Time Magazine
Miko Noguchi	Shimano Mainichi Shimbun
Mary Phillips	First Nations Website
Jerry Reynolds	Indian Country Today
Sam Rosenfeld	American Prospect
Amy Simmons	Freelance Writer / Media Tank
Stuart Sugg	Sugg Productions
Erin Texeira	Associated Press
Benjamin Walker	American Experience
Unknown	KQET

Pacifica and Native America Calling interviewed Pat Powers to announce the event and to discuss current legislative issues. PR Magazine carried a full article by Phil Hall about the reasons for putting on the symposium. Other websites that carried announcements about the symposium, besides those of co-sponsors, were the Benton Foundation and Indianz.com.

Outreach for Media Symposium

The symposium was an "aspirational" endeavor to pique the interest of those who have the means to communicate with the broad public, a hopeful undertaking.

Please note that the list below is suggestive rather than comprehensive. Friends Committee on National Legislation's Native American Advocacy Program contacted too many groups and individuals to name all of them here. Numerous Native organizations and tribal representatives were eager to participate. Some non-Native journalists showed interest or support while others refused to even discuss the idea. In a number of instances, time and staffing constraints meant that symposium planners were unable to get back to the media outlet or person or follow-up on an initial contact with their schedulers.

These examples are provided to give readers a sense of the scope of this project. Systematic outreach begins with an initial contact and with a brief educational message. In this case, people from traditional and electronic communications outlets were invited to be part of a dialogue to build relationships for the future. Those listed were not present at "Hear Our Story" for a myriad of reasons.

The broad array of potential avenues for follow-up is illuminating. Possibilities include both conventional media and association and religious organizations that have their own publications.

Colleges Contacted

All journalism schools
All schools with Native American studies programs
Local university departments such as political science, American Studies
George Washington University's Native American program

Potential Ally Organizations Contacted

AARP
Common Cause
Center for Community Change
Committee on Conscience
Committee of Concerned Journalists
Environmental groups
National Association of Social Workers
National Institute for Holocaust Education

Native Journalists Conferred With, Invited to Event

George Benge
Brian Bull
Tim Giago
Mike Kellogg
Jodi Rave
Doreen Yellow Bird

Mainstream Media Outlets Contacted

Atlanta Constitution
CNN
Regional newspapers that had run articles about Native American issues

Non-Native Journalists Interested in Event

Howard Berkes, National Public Radio
Daryl Fears, the Washington Post
Brad Knickerbocker, Christian Science Monitor
Doug Mitchell, National Public Radio
Laird Townsend, Orion magazine

Non-Native Journalists Contacted

Al Neuharth, editor of USA Today
Donald Barlett, Time and investigative author
Ray Walker, Night Ridder
Andrew Ferguson, Weekly Standard
Several columnists and reporters for the Washington Post
Diane Solis, Dallas News
John Cochran, Congressional Quarterly
Brent Bozell, Media Research Center

Media Outlets Expressing Interest

C-Span television

Ongoing Meetings Needed With Editorial Boards or Editors of These Publications

New York Times
Wall Street Journal
Washington Times
Network Television Stations

Pitch a Story; Contact for Longer, In-depth Analysis

New Yorker magazine
Harpers magazine
Time magazine
Newsweek magazine
The Hill newspaper about Congress
Congressional Quarterly editor
Religion and Ethics Newsweekly (PBS)
Interfaith Alliance State of Belief
Sojourners

Many mainstream journalists and potential allies were asked to think about the First Americans in terms of invisibility, stereotypes, and skewed coverage. For quite a number, this was the first time they were asked to do so. Others have a keen interest but no support from owners and managers because there is no "local angle" and supposedly no readership or listener interest. Both news and entertainment sources were contacted, although the emphasis was on the former because they are more likely to influence public policy.

The above list shows that there is potential for break-through but time and effort will be involved. As social change agents say: "think press relations not press releases." Coalitions between indigenous people and those concerned about justice are needed. The above examples of outreach at the national level may suggest ideas for outreach at the local or state level. Such organizations can become allies or can be challenged to improve their representations of tribes.

Appendix D

Speakers, Moderators, Workshop Facilitators

Jim Adams
Indian Country Today (NY)

Kenneth Adams, Chief
Upper Mattaponi Tribe (VA)

Kristy Alberty
National Indian Child Welfare Association (OR)

Ron Allen
Treasurer, National Congress of American Indians (DC), from Washington State

Cush Anthony
Formerly Maine Committee on State-Tribal Relations (ME)

Kim Baca
Executive Director, Native American Journalists Association (SD)

José Barreiro
Editor, Indian Country Today;
American Indian Media and Policy Initiative (NY)

Rev. Jonathan Barton
Virginia Council of Churches (VA)

Stacy Bohlen
National Indian Health Board (DC)

Kara Briggs
Oregonian (OR)

Beth Brownfield
HONOR (MN)

Lori D. Buckner (Farmer)
U.S. News & World Report (DC)

Gwendolen Cates
Writer; Photographer (NY)

Tom Cole
US House of Representatives, OK 4th District (OK)

Janeen Comenote
National Urban Indian Family Coalition (WA)

Ada Deer
Former Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs (WI)

John Dossett
Attorney, National Congress of American Indians (DC), from Colorado

Amber Ebarb
National Congress of American Indians (DC)

Joe Fab
Producer, filmmaker, "Paper Clips" (VA)

Elizabeth Furse
Representative Institute for Tribal Governments (OR)

Joe Garcia
President, National Congress of American Indians (DC), from New Mexico

Gary Gordon
National American Indian Housing Council Association (DC)

Richard Guest
Native American Rights Fund (DC)

Suzan Shown Harjo
Morning Star Institute (DC)

Laura Harris
Executive Director, Americans for Indian Opportunity (NM)

