



Photo by Mark Pynes

Carrying flags and wearing feathers, Native Americans gathered to socialize and dance at McArthur Court this weekend.

Native Americans chant, dance at 14th pow-wow

By Kevan Houser
Of the Emerald

Eerie, dreamlike chanting fills McArthur Court. Forty couples' feet step to the beat of the drums. The men's bells clank in rhythm, as the colorfully garbed dancers proceed in a circle.

A crowd of 100 watch the owl dance, one of many attractions presented at the 14th annual Native American pow-wow.

Others mill about the gymnasium. Some buy fried bread and Coke, some examine handicrafts. But the food and merchandise are just a sidelight to the dancing and socializing.

Oklahoma gourd dancing, Eskimo dancing, and competitive dancing brought participants and spectators to the pow-wow sponsored by the University Native American Student Union.

"The pow-wow is for people to meet, to be together, to wish each other well. It's a time for all the tribes to be in one heart," says Frances Martinez of Portland. She and two of her children participated in some of the dancing.

During the intertribal dances, anyone is welcome to join. Some dancers wear jeans and tennis shoes.

Even those in full regalia make concessions to the times. Metal bells replace deerhooves

or shells. Plastic has usurped bone in some breastplates, because it's lighter for the dancers.

Competitive dancing, a popular event, features men and women of different age groups performing traditional and fancy, or feather, dancing. Fancy dancing is fairly new. Its origins are in Oklaahaoma about 1960, says White Eagle Horse Hite of Drewsey.

One of the fancy dancers is Deek Heykamp, 17, of Cottage Grove. Although he is not an Indian, he has been dancing for six years, becoming involved through the Boy Scouts.

His green and yellow dress seems appropriate for a pow-wow at the University, but he says it's only a coincidence. Fancy dancers have greater choice of colors than the traditional dancers who must avoid certain colors because of tribal meanings.

One can buy the necessary materials to put together regalia from Indian hobby shops, says Heykamp. After getting the materials, he spent about six months putting them together.

Elaborate regalia worn by men may include moccasins, Angora, bells, a breechcloth, a ribbon shirt, a breastplate, and beaded belt or suspenders. There are many types of head-dresses, ranging from war bon-

nets to coyote headpieces, to buffalo horns. Most common at the pow-wow were roaches. "Roaches" are made with porcupine quills, deer tails, or horse hair. The men may also wear feathers — one feather signifies a single man, two a married man.

The fancy dancers, like Heykamp, wore two circles of feathers on their backs, called bustles.

A beaded choker and a dance wand may complete the outfit.

Some regalia represent \$500 to \$2,000 worth of work, Martinez says.

While the 13 to 18-year-old boys compete, Hite explains that they are being judged on their timing and the smoothness and grace of their movements. The dancers should listen to the drum, become part of it, he says.

Should part of a dancer's regalia, even a single feather, come loose and fall, he would be disqualified.

Much to his surprise, Heykamp, a blue-eyed blond, places first place in his division. This is his fourth pow-wow here, but the first time he has even placed among the top three finishers.

"I thought I might have had a chance to place, but I didn't expect to win," Heykamp says. He says that now, he feels accepted by the Indians.

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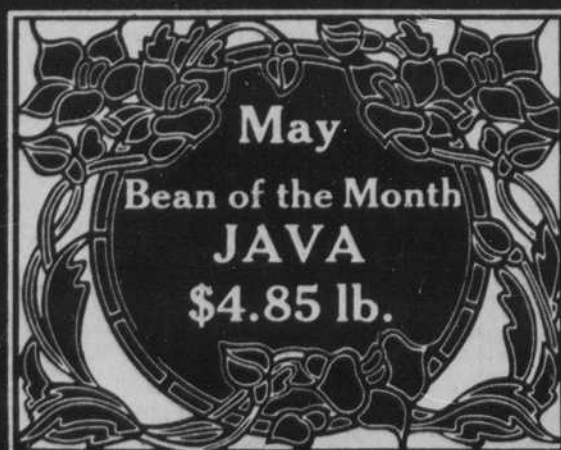
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