Lawrence Hart
Cheyenne Cultural Center; Return to the Earth (OK)

Wade Henderson
Leadership Conference for Civil Rights (DC)

Robert Holden
National Congress of American Indians (DC)

Dawn Jackson
American Indian National Center for Television and Film (CA)

Tim Johnson
National Museum of the American Indian (DC)

Jefferson Keel
First Vice-President, National Congress of American Indians (DC), from Oklahoma

Robert Lichter
Center for Media and Public Affairs (DC)

Juana Majel-Dixon
Secretary, National Congress of American Indians (DC), from California

Bill McAllister
Journalist, Cobell Law Suit Team

Traci McClellan
National Indian Council on Aging (NM)

Harlan McKosato
First Americans Cable Entertainment (NM)

Aaron Mercer
Legislative Assistant for Kansas Senator Sam Brownback (DC)

John Mohawk
State University of New York at Buffalo (NY)

Paul Moorehead
Gardner, Carton & Douglas law; former Staff Director, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (DC)

David Mullon
General Counsel and Policy Director, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (DC)

Mas Ed Nakawatase
Formerly American Friends Service Committee (PA)

Jackie Old Coyote
Manager, Harvard's Honoring Nations Program (MA)

Alison Owings
Journalist, author of (working title) “Listening to Native Americans” (CA)

Ivan Posey, Chairman
Eastern Shoshone (WY)

Patricia Powers
Friends Committee on National Legislation (DC)

Chris Satullo
Philadelphia Inquirer (PA)

Brian Schweitzer
Governor (MT)

Yonce Shelton
Call to Renewal (DC)

Ron Smith
Chair, Department of Communications, Buffalo State College;
American Indian Media and Policy Initiative (NY)

Patty Talahongva
Native America Calling (NM)

Makani Themba-Nixon
Praxis Project (DC)

Mary Kim Titla
Native Youth Magazine (AZ)

Wanda Resto Torres
Fellowship of Reconciliation (DC)

Mark Trahant
Seattle Intelligencer (WA)

Joe Volk
Friends Committee on National Legislation (DC)

Don Wedll
Mille Lacs Band (MN)

Mary Ann Weston
Medill School of Journalism
Northwestern University
author, "Native Americans in the News" (IL)

Susan White
Oneida Trust Department (WI)
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (NY)

Patricia Zell
Zell & Cox Law;
formerly Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (DC)

Note: Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) had intended to come to the media symposium to state his support for its goals and his thanks to the participants. His wife of 57 years, Margaret (Maggie) Shimbun Awamura, passed away that week. Please see a letter from the Senator Inouye on the next page written for inclusion in this conference report. (Excerpts were included at the beginning of the paper.)

First elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962, Senator Inouye is serving his eighth consecutive term. When Hawaii became a state in 1959, he was elected the first Congressman from the new state. He has been an active and influential member of the Senate Committee of Indian Affairs. Besides his concern for Native Hawaiians, he has championed dozens of pieces of legislation affecting American Indian and Alaska Native people. At the time of the media symposium, Senator Inouye was the ranking member of the Committee. He was chair of the Committee on Indian Affairs from 1987 until 1995 and from 2001 until 2003. Senator Inouye was instrumental in the creation of the new Smithsonian museum honoring indigenous peoples. In May 1989, Inouye, joined shortly by then-Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), introduced legislation to build a National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall.

At a budget hearing on Native American programs to meet critical needs, attended by only three senators, Senator Inouye stated, "How about forming a task force on public relations and information? So we can get all the motion picture people there, the public radio people, the PBS people, producers and such. Maybe we will hit gold. Get them excited. Let the others know about your problems. We know about your problems."

DANIEL K. INOUYE
HAWAII

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COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS – Vice Chairman

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November 20, 2006

Ms. Patricia Powers
Legislative Secretary
Native American Advocacy
Friends Committee on National Legislation
245 Second Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Ms. Powers:

Please accept my deepest regrets for not being able to attend the conference that was held back in March. I truly appreciate all of your kind thoughts and prayers for myself as well as my family during such a trying time. I was very pleased to learn several hundred people came together for this event.

The theme of this conference, "Hear Our Story," encompasses not only the fact that stories of our Native brothers and sisters have not been told, but that in fast-paced work environments, popular culture and the media pick and choose which stories to tell. This, in turn, leads to interpretations and misunderstandings about Native America. A perfect example of this occurred this past summer during the consideration of S. 147, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act. I was disheartened to hear some of my colleagues discuss Native Hawaiian history in the manner in which they did – with complete disregard for the actual history as if it had never happened. This is why it is so important to tell your stories. I encourage all of you to take the time to learn and grow from these stories.

In the modern world in which we live, technology and media play key roles in our daily lives. There have been so many instances when Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have been misrepresented in the media. This mostly happens due to a lack of understanding, and the fact that Natives only represent a small portion of the population. This could have the potential to have detrimental effects not only on tribes or Native peoples, but also those whose opinions are formulated based upon these stories.

Now is the time to start to bridge the gap between the world of communications and Native America. I wish you all the best as we continue to work toward a better future for all Native peoples.

Aloha,

DANIEL K. INOUYE
United States Senator

Brief Biographical Information on Speakers, Moderators, and Workshop Leaders

Jim Adams is an associate editor and writer with Indian Country Today newspaper. His articles have won many news-reporting honors. He is also an American Indian Policy and Media Initiative Fellow at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, NY and has a doctorate.

Chief Kenneth Adams (Upper Mattaponi Tribe) grew up in King William County, Virginia as one of 10 children. After graduation from King William High School, the first American Indian to do so, he entered the Air Force, retiring in 1990. Ken Adams graduated from Southern Illinois University with a BS in Industrial Technology.

Kristy Alberty (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) is Executive Communications Manager with the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) located in Portland, OR. The NICWA works to be a voice for the needs of Indian children and Indian child welfare programs nationwide. Alberty also serves as a board member of Oregon Action.

Chairman Ron Allen (Jamestown S'Klallam) has served as chairman of his tribe since 1977 and has also served as Executive Director of the tribe since 1982. He is currently Treasurer on the National Congress of American Indians Executive Board and formerly was President.

Cushman Anthony is a lawyer and mediator. He served as the Chair of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission for five years, and was a Maine legislator for six years prior to that. He has followed closely the progress of the Cobell v. Norton (now Cobell v. Kempthorne) class action case about Individual Indian Money accounts and efforts to settle it through Congress.

Kim Baca (Navajo & Santa Clara Pueblo) is currently the Interim Executive Director of the Native American Journalists Association located in Vermillion, SD. Baca previously worked for the National American Indian Housing Council. Baca's journalism experience includes general and beat reporting for the Associated Press, the El Paso Times and the Santa Fe New Mexican. She has also worked as a policy analyst for the New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs.

José Barreiro (Taino) is the Senior Editor of Indian Country Today and a Senior Fellow for Research with the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative. He is the author of "Indian Chronicles" and the editor of a number of books including "Indian Roots of American Democracy," "View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on the Quincentenary," "Chiapas: Challenging History," and "Panchito: Cacique de Montaña," a testimony narrative." He has a Ph.D. in American Studies.

Jon Barton has served as the General Minister of the Virginia Council of Churches located in Richmond, VA since 2000 and served as the Regional Director of the Church World Service from 1985-2000. Barton has worked with several Virginia tribes seeking federal recognition.

Stacy Bohlen (Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) is the Executive Director for the National Indian Health Board, a position she assumed after serving as the organization's Legislative Director. NIHB advocates for increased funding for Indian health and represents

programs at the national level. Previously, she was the Director of Federal Relations for the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

Kara Briggs (Yakama) is a native journalist from Portland, Ore., where she works for the Oregonian. She chronicles her recovery from breast cancer and also writes about national health care issues that concern Native peoples. She is a former president of the Native American Journalists Association and winner of the 2004 Award for Investigative Journalism. She also co-authored "Reading Red," a content analysis of newspapers.

Beth Brownfield has been active with issues of sovereignty, treaties, cultural understanding and appreciation since the late 70s. In Minnesota, she helped educate non-Indians about these issues and fundraise. She served as Regional Director for Honor Our Neighbors' Origins and Rights (HONOR) in Minnesota before moving to Bellingham, WA where she continues to build bridges between communities and tribal neighbors. In Bellingham she works with a group initiating a national holiday to honor indigenous people.

Lori Buckner (Farmer) has been a professional journalist for 15 years, working as a news editor at U.S. News & World Report magazine since 1997, after positions at the Baltimore Sun and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. She is also a freelance writer and edits Kids Across Parents Down, a syndicated crossword puzzle for kids and adults.

Gwendolen Cates is a photographer and author, who is currently working on her first documentary film. Her photographs have appeared in many national and international magazines including PARADE, Men's Journal, People, and Fortune, and her book "Indian Country," which she both photographed and wrote, was featured on Oprah's television show in 2002. She is completing a documentary about Jock Soto, internationally renowned and recently retired dancer with the New York City Ballet, who is half Navajo and half Puerto Rican.

Representative Tom Cole (Chickasaw Nation) is a second term Congressman representing Oklahoma's 4th district and a champion for Native health, trust settlement, and self-governance. He serves as the Deputy Majority Whip in the House and a member of the Rules Committee. He is currently the only Native American serving in Congress and was inducted in the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2004. Cole holds an M.A. from Yale and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Cole has been a Fulbright Fellow at the University of London.

Janeen Comenote (Quinault Indian Nation) is also Kwakiutl, NuuChaNuulth and Oglala Lakota. She is currently a Development Officer for the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation in Seattle, WA. She is also a founding member of and Coordinator for the National Urban Indian Family Coalition.

Ada Deer (Menominee) is director of the American Indian Studies program at UW-Madison and a fellow at the Harvard Institute of Politics. She was the first member of her tribe to receive a master's degree. She became the first woman chair of the Menominee Nation, the first woman to head the federal bureau of Indian Affairs in the United States Department of Interior and the first American Indian woman to run for Congress and Wisconsin's secretary of state. Deer is a former chair of the board of the Native American Rights Fund.

John Dossett has been General Counsel for the National Congress of American Indians since 1997 and helps coordinate the new Tribal Supreme Court Project. He works in Portland and is a member of the Oregon and District of Columbia bar associations. He has authored a number of publications including "Government-to-Government Models of Cooperation Between States and Tribes."

Amber Ebarb (Raven-Dogsalmon Clan Tlingit) covers issues related to the federal budget and appropriations process, self-determination and self-governance, and consultation as a legislative associate for the National Congress of American Indians. She is an expert in budget analysis.

Joe Fab is an award-winning producer, writer, and director with more than 30 years experience in film and video, communications, and the live presentation of plays and music. His documentary "Paper Clips" received numerous film festival awards, was one of the National Board of Review's top five documentaries of 2004, and received the Jewish Image Award for promotion of cross-cultural communication.

Representative Elizabeth Furse directs the Institute for Tribal Government at the Hatfield School of Government in Portland, OR. The Institute provides governance training to elected tribal officials. She is a former Congresswoman from Oregon's 1st district. Inspired in part by her mother's struggle against apartheid in South Africa, she was active in Indian causes such as treaties and termination and co-founded Citizens for Indian Rights before her years in Congress.

President Joe Garcia (Ohkay Owingeh) was elected to lead the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in November 2005 and also serves as Governor of the Ohkay Owingeh. Before his election as President of NCAI, Garcia served as the first Vice-President for two years. He is President of TSAY Corporation, a tribally owned business. An electrical engineer, he worked for 25 years at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Gary Gordon (Mohawk) joined the National American Indian Housing Council as Executive Director in 2002 and earlier he served as a Board member of NAIHC, Vice Chair of the Housing Committee of the United South and Eastern Tribes, as well as the Executive Director of Oneida Nation Housing, Oneida, N.Y. A former ironworker, Gordon helped build the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Richard Guest is a Staff Attorney with Native American Rights Fund. He has represented Indian tribes on a broad range of issues in federal, state and tribal forums. He has provided legal counsel to tribal leaders and administrative staff in government-to-government proceedings, including co-management of fish, timber and wildlife, and the development of intergovernmental agreements on jurisdiction over natural resources, law enforcement, taxation and social services.

Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee) is President and Executive Director of the Morning Star Institute, a national Native rights organization. She is one of seven Native people who filed Harjo et al v. Pro Football, Inc., regarding the name of the Washington football team, before the U.S. Patent & Trademark Board in 1992. She is well known for her role in

helping to launch the new American Indian museum and her moderator role for educational events that take place there. She also works to preserve sacred places.

Laura Harris (Comanche Nation) is Executive Director of Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO). A trained systems science facilitator, Harris leads an international Indigenous leadership and community development program. In 1997, President Clinton appointed Harris as Senior Consultant to the President's Initiative on Race and during the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign, Harris was senior advisor to Gov. Howard Dean on Native American policy and outreach.

Lawrence Hart (Cheyenne) is founder and Executive Director of the Cheyenne Cultural Center in Clinton, OK. Hart is also a Cheyenne Peace Chief and Mennonite minister. He is active with the Return to the Earth project to buy land and bury the remains of Indian ancestors currently stored in museums.

Wade Henderson is Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) and Counsel to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund. The Leadership Conference works to redefine civil rights issues in broad and inclusive ways. Today, the LCCR includes over 180 national organizations.

Robert Holden (Choctaw) is director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Nuclear Waste Program and has worked for NCAI since the early 1980s. Among his issue areas is homeland security. Holden also led and coordinated national fund-raising and relief efforts to help tribes in the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

Dawn Jackson (Ojibwe) is Vice-Chair of First Americans in the Arts. Jackson is also a global project manager with the Walt Disney Company, where she acts as a mentor for the ABC/Disney New Talent Development Program and she was the executive producer of "Naturally Native," which won the Producers Award at the 1998 American Indian Film Festival.

Tim Johnson (Mohawk) is the Associate Director of museum programs at the National Museum of the American Indian. He is the former Executive Editor of Indian Country Today newspaper and co-founder of Native Americas journal. His recent work as an editor includes "Spirit Capture: Photographs from the National Museum of the American Indian." He is also involved with the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative.

Jefferson Keel (Chickasaw) is the Lieutenant Governor of the Chickasaw Nation and serves as First Vice President on the National Congress of American Indians Executive Committee. He is a retired U.S. Army officer with over 20 years of active duty service. He also has background experience in social services and all tribal health programs.

Dr. Robert Lichter is President of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, which conducts scientific studies of news and entertainment. Dr. Lichter is the author of many scholarly and popular articles on the role of media in society. His books include The Nightly News Nightmare (2002); It Ain't Necessarily So: How Media Remake the Scientific Picture of Reality (2001); and Peepshow: Media and Politics in an Age of Scandal (2000). Center studies are frequently cited

in academic venues as well as the popular press, and he often appears on major network news shows and other media outlets.

Juana Majel-Dixon (Pauma-Yuima Band of Luiseno Indians) is Secretary of the National Congress of American Indians and has served as a traditional appointment to her tribal legislative council for 28 years. She has been a member of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) for 30 years. In the mid-seventies, Ms. Majel served as Pacific Area VP with President Joe De La Cruz. She was also co-chair with Chief Tillman on Trust Reform during the Administration of Secretary Babbitt and Assistant Secretary Grover. She has a doctorate in policy and education.

Aaron Mercer is a Legislative Assistant for Senator Sam Brownback. Beginning in the Senator's office in August 2001, Aaron has served in a number of capacities for Senator Brownback including work on legislation affecting children, education, and environmental affairs. Aaron has worked on Indian affairs since 2003 and aided the Senator in crafting and moving forward the "Native American Apology Resolution" (S.J.Res.15 in the 109th Congress).

Bill McAllister worked for 24 years as a reporter, columnist and editor at the Washington Post. He also has written for the Wall Street Journal, Denver Post and Virginian-Pilot. He is a native of North Carolina and a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Currently, he engages in communications work about trust reform with the Elouise Cobell legal team.

Traci McClellan (Cherokee) serves as the Executive Director of the National Indian Council on Aging based in Albuquerque. McClellan focuses on working with elders, tribal leaders, members of Congress and colleagues across the field of aging services to advocate for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act as well as the reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. She previously served as the Legislative Director for the National Indian Health Board.

Harlan McKosato (Sac and Fox Nation) is director of NDN Productions, an independent media production company. He is a columnist for the Santa Fe New Mexican, a commentator for National Public Radio and an adjunct professor of journalism at the Institute of American Indian Arts. He is developing the First Americans Cable Entertainment System.

Dr. John Mohawk (Turtle Clan Seneca) is a professor in the Center for the Americas at the State University at Buffalo, New York and currently serves as the Director of Indigenous Studies at the Center. He is also founder and director of the Iroquois White Corn Project and the Pinewoods Cafe, located on the Cattaraugus Territory of the Seneca Nation in Western New York. His latest book is "Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World," a history of the impact of revitalization movements on the history and culture of Western Civilization. He wrote the classic "Basic Call to Consciousness." With Oren Lyons (Onondaga), he edited the book "Exiled in the Land of the Free."

Paul Moorehead is a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of Gardner Carton & Douglas LLP. A member of the Indian Tribal Governments Practice Group, his practice is dedicated exclusively to Federal Indian law and policy. Prior to joining Gardner Carton & Douglas, he was Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs from 1997-2005.

David Mullon (Cherokee) is Majority General Counsel and Policy Director for the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. He was previously General Counsel for the National Congress of American Indians, Associate General Counsel for the Cherokee Nation, and Attorney General of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Mas Ed Nakawatase was national representative for Native American Affairs at the American Friends Service Committee from 1974-2005. He is Japanese American, born in Poston, Arizona, one of the 10 internment camps for people of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Ed has served on the boards of Asian Americans United, Indian Rights Association, the Philadelphia chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, and the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

Jackie Old Coyote (Crow & Ho-Chunk) is the Honoring Nations Program Manager at the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED). She is an enrolled member of the Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation, a Whistle Water clan member and child, and is also of Ho-Chunk descent. She has enjoyed a career as an international fashion model, actress and playwright.

Alison Owings is a California-based editor, writer, oral historian, and journalist, who is currently researching a book with the working title: Listening to Native Americans. She was a news writer for CBS TV in New York and is the author of two books based on her interviews as an outsider: Hey, Waitress! The USA from the Other Side of the Tray (Univ. of California Press 2003) and Frauen / German Women Recall the Third Reich (Rutgers 1993), a "New York Times Notable Book" of the year.

Chairman Ivan Posey (Eastern Shoshone) is the state of Wyoming's first tribal liaison. In this role Posey is charged with strengthening ties between state government and the state's two tribes and ensuring a fair exchange of information and dialogue. Previously, Posey was chairman of the Eastern Shoshone tribal business council on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Posey has also served as the director of culture and Indian education at Arapahoe School on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Patricia R. Powers directs the Native American Advocacy Program started in 1973 by Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker lobby in the public interest. An advocate for 40 years, Powers has a PhD in Cultural American Studies with specializations in ethnography, social change, and mass media. She co-authored a textbook entitled Community Practice.

Chris Satullo has been editorial page editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer since March 2000. He's been with the paper 16 years, previously working as deputy editorial page editor and deputy suburban editor. He writes a column "Center Square." He is the founder and director of the paper's Citizen Voices program, an effort to engage readers in deeper political dialogue. He won the 2000 James F. Batten Award for Excellence in Civic Journalism for his work on Citizen Voices.

Governor Brian Schweitzer became the 23rd Governor of the state of Montana on January 3, 2005. Gov. Schweitzer has sought to be an ally of Montana tribes. He is a strong supporter of

the "Indian Education for All" program, which seeks to integrate lessons on Indian history and culture into the basic curriculum of all Montana students. He has also encouraged more government-to-government consultation between tribal leaders and Montana state government. He has a master's degree in soil science.

Yonce Shelton joined the Call to Renewal senior team as Director of Public Policy in 2002, following four years on Capitol Hill as Congressional staff for Rick Boucher, a U.S. Representative from the state of Virginia. In his current role as National Coordinator and Policy Director, he manages Call to Renewal's public policy initiatives and acts as Call to Renewal's liaison to national partners and organization. Call to Renewal is a national network of churches, faith-based organizations, and individuals working to overcome poverty in America.

Ron Smith is project director for the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative at Buffalo State College, and professor and chair of the college's Communication Department. He is the senior author of a research study: "Public Opinion on American Indians and Taxation Issues in Western New York" (Spring 2005). He has authored several textbooks on public relations and a consultant/workshop presenter on media training and strategic planning for public relations.

Patty Talahongva (Hopi) is from the Corn and Water Clans of First Mesa, AZ. She is Managing Editor of National Native News and host of Native America Calling (NAC) a daily, live, talk show. Prior to joining NAC, Patty Talahongva owned and operated White Spider Communications, a company dedicated to covering Native American news for Native People's Magazine. She has served on the board of the Native American Journalists Association for six years, two as President. She sits on the board of directors for Unity: Journalists of Color, Inc. and on the board of the Hopi Education Endowment Fund, which oversees a $14 Million endowment to ensure the future education of Hopi people.

Makani Themba-Nixon is Executive Director of the Praxis Project, a nonprofit organization helping communities use media and policy advocacy to advance health equity and justice. Makani Themba-Nixon was previously director of the Transnational Racial Justice Initiative, an international project to build capacity among advocates to address structural racism. Prior to that, she directed the Grass Roots Innovative Policy Program, a national project to build capacity among local organizing groups to engage in media and policy advocacy and to address institutional racism in welfare and public education.

Mary Kim Titla (San Carlos Apache) is publisher of Native Youth Magazine.com, an on-line magazine first launched in July 2005, to showcase the talents of Native youth. The website now averages 2 million hits a month, making it one of the most visited Native websites in the country. Before launching Native Youth Magazine, Titla was a TV News Reporter in Phoenix and Tucson, AZ for 20 years.

Wanda Resto Torres is Coordinator of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) - Vieques Office, Washington, DC. She is an attorney with legislative experience as well as experience coordinating social justice initiatives. At FOR's Washington office, she focuses on education, advocacy, networking and action to clean up the contaminated lands in Vieques and return them to the island's people.

Mark Trahant (Shoshone Bannock) is the editorial page editor for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Before that, he was chief executive for the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education in Oakland, California, which trains and helps promote the careers of minority journalists. He has been a columnist for the Seattle Times, editor and publisher at the Moscow-Pullman Daily, executive news editor of the Salt Lake Tribune, editor and publisher of Navajo Nation Today, and a national reporter for The Arizona Republic, where he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for a project on government failures in federal Indian policy. See these books: Pictures of Our Nobler Selves, Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes.

Joe Volk has been the Executive Secretary for Friends Committee for National Legislation for 14 years and has more than three decades of experience working for peace and social justice. He believes that the U.S. is in a bad position to stop genocide and to call for human rights elsewhere before we have faced our own past. Volk manages an organization, which specializes in peaceful prevention of deadly conflict, budget realignment, and other issues in the daily headlines. The Quakers had the first religious lobby in DC; FCNL started in 1943.

Don Wedll has worked, since 1973, for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in a number of positions: Principal of tribal school, Commissioner of Education, Commissioner of Natural Resources, Economic Development Director, Chief of Police, and now Long Range Planner. He was instrumental in achieving recognition and implementation of treaty rights in the 1837 ceded territories and in achieving the successes realized in the Mille Lacs v. State of Minnesota Supreme Court case. He also teaches American Indian history for Brainerd and Fond du lac community colleges and is on the faculty of the College of St. Scholastica.

Mary Ann Weston is associate professor emeritus at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, having retired in 2005 after 18 years. In retirement, she continues the research that was earlier demonstrated in her course, Reporting Across Race and Culture, and in her book, *Native Americans in the News*, which concerns portrayals of Native Americans in the twentieth century press. In one study of Chicago's newspapers, she found only 0.2 percent of the articles published in a two year time period covered Native Americans and only 11 stories were about those in the Chicago area.

Susan White (Oneida) is the Director of the Oneida Trust Department. Her work stems from the Oneida Nation Trust Committee's mission to manage in a manner that does not enable harm to the environment or the spiritual and cultural values of Native Americans. The Oneida Nation's loan to the Lokata fund helped launch intertribal community development financing. She is also a member of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility that uses persuasion backed by economic pressure from investors to hold corporations accountable; Calvert social responsibility fund divested from Liz Claiborne corporation in 2002 over respect for Indians concerns.

Patricia Zell (Navajo & Arapahoe) is a partner with Zell & Cox Law, P.C. a Native practice group specializing in the laws affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, and Native American business opportunities. She is a former Staff Director and Chief Counsel of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Still called upon to research and write about indigenous issues, she analyzed the federal recognition for Native Hawaiians bill.

Appendix E

Participants

Cynthia Abrams
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
Seneca Nation of Indians
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Susanne Aikman
alterNative Voices
Eastern Band of Cherokee
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Center for Media, Democracy, and Civic Life
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Laural Belleu
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Rev. Maria Barerra
With-in With-Out the Circle, Inc.
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American Indian Council, Inc.
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Baltimore Friends Meeting
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Kooma Nation Australia
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Bloomington Friends Meeting
Bloomington, IN

Kirk Clay
Common Cause
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Raymond Cook
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Akwesasne Mohawk
Oneida, NY

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Environmental Division Manager
Makah Tribe
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Alexandria, VA

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Indiana School of Journalism
Bloomington, IN

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Running Strong for American Indian Youth
Alexandria, VA

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Center for Disease Control
Atlanta, GA

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Reston, VA

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The Talkingfeather Radio Show
Chappaquiddick Band
Wampanoag Nation of
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Hyattsville, MD

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AnaMaria Goicoechea
Melbourne Beach, FL

Bill Gollnick
Oneida Tribe
Oneida, WI

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University of New Mexico
Washington Internships for Native Students

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Baltimore American Indian Center
Lumbee Tribe
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Fountain Hills, AZ

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National Sexual Violence Resource Center
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Roger Wolcott
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Annabel Wong
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Appendix F

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Institute for Tribal Government
Mark Hatfield School of Government
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Elizabeth Furse

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National Council of Urban Indian Health
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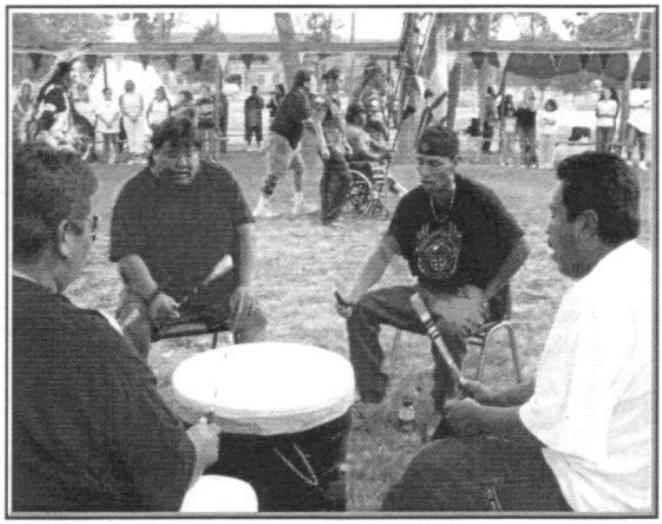
202-387-2800 www.urj.org

Hear Our Story

Communications and Contemporary Native Americans

An Educational Symposium



WIDENING THE COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

March 2-3, 2006

Wyndham Washington DC Hotel

Media image is especially crucial because it is that image that looms large as non-Indians decide the fate of Indian people.

Rennard Strickland
Knight Professor of Law, University of Oregon
from Tonto's Revenge

Few members of Congress or their constituents across the U.S. know much about either the history or contemporary lives of Native people. When complex tribal land, water rights, taxation and jurisdiction issues are debated in the Congress or chronicled in media reports, it is difficult for people without any kind of historical context to understand the issues. In recent years a number of misleading and mostly negative articles have been written about tribal governments, especially those involved in gaming enterprises. If these types of articles are left unanswered, they can ultimately impact federal policy as it relates to tribal governments and citizens. There is a direct link between public perception and public policies affecting tribal people.

Wilma Mankiller
author and former Principal Chief of the Cherokees

The American Indian is invisible in prime-time television.

Mark Reed
chair of American Indians in Film and Television,
gives the networks F grades across the board
Multi-ethnic Media Coalition

Thursday, March 2, 2006

7:00am **Registration** ..... **Vista Ballroom Foyer**

8:15-9:00am **Continental Breakfast** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

9:00-10:30am **Opening Plenary** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

Moderator: ..... ***Laura Harris***

Executive Director, Americans for Indian Opportunity

The Challenge in Social and Political Climate ..... ***President Joe Garcia***

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

The Mission: Creating Deeper and Wider Circle of Knowledge ..... ***Treasurer, Ron Allen***

National Congress of American Indians

The Facts: Successes, Stories from Native Nations ..... ***Jackie Old Coyote***

Harvard, Manager for Honoring Nations Program

The Stories from Tribal Leaders: Pride, Heritage, Resilience ..... ***Rep. Elizabeth Furse***

Institute for Tribal Governments

Getting Positive Stories into the Mainstream Media ..... ***Gwendolen Cates***

Filmmaker, Photographer, Writer

QUERIES

Who does want to hear the story/stories?
Why do non-Natives fail to see where they can contribute to change?
Why do so many non-Natives assume that a symposium like this is only for members of tribes?

Note: *The first three sessions are designed for participants who want to acquire more knowledge in order to better understand the rest of the symposium program and to take crucial information back home.*

10:45am-12:15pm *(Participants will choose one workshop.)*

Historical Overview of Problems ..... **Room EBS 216**

Moderator: ..... ***Joe Volk***

Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Lead-off Speakers: **Ada Deer,** *Former Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs*

Janeen Comenote, *National Urban Indian Family Coalition*

Resource Person: **Alison Owings,** *Oral Histories author*

Legislative Overview of Problems ..... **East Room**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Paul Moorehead***

Gardner, Carton and Douglas

Lead-off Speakers: **David Mullon,** *General Counsel, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs*

Amber Ebarb, *National Congress of American Indians*

Aaron Mercer, *Legislative Assistant, Senator Sam Brownback*

Resource Person: **Jefferson Keel,** *NCAI First Vice President*

Judicial Overview of Problems ..... **West Room**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Richard Guest***

Native American Rights Fund

Lead-off Speakers: **John Dossett,** *Attorney, National Congress of American Indians*

Bill McAllister, *Journalist, Cobell Law Suit Team*

Resource Person: **Cush Anthony,** *formerly Maine Committee on State-Tribal Relations*

Journalistic Overview of Problems ..... **Vista B Ballroom**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Kim Baca***

Executive Director, Native American Journalists Association

Lead-off Speakers: **Ron Smith,** *Chair, Communications Department, Buffalo State College*

American Indian Policy and Media Initiative (AIPMI)

Patty Talahongva, *Native America Calling*

Resource Person: **Chief Kenneth Adams,** *Upper Mattapori Tribe*

12:15-1:30pm **Luncheon Address** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

Improving State-Tribal Relationships through Communication ***Brian Schweitzer***
Governor—Montana

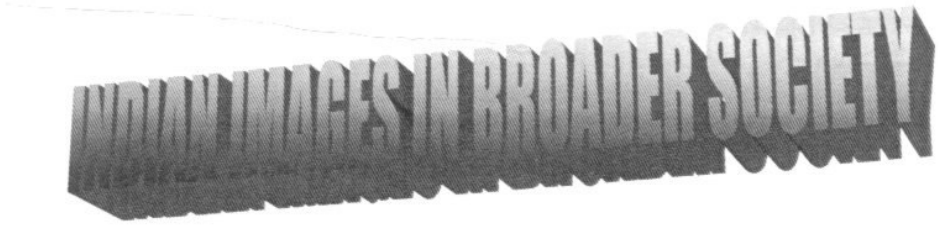
1:30-2:15pm **A Conversation with Journalists** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

Native journalists share their own stories.

Tim Johnson, *National Museum of the American Indian*

Mary Kim Titla, *Native Youth Online Magazine*

Mark Trahant, *Editorial Page Editor of Seattle Intelligencer*

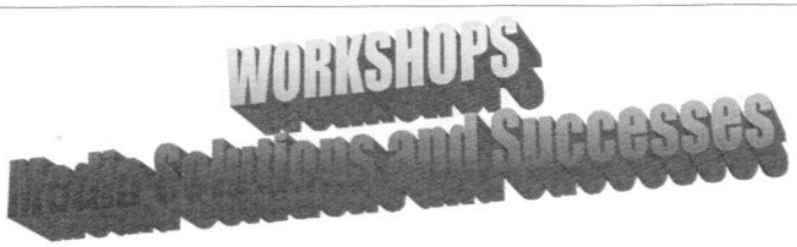


2:15-3:30pm **Plenary Session** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

Moderator: ..... ***José Barreiro***
Editor of Indian Country Today, AIPMI

Panel on Distorted & Literal Representation, Effects on Public Opinion

- ❑ Old & New Stereotypes ..... ***Suzan Shown Harjo***
  Morningstar Institute
- ❑ Analysis of Coverage, Missing Dimensions ..... ***Dr. Robert Lichter***
  President, Center for Media & Public Affairs
- ❑ Unknown, Unseen Influences on Final News Product ..... ***Lori Buckner***
  News Editor, US News



3:45-5:15pm **Monitoring of and Interaction with Media** ..... **Room EBS 216**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Pat Powers***

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Lead-off Speakers: **Mary Ann Weston**, *author of Native Americans in the News*

Susan White, *Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, Oneida*

Resource Person: **Yonce Shelton,** *Call to Renewal*

Addressing Lack of Indigenous People in Mainstream News—

as Journalists, Guests, Sources, Experts ..... **Vista B Ballroom**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Patty Talahongva***

Native America Calling Host

Lead-off Speakers: **Jim Adams,** *Indian Country Today*

Mark Trahant, *Seattle Intelligencer*

Broadening Entertainment

(Hollywood, Networks, Cable) ..... **East Room**

(Or, What Ever Happened to "Marilyn" from Northern Exposure?)

Moderator/Speaker:: ..... ***Dawn Jackson***

Indian Office in Los Angeles

Lead-off Speakers: **Harlan McKosato,** *First Americans Cable Entertainment*

Joe Fab, *Documentary Filmmaker*

Resource Person: **Jackie Old Coyote,** *former Actor*

Sharing Stories to Give More

Complete Picture of Indigenous Peoples ..... **West Room**

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Makani Themba-Nixon***

Praxis Project; Organizer

Lead-off Speakers: **Lawrence Hart** (Return to the Earth), *Repatriation, Culture*

Kara Briggs (Oregonian), *Health*

Mary Kim Titla (Native Youth Magazine.com), *Young Adults*

Stacy Bohlen (National Indian Health Board), *Lobbyist Concerned with Invisibility*

Resource Person: **Kristy Alberty** *(National Indian Child Welfare Association), Children*

6:30-8:00pm **Evening Reception**

Friday, March 2, 2006

8:00am **Continental Breakfast**

9:00-9:30am **Plenary Session** ..... **Vista A Ballroom**

Moderator: ..... ***Patricia Zell***

Zell & Cox Law, formerly Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Needs, Assets, and Positive Coverage ..... ***Representative Tom Cole***

4th District, Oklahoma

9:30-10:30 **GETTING INDIAN ISSUES FRONT AND CENTER**

How to Engage Senators, Representatives, Media in Hearing Story

1. The problem of low numbers (how to overcome?—success stories) .. ***Juana Majel-Dixon***

   Secretary of NCAI (violence against women)

   Robert Holden

   NCAI (Katrina relief)

2. The problem of low visibility (how to overcome?) ..... ***Mark Trahant***

   Seattle Intelligencer

3. The problem of competing demands, other needy groups ..... ***Wade Henderson***

   Leadership Conference for Civil Rights

   Wanda Resto-Torres

   Fellowship of Reconciliation

4. The politics of compassion ..... *Interaction among panelists*

Stakeholders in Conflicts:

Political Allies and Opponents, Multiple Players, Tribes

10:30-11:30am *(Participants will choose one workshop.)*

Organizations lobbying on Behalf of Native Americans ..... **Woodlawn Room**

Focus: Issues and Media Coverage

Moderator/Speaker: ..... ***Aura Kanegis***

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Lead-off Speakers: **Gary Gordon,** *National American Indian Housing Council*

Traci McClellan, *National Indian Council on Aging*

Joe Barton, *VA Council of Churches*

Chief Kenneth Adams, *Upper Mattaponi Tribe*

Organizations that Assess Native Americans in Context of Social and Political Trends (Media, Foundations, Universities, Etc.) ..... **Sherwood Room**

Focus: Gaming and Media Coverage

Moderator: ..... ***Mas Ed Nakawatase***

formerly American Friends Service Committee

Lead-off Speakers: **Chris Satullo,** *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Mark Trahant, *Seattle Intelligencer*

Organizations Opposing Native Americans ..... **Ashland South**

Focus: Critics of Sovereignty and Media Coverage

Moderator: ..... ***Kristy Alberty***

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Lead-off Speakers: **Beth Brownfield,** *HONOR*

Don Wedll, *long time staffer for, Mille Lacs*

Resource Person: **Tribal Chair Ivan Posey,** *Eastern Shoshone*

11:30-12:30pm Plenary Session:

The Big Picture from Native Perspective ..... ***Prof. John Mohawk***

SUNY Buffalo

Wrap-up ..... ***Pat Powers***

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FUNDERS FOR MEDIA SYMPOSIUM

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- Friends Committee on National Legislation

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- National Congress of American Indians
- National Council of Churches
- National Council on Urban Indian Health
- National Indian Child Welfare Association
- National Indian Council on Aging

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- Navajo Nation Washington Office
- The Union for Reform Judaism

ENDORSERS

- Buffy Sainte-Marie
- Wilma Mankiller
- Ken Burns

"This symposium will feature the lived experience of Native Americans today. Because race has played a pivotal position in American history, I am interested in how we cohere as a people. One way is by sharing our individual and collective narratives and bringing them to public attention through the media."

Ken Burns, producer
PBS documentary "The West"

Dedicated to the memory of Dr. John Mohawk
who died just as this paper was going to print

"He was a one-man think tank."

"His intellect was his great gift and he exercised it well. When people across our territory needed to understand what happened and why it happened and what were the consequences, John was the guy to call."

Rick Hill, artist and museum curator who taught with Mohawk for 20 years

"The rare combination of his two-world view is going to be hard to come by again."

Robert Odawi Porter, Dean, Syracuse University College of Law

[quotes from article by Diana Louise Carter
Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester, NY, 12/15/06]

"Intensely steeped in the spiritual ceremonial traditions of the Haudenosaunee people through his foundational longhouse culture…, Mohawk was one of those rare American Indian individuals who comfortably stepped out into the Western academic and journalistic arenas. He was an enthusiastic participant in his own traditional ways, a legendary singer and knowledgeable elder of the most profound ceremonial cycles of the Haudenosaunee. As a scholar, he represented the Native traditional school of thought in a way that was as authentic as it was brilliantly modern and universal. "

[quote from José Barreiro, Indian Country Today, 12/15/06]

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